

THE DISTINCT AND IMMORTAL EXISTENCE OF THE SOUL.

BY J. FOREMAN, LONDON. 1847¹

First. That there is a *spirit* in man superior to the animal life of beasts, that there is a distinct spirit beyond the mere animal life of the body, that this spirit or rational soul dies not with the body, and is immortal or exists for ever, is all plain and undeniable if the following evidence be received.

1. "Who knows the spirit of man that goes upward, and the spirit of the beast that goes downward to the earth?" Ecclesiastes 3:21. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it," Ecclesiastes 7:7.
2. "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin," Romans 7:25. Here is a distinct *mind* serving the law of God, in opposition to active propensities in depraved nature, called the flesh.
3. Observe our Lord's answer to the praying, dying thief, saying, "To day shall you be with me in paradise," Luke 23:42, 43. By paradise is evidently meant a state and place of living happiness, and we know that the body of our Lord, and the body of the thief too, were both under the hand of death that day, and therefore, he could not speak of their bodies, and yet he spoke of their existing together in happiness on that same day, and therefore, he must speak of their souls.
4. Amidst the grand and great *assembly* that the apostle speaks of, we read of *the spirits of just men made perfect*, Hebrews 12:22, 23, 24. And yet their *bodies* were not raised from the dead, Acts 2:29, and to whom the saints on earth could only come and form a part, by faith in Christ, and the promises of eternal life by him.
5. In our Lord's quoting the words in the *present* tense, saying, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," adding, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living," when we know that their bodies were not raised from the dead, Matthew 22:32.
6. In the evident distinction our Lord made between the willingness of the spirit and the weakness of the flesh in the same persons, saying, "What, could you not watch with me one hour? The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak," Matthew 26:40, 41.
7. In the distinction the apostle evidently makes between the now living *spirit* or *soul*, because of imputed righteousness, and the dying *body*, because of sin; saying, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness," Romans 8:10, 11; 4:7, 8.
8. In the plain meaning of our Lord's parable; saying, "The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments," Luke 16:22, 23.
9. In the vision that *John* had, and of which he spoke, saying, "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held." In this vision are *living souls*, but no bodies, these not being yet come forth from their sleep in the tomb, Revelation 6:9, 10.
10. In Job's solemn and reflective enquiry; saying, "Yes, man gives up the spirit, and, where is he?" He is somewhere, though dead to time. And while the death of the body is included in the connection of this text, more than the body is spoken of and referred to. Because, if the whole of man was dead in the death of the body, there would be no importance in the question in our text,

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“Yes, where is he?” Because anyone who knows where a man's grave is, would in such case know where the man is; but in regard to the existing, unburied soul, where is he? for he is somewhere! This is evident to our point; and the solemn answer to the question by us must be, by further enquiry, as to where he has been, and *what he has been through life*, in scripture character; for that, by the solemn word of God, determines where the departed soul is, Job 14:10, 11, 12, compare with our *eighth* idea.

11. In the fact, that the body is but the *tabernacle* of the man, and so but an inferior to a nobler part in the constitution of man's personal being, as the apostle most clearly shows in 2 Corinthians 5:1, 2,3.

12. In Paul's considering that departing by death from time, was to be with Christ, though he did not expect his body to be with Christ till the resurrection day; yet showing the *distinction* between the dying flesh and the undying soul, he saith, “*While* we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord,” Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:6, 8. 13. In this, that the *righteous* shall go into life eternal, and so be forever with the Lord, Matthew 25:46; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; and that the *wicked* shall go away into everlasting punishment, where *their* worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched, Matthew 25: 4; Mark 9:44, 45, 48. *Their* worm, or the worm of their conscious guilt, shall always exist; and the fire of their judgment from God shall never cease, shall never be out, 2 Peter 2:3.

Second. We will drop another word or two on *annihilation*; for the proof of the *truth* of which some modern writers have quoted a great deal of scripture; that is, to show that the wicked after the day of judgment, and suffering awhile, will be literally annihilated; but they have only proved their *own belief*, and not the *truth* of their doctrine. Because the scriptures by no analogy in the use of the terms *burn, burn up, consume, destroy, destruction, death, &c.*, will at all support such a conclusion; as may be abundantly seen through the scriptures, in the use of such terms to express the judgments of God, wherein *annihilation* of existence cannot be meant, because not executed in the execution of such threatening on the several occasions found; and which I would here collect and show up most plainly, but for the length to which it would carry my present remarks; on which account I shall leave it to the bible reader to observe for himself, unless I am further called upon to make the said collection. And I shall here only take notice of the word *death*. Some writers can take no other view of death than that of a material and literal *annihilation* of existence altogether into nonentity; but we have to do with the *scripture use* and meaning of the word *death*, and here we would notice seven points of death, in the scripture use of the term.

