



From Death To Life

**The Official Magazine of the Conditional
Immortality Association of New Zealand**

Bible Teaching • Life • Death • Resurrection • Eternal Destiny

Issue 30 • July 2006

INTERNATIONAL WORK TEAM

PROJECT NEHEMIAH

building the mission wall + teaching ESOL

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Issue 30 July 2006

Our recent Association Conference and Dinner (May 6) was a great success. As well as good food and good fellowship, it was a time of encouragement for those who believe that Conditional Immortality is important. You will find my address given that evening in this issue of our magazine (p5).

As an Association we publish this magazine (in print and electronic formats); we promote Warren Prestidge's videos, "Life Death and the Resurrection" (Now available on DVD), and his book, "Life, Death and Destiny"; we maintain a website; we support theological students who share our belief in Conditional Immortality as they train for ministry in one capacity or another; we maintain an interest in ACMissioNZ and Carey Park. From time to time we host international guests such as Professor Joel and Pam Green in New Zealand (2005).

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Hebrews 12:23.

The writer to the Hebrews speaks of "the spirits of righteous men made perfect" (12:23). Many assume this is a reference to believers who have died and that since, in some way, the Hebrew saints are "come" to them in Heaven, the souls of the departed must already be in heaven. Not at all!

Jesus once told a Samaritan woman that a time was coming when true worshipers would worship the Father "in spirit and truth" (John 4:23).

To worship "in spirit" is not just to worship sincerely. This God has always required (Deut. 6:4-7; Isa 1:10-18). John, however, in Revelation, was "in the spirit" on the Lord's Day (Rev. 1:10). In Revelation Four we see him in heaven, "in the Spirit" (v2), at a heavenly worship service.

The early church understood that all of our worship takes place, in some sense, "in the spirit", in heaven, around the



throne of God with the angels and other heavenly beings (Heb. 12:22ff).

While Old Testament worship consisted of "fleshly" ordinances, anchored in the physical realm (Heb. 9:1-10), New Testament worship is geared more toward what takes place in the spiritual realm. Ours is a "spiritual temple" (1Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:19-22). We offer "spiritual sacrifices" (1Pet. 2:5,9; Rom. 12:1; Heb. 13:15). Our prayers are sweet incense (Rev. 5:8) offered to God.

So too, to worship "in truth" is not to worship according to the commands of God. Such was expected in the Old Testament (Deut. 5:32-33). Rather the contrast is between that which is "true" and that which is a "shadow" pointing to the truth!

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FROM OFF THE SHELF

Reflections on John H. Hayes and Sara R. Mandell, "The Jewish People in Classical Antiquity: from Alexander to Bar Kochba".

Having enrolled to take a paper toward an MTS (Master of Theological Studies) I found myself having to read this book on the history of the Jewish people "between the Testaments".

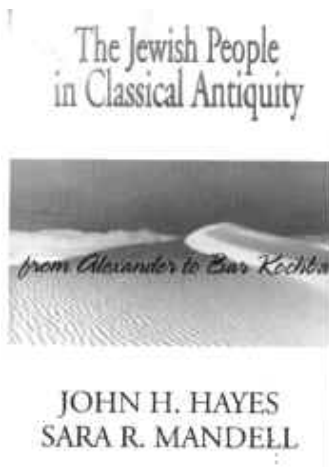
The substance of this book is (to me anyway) a relatively detailed, though still readable account of the Jews in the Land from the time of Alexander the Great and his conquest of the Near East (332 BCE) to that of the Second Jewish Revolt led by Bar Kochba (132–135 CE). Chapter one discusses the lot of the Jewish Community under the Ptolemies and Seleucids. Chapter 2 deals with the Hasmonaean. Chapter 3

is concerned with the Herodian period. Chapter 4 gives an account of the Jewish-Roman wars. There are charts and maps throughout the book, though the charts are more like long lists and do little to break up the text. There are excerpts from primary sources which are interesting but again, apart from being in boxes, they do

little to break up the text. It is not that I can't read a book that has no pictures, but this book, apart from a few maps and a family tree or two, is an illustration free zone!

The time between the Testaments is not well understood by

Christians, though this time, its leaders, its politics, its wars, and its religious schisms shaped and moulded Second Temple Judaism into what it was at the time of our Lord Jesus Christ.



With this in mind I was looking forward to expanding my understanding of this important period. I was not disappointed, though at times I was almost overwhelmed by the details.

