

IMMORTALITY

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“There is scarcely any other subject of religious thought that holds so keen and such a universal interest for us as that of the future life. It has exercised the mind of man in every age, and invariably there has been an innate longing in the hearts of individuals to perpetuate themselves beyond the grave. It is, therefore, not merely an academic question, but one that presses for an answer at the door of each one of us. Ultimately it will be the supreme question for each of us. It is a question aroused primarily not by fear of the future, but by a natural God-given desire to enter into that larger life and destiny which we instinctively feel is ahead. The term that we generally use to designate the life of which we are speaking is immortality.” (59)

Q: Job 14:14—If someone dies, will they live again?

1. The Doctrine Stated

Definition: “Immortality means the eternal, continuous, conscious existence of the soul after the death of the body.” (59)

A: John 11:25-26—I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; ²⁶and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. (Jesus)

“It must be admitted that if the prospect of a future existence be not illuminated by the light of the Gospel there is little in it to make it appear attractive and much in it to make one apprehensive if not indeed frightened. Added to this is the fact that no one can give positive proof of a future life, and that even Christian believers at times have had doubts. Yet the race continues to believe in immortality.” (61)

Here, Boettner addresses Hamlet’s concern!

2. Immortality in the Ancient Religions

- Egyptian: “solar boats”
- Indian:
- Persian:
- Greek and Roman:

- Native American:
- Materialism:

3. Immortality Necessary to Vindicate Moral Order

“There must be a future life in order that the justice of God may be vindicated. In this life so much good goes unrewarded, and so much evil goes unpunished. If there were no other reasons the demands of the justice of God would be sufficient to prove the case. Otherwise the moral order of the universe would not be right.... It is unreasonable to think that those who in this life escape just punishment shall escape forever, or that the good services of the righteous shall be forever unrewarded.” (64, 65)

I.e. to vindicate the principle of *Galatians 6:7—Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.*

Another biblical argument goes something like this:

Our reason rebels against the thought that a system in which sin and injustice and suffering are so prominent can have death as the end of all things. The answer to the sins and injustices and unrewarded services of this life is a future life in which there must be a “judgment to come,” such as that which terrified Felix when Paul preached to him: *Acts 24:25—As Paul talked about righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and said, “That’s enough for now! You may leave....”* Mere extinction of being would not be a sufficient penalty for the evil, nor a fit reward for the righteous. Bluntly expressed, if there is a just God, there must be a future life. *Genesis 18:25—Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?”* No just God could allow a system in which so much evil goes unpunished and so much good unrewarded. (65-66)

4. Life Here is Incomplete

“Life here is too short, too circumscribed, to be the end for man’s marvelous divinely given endowments and aspirations. He scarcely more than gets his preparations made for full and intelligent living until his time comes to leave. The truly great scientist feels that he has not mastered the one-hundredth part of the knowledge that is to be known in his field. As he surveys a library of books on his particular field, what a small fraction of that knowledge he feels that he really possesses!” (66)