1. The *moral* death of Adam, as the Lord said, “For in the day that thou eat thereof thou shall surely die,” Genesis 2:17. Adam did eat of the forbidden tree, 3:12, and he did die the death threatened, see Romans 5:12, 14, 15. This was a death of *extirpation* from state and place, with all the after entailments, but not an annihilation of Adam's being.

2. The *civil* death of the *Jews* as a nation, see Ezekiel 18; and that they did so die, and that God promised to raise them from that death and reinstate them in their land, as he afterwards did, see Ezekiel 37. This was death after its kind, according to the scripture way of expressing things, and it was a death of *extirpation* from place and privilege for the time, but it was not an *annihilation* of existence.

3. *Legal* death. When the law comes in its condemning character and sentence into the sinner's conscience. As the apostle says, “I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died,” Romans 7:9. This was death of its kind, for the apostle declares it

to be so; and it was a death of *extirpation* and cutting off from all hope of salvation by man's own good works by the law ; but it was not an annihilation of personal existence.

4. *Carnal* death. "For to be carnally minded is death," Romans 8:6. This is death after its kind, and in proportion to its degree, it is a cutting off for the time, from spiritual comforts; but it is in no degree annihilation of existence.

5. *Spiritual* death. Dead to sin, dead to the law, dead with Christ, Romans 6:2; 7:4; Colossians 2:20. In the two first points, this death is exemptive from the dominion of sin, and from the curse of the law, and in the last conservative to Christ and all the benefits of such an association: but in neither is there anything of existence annihilated.

6. *Corporal* death. In which we have shown that the soul still exists unextinguished, and in which the body is not annihilated. For although it is cut off and extirpated from a certain state of being, as to time's sociability's of life, it is in being in another state, and will be raised up into the life of another world; and so here is nothing in this death of annihilation.

7. *Penal* death. The nature of which we have beyond any other intelligent description of it given us, and far beyond any other conception that we can safely and accurately form of it, as to what it really is, in the penal death of our Lord for the sins of his people. He endured the whole of that death for his people, that is the *wages of sin*, and which was in sufferings and in sorrow; saying, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," or unto *the* death, Matthew 26:38. This was the fire of wrath, the *destruction*, and the *death* denounced for sin, which Christ now endured. But he was not literally burning with material fire when in agony; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground, so as to be literally burnt up thereby like a stick of wood, according to carnal and material notions; and yet our Lord was now suffering *form*, as well as *matter*, all that such sayings mean in the word of God, when speaking of the fire of God's wrath against sin, on the ungodly hereafter, &c. But penal death is, and must be what it is, whoever endures it; and if penal death, the wages of sin, be nothing more or less than literal, material, and total annihilation, then Christ must have been annihilated, for he endured the very thing as it is, for the sins of all his people! And his human nature was not annihilated, because personated by David in the spirit of prophecy, he says, "Thou will not leave my soul in hell," speaking of his penal suffering state in such form; so that if his soul could have been left there it would have been there, nothing whatever being hinted of his going out in such case by annihilation of existence, Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:27. We have now examined *death* in pretty well every form in which the word is used, and the subject in the holy word of God is presented before us; and there is not the least shadow of authority to be gathered from thence, that can possibly stand as an argument from which to conclude that penal death, the wages of sin, is or must be, from the use or intended meaning of the word *death*, total annihilation of the souls of the wicked; and that such a conclusion is only from the carnal, materializing, and abstract fancy, or something worse.

It has been said, in a vaunting tone, "If eternal misery were the punishment annexed to sin, how can it be shown that Christ has redeemed us from it? He has not suffered eternal misery!" This is too senseless and carnal to deserve a reply, but as some may consider it "unanswerable," to the annoyance of others, I would say in a word, that Christ, in the dignity of his *power* as the *mighty* to save, did atone and redeem, by suffering in a period, *the mighty sum that would otherwise have been eternal punishment and suffering to his people*. He in his mightiness to bear and to save, rolled an eternity of *finite* sufferings into a period, and bore it all at once; going to the end of the law, making an end of sin, and so obtained "eternal redemption" for-his people.

And thus, Christ has suffered at once, in his human nature, his dignity of power and greatness to endure, what would in their measure have cost his people eternity to endure. This I believe, and adore his mightiness to bear, his fulness of worth, and the benevolence of his will; admiring, in pleasing hope, the unfolding wonders of love divine, in such, a mediatory person and plan, for the endless glory-life of countless millions.