One key point that Hayes and Mandell make time and time again is that there was no such thing as "normative Judaism". Various groups, divided by political or theological issues all comprised a people loosely connected by belief in the same one God, but not necessarily subscribing to the same political or theological creed. These diverse groups hung together, Hayes and Mandell seem to say, only "insofar as they were Yawhist" (p. 2). A similar point is made by Shaye J. D. Cohen (Cohen, Shaye J. D. *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987) when he says, "The

Jews saw (and see) themselves as the heirs and continuators of the people of pre-exilic Israel; the Jews also felt (and still feel) an affinity for their fellow Jews throughout the world, in spite of differences in language, practice, ideology and political loyalty" (p. 25). One could wish for such a sense of unity in diversity among the followers of Jesus today!

As one who has had a long-standing interest in the doctrines we know as "Conditional Immortality" I have heard it argued (even by people who should know better!) that the teaching of Jesus and his Apostles on the nature of hell-fire ought to be interpreted against the background of a supposedly "uniform Jewish view". The reality is, as Hayes and Mandell stress, there is rarely a single uniform Jewish view of

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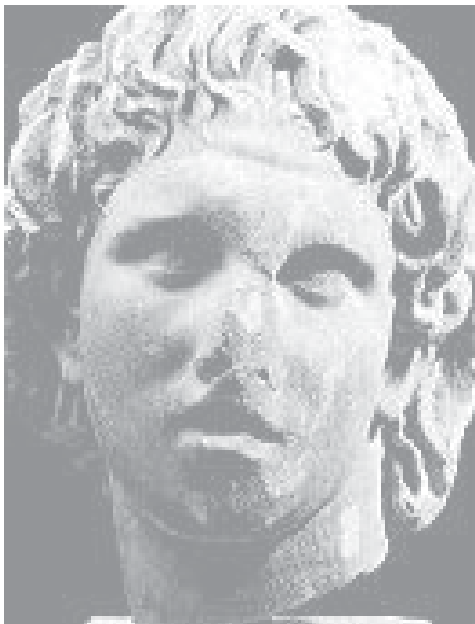
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any subject - whether hellfire, or "Fate", or the status of the "oral torah" (p. 86), or the resurrection (Mat. 22:23) or angels (Acts 23:7-8).

In one sense, however, I confess I may be as much sinning as sinned against. The authors, in discussing the impact of the major powers (Rome, Greece, etc) upon the political situation in Judea always seem to have at least one eye on how the various factions within each of the powers, such as Seleucids and Ptolemies (pp. 30-31) in the case of the Greeks, or the Optimates (p. 4) in the case of the Romans, affected the outcome. The idea that it may be no more accurate to speak of a normative Greek or Roman view than it is to speak of normative Judaism is one that intrigues me. I would like to explore this more. I have been guilty of contrasting (when it suits) THE Greek view with the Hebrew view, perhaps at the expense of historical accuracy.

The truth is, people of all ages have held all kinds of competing and often contradictory beliefs. In the end it is not about pigeonholing people so we can say who believes this or that, but about helping people connect in a meaningful way with the truth as it is taught in the Bible!

David Burge



Alexander The Great

CI: Does It Matter Should I Care?

Conference 2006



People often ask me, "What difference does it make? Why is Conditional Immortality important?"

Actually, the difference is fundamental. It affects every area of Christian doctrine. What follows is a brief comparison of some of the areas of difference between **Conditional Immortality (CI)** and what I will call **Natural Immortality (NI)**. If you are not yet sure what Conditional Immortality is, I will not take the time to define it yet. It will all be made clear as we make our way through the presentation.

ASSUMPTIONS

In approaching the question this evening I am making three assumptions about you, my audience:

1. That you are Christians (followers of our Lord Jesus Christ);

2. That you believe that doctrine is established by examining the Scriptures; and (though this third assumption may be something that you have thought about less than the other two)

3. That you think that truth and "consistency" is something we should strive for in any theological enterprise. That is to say, we should not hold, together at the same time, a series of self contradictory beliefs, but should seek to hold only those beliefs which are harmonious with one another. To believe otherwise is to abandon the search for truth in favour of an "anything goes" or "if it feels good, believe it" philosophy.

If any of these assumptions about you is incorrect, you may still at the end of this evening believe that Conditional Immortality is not important - at least not to you. If I am correct in the

assumptions I have made about you then, I hope, by the end of this evening you will be convinced that Conditional Immortality is an important doctrine!

AS TO SCRIPTURE

A friend once challenged me to explain some "difficult"

Scriptures. I did (I thought) an adequate job. She challenged me, however, saying "I think God would have made the Bible so it could be understood by simple folk." I agree. Actually, every position has its "difficult verses", but on the whole it is CI which says that the Bible can be understood as is

— death means death, life means life and so on. It is NI that says the Bible must be interpreted by an "insider" — death means life in endless torment, life means heavenly bliss, etc. This affects such things as our understanding of

the Atonement and of sin and its penalty. What are the wages of sin? (Rom. 6:23). Did God threaten Adam with death or eternal torment? (Gen. 2:17). And so on

We believe God wants to be understood. We do not want our theological theories to

obscure the clear teaching of Scripture. CI makes it easier to take the Bible at face value. It means what it says and it says what it means.



