

FROM MAX HEINDEL'S WRITINGS

Immortality



of the Soul

IT is commonly assumed that each individual soul has had a beginning, but is nevertheless so constituted that it is imperishable. This idea is questioned by those who believe that death ends all.

While there are a number of ways in which it is possible to demonstrate that death does *not* end all, we are afraid that no amount of argument will convince one who is not willing to be shown. You remember the parable Christ told about the rich man and Lazarus, who dies, and when the rich man desired that Lazarus be allowed to return from the dead to warn his brothers, Christ said: "If they will not believe Moses and the prophets, neither would they believe if one rose from the dead." And that is the point. We have heard so-called scientists say that they would not be convinced of life after death even though they actually saw a ghost, for having settled by reason and logic to their own complete satisfaction that there are no ghosts, they would consider themselves suffering from an hallucination if they were actually to see an apparition.

Neither is it possible to give authoritative statements from the Bible. The word *immortal* is not found in the Old Testament. Then it was said, "Dying thou shalt die," and long life was held out as a reward for obedience. Nor is the word found in the four Gospels, but in the epistles of Paul it occurs six times. In one passage he speaks of Christ having brought immortality to light through the gospel. In another he tells us that "this mortality must put on immortality." In the third passage he makes clear that this immortality is given to those who seek for it. In a fourth place he speaks of *our*

state, "When this mortal shall have put on immortality." In a fifth place he declares that "God only has immortality." The sixth passage is an adoration of the King Eternal, immortal and invisible.

Thus the Bible does not by any means teach that the soul is immortal, but on the other hand it says emphatically, "the soul that sinneth it must die."

Were the soul inherently and intrinsically imperishable that would be an impossibility.

Nor can we prove immortality from the Bible by passages as John 3:16: "God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son, that whose believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life." If we rely upon that word to prove that the soul is without end, possessed of interminable life, we must also accept the passages which state that the souls are doomed to everlasting torment as claimed by some of the orthodox sects. But as a matter of fact these passages do not provide a life of unending bliss or torment. If you will take Liddel and Scott's Greek dictionary and look up the word, you will find that the word translated *everlasting* in the Bible is a Greek word, *aionian*, which means "for a little while," "an age," "a little time," "a life-time." You will readily see that in the case of Onesimus, concerning whom Paul writes to Philemon, "for perhaps he therefore departed for a season that thou shouldst receive him forever." This word *forever* could only mean the few years of Onesimus' life on earth, and not infinite duration.

What then is the solution? Is immortality only a figment of the fancy and incapable of proof? By no means, but we must differentiate sharply between

the *soul* and the *Spirit*. These two words are too often taken as synonymous, and they are not. We have in the Bible the Hebrew word *ruach*, and the Greek word *pneuma*, both meaning Spirit, while the Hebrew word *neshammah* and the Greek word *psyke* mean soul. In addition to these we have the Hebrew word *nephesh*, which means *breath*, but has been translated *life* in some places and *soul* in others, as suited the purpose of the translators of the Bible. And that is what creates confusion. For instance, we are told in Genesis that Jehovah formed man from the dust of the earth and blew into his nostrils the breath (*nephesh*) and man become a breathing creature (*nephesh chayim*), not a living soul.

Regarding death we are told in Ecclesiastes 3:19-20, also in other places, that there is no difference between the man and the animal, "as the one dieth so dieth the other, for they have all one breath," (*nephesh* again). Thus is indicated that man has no pre-eminence above the beast and all go unto one place. But there is a very definite distinction made between the Spirit and the body, for we are told that "when the silver cord is loosed, then shall the body return to the dust whence it was taken and the Spirit to God who gave it." The word death is nowhere connected with the Spirit, and the doctrine of the immortality of the Spirit is taught definitely at least once in the Bible: Matthew 11:14, where the Christ said concerning John the Baptist, "This is Elijah." The Spirit which had ensouled the body of Elijah was reborn as John the Baptist. It must therefore have survived bodily death and have been capable of continuity of life.

For the deeper and more definite teachings concerning this matter we must, however, go to the mystic teaching, and we learn from *The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception* that the Virgin Spirits sent out into the wilderness of the world as Light-rays from the Divine Flame, which is our Father in heaven, first underwent a process of involution into matter, each ray crystallizing itself into a threefold body. Then mind was given, and became the fulcrum upon which the involution turns to evolution, and epigenesis, the divine creative ability inherent in the indwelling Spirit, is the lever by which the threefold body is spiritualized

into the threefold soul and amalgamated with the threefold Spirit, soul being the extract of experience whereby the Spirit is nourished from ignorance to omniscience, from impotence to omnipotence, and thus finally becomes like its Father in heaven.

It is impossible for us with our present limited capabilities to even conceive of the magnitude of this task, but we can understand that we are a long, long way from omniscience and omnipotence, so that this must require many lives. Therefore we go to the school of life, as the child goes to our schools here. And as there are nights of rest between the children's school days, so there are nights of death between our days in life's schools. The child takes up its studies each day where it left off the previous afternoon. So also we, when coming to rebirth, take up the lessons of life where we left off in our previous existence.

If the question is asked why we do not remember our previous existences if we have had them, the answer is easy. We do not now remember what we did a month ago, a year, or a few years ago. How then could we expect to remember so much farther back? We had a different brain attuned to the consciousness of the previous life. Nevertheless, there are people who remember their past existences and more are cultivating the faculty every year, it being latent within each human being.

But, as Paul says very properly in the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians, "if the dead rise not, then our faith is vain and we are of all men the most miserable." Therefore the neophyte who has passed the door of initiation into the invisible world is always brought to the bedside of a dying child. He sees the Spirit pass out and is told to watch that Spirit in the invisible world until it seeks a new embodiment. For this purpose a child is generally selected which is destined to seek rebirth within a year or two. Thus, within a comparatively short time, the neophyte sees for himself how a Spirit passed out through the portal of death and enters physical life again through the womb. Then he has the proof. Reason and faith must suffice those who are not prepared to pay the price for firsthand knowledge, which is not to be bought for gold. The price is paid in one's lifeblood. □