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AS TO HUMAN NATURE

According to Scripture "the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the

man became a living being [soul]." (Gen. 2:7). A living being or soul is NOT an immortal soul! If the English language has any meaning at all, then whatever else may be said of immortal souls, this much is clear: they CANNOT

DIE! Yet, only ten verses later, the first man is told, "You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die" (Gen. 2:17). Adam must not have been immortal! What it means to "die" is clearly described in the next chapter: "Dust YOU are [You' not just 'your body'] and to dust YOU shall return." (Gen. 3:19). Through the prophet Ezekiel God made it abundantly clear that the "soul" is not immortal when he said, "the soul that sins shall die" (Ezk. 18:4, 20).

NI says we have an immortal soul, an eternal spirit, some "spark of divinity" within us. NI not only goes against the plain meaning of Scripture, rendering impossible any truly Biblical doctrine of human nature, it panders to human pride and self confidence.

CI says we are mortal creatures of dust, totally dependent on God. It urges us to trust God alone for salvation.

AS TO DEATH

As already noted Scripture and CI teach that death is a

return to the ground: "Dust YOU are and to dust YOU shall return" (Gen. 3:19). Death is real. It is an enemy, the "last enemy" (1Cor. 15:26). It will be defeated but only when Christ comes again. Meanwhile, CI sets us free to grieve as Christ did (John 11:35) and as Paul says we should - though not without hope (1Thess. 4:13).

NI on the other hand denies the reality of death. It says death is a doorway to the spirit world, a "promotion to glory," even a friend to be welcomed. NI actually accepts the devil's lie: "You shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4).

Should we not strive for an understanding of Scripture that reflects God's truth rather than the Devil's lie?



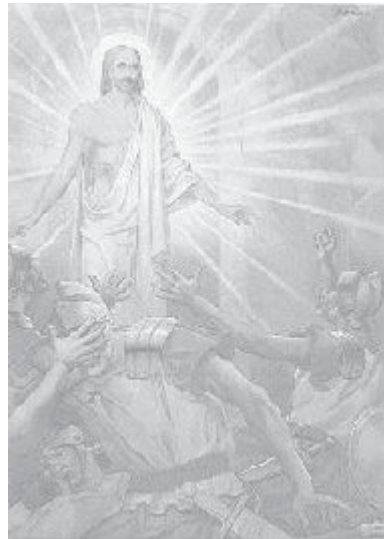
AS TO SALVATION

Christians believe that God has provided a Saviour in his Son Jesus Christ. But what is it that we need to be "saved" from? The Bible's answer to that question is that, ultimately, we need to be rescued from "the second death" in "the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:14). If, however, human beings are, by nature, immortal, how can we be subject to a first death, let alone a second? How can we say we believe Jesus' death on the cross paid the penalty for our sin – and at the same time say he didn't REALLY die at all, because his human soul was naturally immortal? How can we say we believe that God raised Jesus from the dead if he never REALLY died? Romans 10:9 makes it clear that believing that God raised Jesus from the dead is essential for salvation. CI makes for a clearer understanding of what it means to say, "I'm saved". That has to be a good thing!

AS TO RESURRECTION

CI says resurrection is recreation; we are "made alive again" (Rom. 8:11) by the

breath of God. NI says resurrection is the immortal soul re-entering the body (this is reincarnation!) and almost irrelevant to what is today presented as our eternal hope ("Heaven" when we die). Only CI truths give both his and our resurrections the central place that resurrection has in



Scripture. Some prominent Reformers seemed to have grasped this truth. "We shall all sleep until he comes and knocks on our little grave, saying, 'Dr. Martin, get up!' Then I shall rise up in a moment and I shall be

eternally merry with him." So says Martin Luther. "If the souls of the righteous be in heaven, tell me why they be not in as good case [condition] as the angels be. And then what cause is there of the resurrection?" asks Tyndale.

In essence Tyndale asks, Why bother with resurrection? Unfortunately the Reformation never answered that question. It stalled before coming to Conditionalist convictions. Today we have another opportunity to put before the world the logic of the resurrection. Should we not grasp it with both hands? Is it not an important part of the Christian faith?

AS TO THE SECOND COMING

CI puts Christ's return at centre stage. Apart from his own resurrection and eventual return, the dead in Christ are lost. We who in this life have put our hope in Christ are to be pitied (1Cor. 15:18, 19). By contrast NI puts death at centre stage. But if the dead are enjoying their reward even now, the Second Coming is a matter of little or no

consequence. No wonder much of the Church has lost its passion for Christ and his coming as king. The great hope to which the Bible — Old Testament and New — looks is now seen by many as irrelevant at best and divisive at worst. Perhaps we major on



minors only because we are desperate to make the subject relevant. If only we would let the Bible be our guide! CI answers more than the preacher's problem, What to do with the Second Coming? CI will put the Second Coming in its rightful place, it will allow

its importance to be seen by all, without our having to develop sensational scenarios to peek peoples waning interest.

AS TO LIFE AND IMMORTALITY

CI accepts the ordinary, straight forward assertion of 1 Timothy: "God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords ... alone is immortal"

(1Tim. 6:15-16). NI asserts that there are other beings in the universe, besides that blessed and only Ruler who now possesses immortality. Let God be true and

all theologians liars! CI says life in immortality will be given to mortal human beings BUT it is a gift to believers only, to be conferred when Christ comes again (See Rom. 2:7, 1Cor. 15:50-55). NI makes



"... the real issue is not, "Where will you spend eternity?" (Smoking or Non-Smoking) but "Will you spend eternity alive or dead?"

immortality a natural endowment bestowed on all people.

This strikes at the core of the Gospel: Now everyone must spend eternity

somewhere. Yet according to the Bible the real issue is not, "Where will you spend eternity?"

(Smoking or Non-Smoking) but "Will you spend eternity alive or dead?"

AS TO JUDGMENT DAY

CI says that on this climactic day all humanity will receive their just reward. It will be a day of vindication for

some and condemnation for others.

We are often told that the deceased have "gone to their reward". Jesus himself left no room for doubt. He says that the "reward" is not "theirs",

but HIS. It is not awaiting them at the end of their earthly pilgrimages, it is "with" HIM. He alone will "give" it to them when he "comes" and not before (Rev. 22:12). NI says the opposite when it says humanity has received or will receive their reward at death. Is this justice, to receive one's reward (especially one's punishment) *before* one is judged? Surely not! This man made, concocted scheme makes the biblical judgment into something of an anticlimax at best and a perversion of justice at worst.



AS TO "HELL"

Nobody likes to talk about hell. At least not in polite company but the doctrine of final punishment is one which must be faced. How can one say it makes no difference

whether (as CI says) "hell" is the place of the final destruction of the wicked, and the end of all evil (Rev. 20:14, Mal. 4:3) or (as NI says) "hell" is the place of unending conscious torment for lost immortal souls.

Almost all of us have "unsaved" friends and relatives, while it pains us to know that many of those whom we love will not "inherit eternal life" (I don't seek here to minimise the tragedy of any human being missing out on salvation!) our experience of grief in this life tells us we will come to terms with this reality.

If, however, "hell" is a place of unending conscious torment, tell me how we may ever enjoy the delights of "heaven" knowing that those we love are suffering so much. Worse, some would have us

believe we will be able to observe the torments of the damned.

AS TO GOD'S CHARACTER

Following on from this, CI says "eternal torment" distorts the biblical view of justice. Can any sin committed by a finite human being over a finite period of time merit an eternity of unending, unrelenting pain? This makes God out to be a monster, worse than any human sadist. It makes a nonsense of the Christian message to say that God loves you so much ... but if you don't accept his benevolent rule he will torture you for eternity. CI allows God to be loving and merciful at the same time as he is just. This is an important difference!

AS TO EVANGELISM

The charge is often made that if we abandon the

traditional understanding of hell we will lose the ability to scare people into heaven.

The famous atheist, Bertrand Russell alleged "a very serious defect" in "Christ's moral character". That is, that "He believed in hell" ("Why I Am Not A Christian", 1957, p17). The professor declared that "any person who is really profoundly humane" could not believe in everlasting punishment. Hell, he asserted, is a doctrine of "cruelty" (1957, 18). Since he acknowledged that the punishment of criminals is necessary for the

welfare of society (1957, 72), he must obviously have thought only in terms of the traditional understanding of eternal conscious torment. Consequently, the doctrine was a stumbling block to him. For how many others has this false doctrine become an insurmountable problem? Dare we say that this is not an important issue?



AS TO CHRISTIAN LIFE AND MISSIONS

When I tell my children, "Eat your vegetables or I will send you to your bedrooms until you're 21", they laugh at me. They do not take me seriously. My threat is not a credible threat.

If I say, "Eat your vegetables or I will not give you any pudding", this is a believable threat and a powerful motivating factor for my children.

CI says "eternal torment" is not credible — it puts more people off Christianity than it "scares into heaven." The Biblical threat of death to all who persist in rebellion against their legitimate sovereign is however a credible threat and therefore a powerful motivating force.



Bertrand Russell...declared that "any person who is really profoundly humane" could not believe in everlasting punishment.

At a heart level many Christians are beginning to understand the need for a holistic approach to mission, one that cares about the body and the practical needs of people as well as the so-called "soul" and our "spiritual" needs.

NI promotes the idea that the soul is "spiritual" and the body isn't. It implies to many that Creation itself is "unspiritual".

While the Greeks spoke of the body as a prison house of the soul. This only encourages us to neglect the "body" in favour of the "soul" and

to neglect the "world" in favour of "heaven".

CI , on the other hand, encourages us to minister to

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This Is My Story

'He lifted me up and set my feet upon the Rock'

Armand Newrick

On the first Sunday of April 1965, at the tender age of 9 months, mother decided the time had come to trundle two older brothers, a reluctant husband, and me off to Saint Matthew's Anglican Church in Hastings. I don't recall this, but the vicar K.F. Button sprinkled me with holy water and pronounced me right with God (according to our family tradition). I have the 'Certificate of Baptism' to prove it.

According to my certificate my parents vowed that I would 'Be virtuously brought up to lead a Godly and a Christian life.' This meant nothing to Father who had no time for religion, except to keep Mum off his back. For Mum the vow consisted of making my brother and I kneel by our bedside and repeat 'the Lord's Prayer' in good ol' King James English. It wasn't long before my brother and I convinced Mum she was fighting a losing battle introducing religion into our lives. It was Dad and us against her.



The only other religious influence in my early years was about two years of Bible in schools. When our teacher announced that religious education was beginning next week I told Mum I didn't want to do it. I ended up doing it and loved it. I volunteered to act out the stories we were taught. I loved drama and being the centre of attention. The confusing, turbulent teen years, however, erased the fond memories of those classes.

A Personal Crisis

Late in 1979, at the age of 16, my life reached a crisis point. I was buckling under the weight of difficult circumstances at home. The pressure of school certificate only magnified this. A mates' girlfriend encouraged me

to phone up her sister for a date. I was keen but felt entirely inadequate. I couldn't pluck up the courage to phone her. I lay down to sleep that night deeply troubled in my spirit over all these things, which seemed so huge and permanent in my life. I remember thinking it didn't seem to matter whether I succeeded or failed in life I would die just the same. It all seemed so hopeless.

I got out of bed and rushed out of the house. A short distance up the road was a park. I headed across to there. It began to rain but I didn't care. I just sat down

on the grass. I was overwhelmed by the sound of the raindrops pelting the grass around me. I wasn't looking for God, but God came looking for me. He touched me in a way that was relevant at that time. I recalled, as the rain fell, that my Grandmother used to say it always rained after a funeral as a sign of God's blessing. Suddenly out of nowhere God entered into my thoughts. The rain stopped and I felt at ease in my spirit, the

turmoil had subsided. I walked back home to bed wondering what it all meant.


The next 11 months were difficult for me. I left school. I ended up working in the most horrible, dirty job imaginable. I was spray coating decromastic roof tiles in a factory with three older men. One a Rarotongan, the other two Maori. I came to

respect these men who treated me like one of them.

God Moves Again

After a few months Sandy Poharama, who seemed always to have a fag hanging out

between two missing front teeth, asked me if I believed in God. Had he asked because I was white and comparatively innocent looking? Perhaps he thought I was one of those "churchy" sorts? I couldn't say yes, or no, so I said 'I don't know.' From then on these three men began to talk casually of stories from the Bible and their significance. Stories from my Bible in School days came flooding back to me.



I wasn't looking for God, but God came looking for me.

I found a Bible and began to read. Among all the things I wanted to do in life I wanted to read the Bible through once so that I could say I'd been there and done that.

The book came alive in my hands, mind and heart. It was a revelation to me! The words of Jesus were profound. If applied, I was sure that this world would be a better place.

Until now I had thought this book a cold lifeless book of religion. After all it had a black cover with no picture on it! I was noticeably moved by what I was reading, so much so that Sandy invited me to his small flat in Papakura for a Bible study with

five others. We sang, prayed, and read the Bible. I loved it. As I was leaving Sandy followed me to my car and asked if I had ever asked Jesus Christ into my life. I said 'no', obviously, and he asked me whether I would like to do that. I just knew out of my life story so far that this was a life and death decision that I

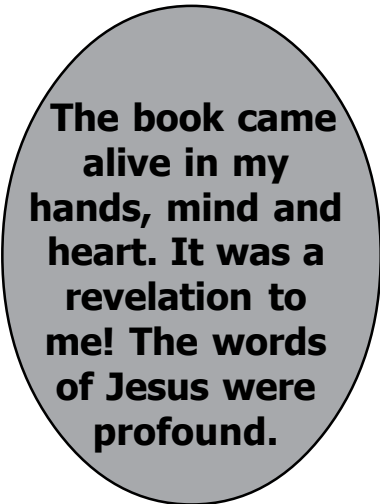
must make! If I was ever sure of anything it was that I must make this decision. So we went back into the flat and prayed. I repented of my reckless life and received Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour.

Early Years in Christ

One month after my conversion, Oct. 4th 1981, I was baptized at Mt, Zion AOG. I began the discipline of reading the Bible and praying every day (Something I have kept up over the last 25 years). I enrolled to go to the AOG Bible School at the beginning of 1982 but became disillusioned with aspects of what I thought was AOG "sensationalism". I

withdrew my application. I left the AOG thankful for some basic teaching but resolved to be truthful in my testimony to God's work in my life and in handling his word the Bible.

In time I found myself at the Church of Christ (Life and Advent) in Takanini. I had no idea that I would be there for



The book came alive in my hands, mind and heart. It was a revelation to me! The words of Jesus were profound.

the next 17 years. I also had no idea what the distinctive doctrines of the church were. Pastor Colin Warner challenged me with the notion that the Bible did not teach that human beings had an immortal soul as most people believed!

Challenged As To The Soul

I had simply come to accept that when you die you go to heaven (or hell) as some form of phantom spirit. I remember seeing a Goofy cartoon where Goofy was flattened on the road and a semi transparent Goofy-copy, complete with wings, fluttered off into the sky; that was sort of how I understood it. I began searching the scriptures. After a period of time sitting on the fence it became clear to me that if Jesus Christ's death and Resurrection were to be relevant to all human beings, despite ones inherited religious or philosophical convictions to the contrary, then death must be death, and life must be life by resurrection! There must be no confusion between the two! If the return of Jesus Christ,



the resurrection from the dead, and the establishment of his Kingdom upon the earth are to be truly motivating truths which inform our efforts to share in that great mission of God, then the dead must remain dead until that great day. We must not empty the logic out of the message!

This wonderful truth opened up the Bible to me. The truth which we call conditional immortality has given to me a greater sense of the universal appropriateness and application of the Gospel by which erroneous claims to disembodied life after death can be met, challenged, and dispelled by the historically witnessed truth of Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead. This message accurately presents the human condition in which we are bound up and frustrated by the consequence of sin – that is, death! Death is thunderously answered by the dependable truth of Christ Jesus breaking the power and silence of the grave!

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whole persons body and soul, whatever the need. CI encourages us to see this material world as good and glorious. It affirms that, in spite of everything, God prizes his Creation enough to make a revised version of all things. It encourages us to see all we do in this world in light of our calling to care for the world as stewards under God (Gen. 1:26-29).

AS TO "HEAVEN WHEN WE DIE"

CI goes hand in hand with an understanding of the Biblical hope (one gaining wide spread acceptance) as a resurrection to eternal life in immortality as royal sons and daughters ruling in the Kingdom of God on earth (Dan. 7:13, 14, 27, 1Cor. 6:1-3, 2Tim. 2:12). NI perpetuates the unbiblical notion that our reward is to go to the Kingdom of Heaven, supposedly in Heaven, when we die.

AS TO GOD'S FINAL VICTORY

CI alone says that there will be an end to evil. There will come a

day when evil is defeated. God will be "all in all" (1Cor. 15:28). This is the Bible's solution to the problem of evil.

NI, on the other hand, says that there will always be a corner of the universe that exists in rebellion against God and his will. Despite Revelation 21:4 there will always be mourning and crying and pain for the old order of things can never, ever

completely pass away.

This is a vita difference between the two views!

AS TO WHO CHRIST IS

CI says Christ is "the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25) — the source of life itself — and that this is proven by his own resurrection from the dead.

CI paints a much grander picture of Christ and his work. We await a literal, personal, visible return of Christ in power and glory to resurrect the sleeping dead, to destroy evil and evildoers, and to reign forever on a renewed heaven and earth (!) not a mere umpire of souls, sorting out eternal



lodgings for already immortal beings.

CONCLUSION

I do not question the sincerity of those who hold to the NI view. I do not question that there are many fine men and women of God and many eminent scholars among them. However I believe that there are fundamental differences between what the Bible teaches and what goes for Christianity today. I also believe that the doctrines known as Life Only in Christ or Conditional Immortality are an essential part of a fully biblical theology of life, death and human destiny. Lastly, I also believe that these doctrines impact almost every area of Christian theology. I therefore commend them to you as worthy of further study.

David Burge.

Thanks to Dr. John H. Roller for the opportunity to read a paper he prepared on a similar subject. Portions of this paper are dependent upon his work. Further copies of this Address are available in booklet form. If interested contact the Editor.

(Continued from page 4)

The elements of Old Testament worship were a "shadow" of things to come (Heb. 9:8-9 cf. 9:11-12, 24). The worship of the church is the true worship, of which the former is a shadow!

It is in this context that the author to the Hebrews tells his readers that they have already come "in the spirit", though still very much alive upon the earth, to the heavenly Zion, in the heavenly Jerusalem, to myriads of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are already written in heaven (presumably in the book of Life), to God himself, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect (Heb. 12:22-24).

These "righteous men made perfect" are no more dead than the Hebrews are! Are only the Hebrew Congregations worshipping "in the spirit" in heaven. Not at all. The whole Church is there! They (we) have, of course, been "made perfect" in a relative sense only. Only at the resurrection will we all be made fully perfect together (Heb. 11:39, 40). Meanwhile how wonderful to know our worship reaches up to heaven!

David Burge

Faith of Our Fathers

A Reformation Crisis Concerning the Soul: Immortal or Mortal?

By William Kilgore
(Part Two)

This article is the second of three exploring the history of the controversy concerning the nature of the soul

at the time of the Reformation.

Reading between the lines of Calvin's work we see that belief in Conditional Immortality must have been wide spread in

Reformation

times. It may not be too much to say that

Conditional

Immortality may

have become the "majority view" among Protestants were

it not for John Calvin and the

work discussed below. One wonders what might have been. One wonders what still

might be among those constantly seeking to reform

the church in the light of Scripture - The Editor.



CALVIN AND THE RADICAL REFORMATION

John Calvin (1509-1564) was another Reformer, active in France. One of his first writings was against the doctrine of soul sleep and was entitled

Psychopannychia, "The Soul Awake."

This treatise was subtitled "Or a refutation of the error entertained by some unskilful persons who ignorantly imagine that in the interval between death and the judgment the soul sleeps". Calvin at this point

was in company with the Catholics in opposing soul-

sleep.

Written in 1534, Psychopannychia was not actually published until 1542. Although Calvin attributes the doctrine primarily to the Anabaptists, this doctrine of "soul sleep" was the same view held by (possibly) Wyclif,

Tyndale, and Luther himself – that the soul, rather than being immortal, “sleeps” with the death of the body until the final day when all will be physically resurrected.

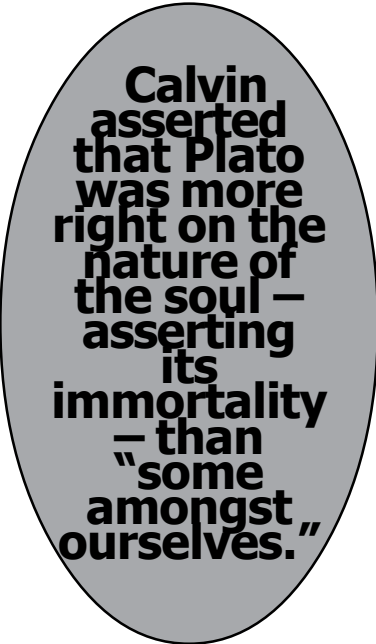
Perhaps Calvin attached “Anabaptists” as the intended foes as a device for the wider acceptance of his work, since the Anabaptists were hated in many corners of the Reformation. Calvin may actually have been addressing his contemporaries, especially

Luther and his followers. It is true that there were Lutherans who held to soul sleep in 1534. However, there is also irrefutable evidence that some Anabaptist groups did in fact hold to the doctrine of soul sleep. In fact, Calvin may have been referring to the

Libertines in Paris, a group with Anabaptist affiliations that he had become acquainted with.

Calvin’s treatise proved to be very influential, though even he seemingly did not consider

the topic to be a major debate at first. He attributed the doctrine of soul sleep to “some Arabs,” with its then recent revival “being stirred up by some dregs of Anabaptists.” Then, in a moment of candor, Calvin asserted that Plato was more right on the nature of the soul – asserting its immortality –



Calvin asserted that Plato was more right on the nature of the soul – asserting its immortality – than “some amongst ourselves.”

than “some amongst ourselves.” One historian roots Calvin’s disagreement with Luther on this issue directly in the idea that Calvin was a “Platonist,” and “therefore found it easier than Luther ... to hold to a natural persistence of the soul after death.”

After spending a few pages defining what he meant by "soul," he proceeded after this clarification to examine several passages that, to his mind, proved the immortality of the soul. He argued persuasively and thoroughly, and also addressed the passages that were used as proof texts by his opponents.

A debt to Augustine and other patristic sources is acknowledged as Calvin included references and quotes from the Church Fathers. It

should also be noted that Calvin in no sense denied the doctrine of a future bodily resurrection, far from it. Rather, he affirmed in his treatise both the immortality of the soul and a future rejoining of soul and body in the promised resurrection. This, of course, is precisely the

majority view in Protestant churches today.

Calvin ends *Psychopannychia* by asserting that, after all, the doctrine of soul sleep must be heretical since its source – the Anabaptists – is "a forge which has already fabricated, and is daily fabricating, so many monsters."

- William Kilgore



Augustine

William Killgore is a Charismatic Southern Baptist in Texas. As a longtime advocate of conditional immortality, and a graduate

student at the University of Houston, he wrote a fuller version of this paper for a Reformation history class (including a lot of footnotes!). He kindly gave me his permission to publish this edited version of his paper

-Editor.

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Back To Bible College

In the year 2000 our family made the decision to attend the Manukau Central Baptist Church. At the prompting of our pastor, Grahame Craggs, I tried one distance paper through Carey Baptist College. I loved it and continued with distance study for two years until I had the privilege of another two full time years immersed in the life of the college, its people, and its learning on site. During that time I was privileged to have many opportunities to present the conditionalist position to other enquiring minds. I found others willing to listen respectfully.

I enjoyed sharing a class on future hope with the late Carl Josephson. We had fun defending our conditionalist position in regards to the nature of the final punishment reserved for the unsaved.

The 'Conditional Immortality Association of New Zealand' will often commit finances to support students who share conditionalist beliefs as they pursue theological study. I am grateful to have been one such recipient of their generous support. It is 25 years since I first intended to head off to Bible School. I never thought

that theological training would ever again be possible for me. But this April 2006 I graduated with a Bachelor of Applied Theology and with a firm conviction of the truths that we hold dear in this association.

Where to from here? It's a journey of faith isn't it? I know the God who set my feet on the rock of Christ Jesus, out of the miry clay of despairing, even of life itself, will faithfully sustain me whatever may come. To his glory I pray!

Armand Newrick

(Continued from page 3)

This is quite a lot for a relatively small organisation to do! Yet by God's grace we are able to do it! We do, however, covet your prayers.

As of Conference 2006 the Executive consists of Glenise Burge (Secretary), Cyril Betteridge, Rob Carr Sylvia Coulter, Don Dickson, Colin Prestidge, Warren Prestidge, Edwin Tucker, and myself (President).

We are a dedicated team who desire to make known the gospel of "Life Only in Christ". Pray for us as we work on your behalf.

David Burge.

www.afterlife.co.nz

Carey Park Christian Camp

"An outstanding environment with brilliant facilities", "Hope Auckland always cherishes this facility", "Fantastic experience; we look forward to coming back".

These are just a few of the many comments schools are writing in their evaluation

forms. It is so encouraging to be part of a place that people enjoy and look forward to coming back to. As a staff we are always conscious of serving people as best we can both in how we interact with them and how we provide for them with our facilities and activities.

Every day we have a staff devotion time and we pray for the group that is in, we pray

that they will see God in this place and in our lives and that all the Glory will go back to Him. By the comments we are receiving, it would seem these

prayers are being answered.

Earlier this year, we had a Board retreat. This was a very encouraging time of



seeing how far God has brought us, and then looking ahead to what the future could possibly be. We are excited about how God could use us for His glory, we have many ideas of ways to improve our service and we now pray for the time and resources to implement these.

Stedfast Park is also keeping us busy. We are enjoying the challenge of upgrading the camp facilities and at the same time

increasing the bookings. We were very pleased that in our first year of managing Stedfast Park we were able to increase the bookings by around 30%. We pray that this will continue and that we will have some good opportunities for ministry in that place. Our next goal is to get a full time staff member out there – please pray with us that we will be able to build some staff accommodation and then find the right person for that job.

Our holiday camps have again been a source of some great times of ministry. We took a group of Teens to the Baptist Easter camp and we took our kids out to Stedfast Park. Both camps were the usual mix of fun, adventure, exhaustion and minimal sleep, and the rewards of seeing young people turn to Christ made it all worthwhile. We want to see these camps grow even more and would appreciate your continued



prayer for this. We had one family 'upset' by a comment from their child following camp that she "wants to give her life to God". This was the first time we had received a complaint like this and it required some sensitive correspondence. It was a source

of rejoicing but also a source of concern as we wonder about the future of our

'pc' society and the freedom we have to proclaim the Gospel.

As always, we are dependant on the prayers of our supporters, and the Grace and provision of God. He has blessed us so much, we are thankful for His goodness to us and we continue to look to Him as our provider and to you as our supporters. Please continue to uplift us in prayer.

Thank you for your continued support.

Cameron Dick