

in me shall never die" (John 11:25, 26). Only Jesus, as God the Son, could say this. As a member of the God-head, at the creation, He breathed into man, made of dust, the breath of life. By this Adam and all his descendants became living beings (Genesis 2:7). This means man became a being with a soul and spirit that would never die.

Jesus being God in the flesh could see both time and eternity. Before He died on the cross, He told His disciples He would live again. He said, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19). In Revelation 1:18, Jesus said, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen: and have the keys of hell and death."

The belief in a future life is so strong and universal that it has occupied the mind of men since the beginning of time. What is immortality? As a saint or sinner, how does it affect you?

The Bible speaks often about the eternal state of man. Immortality is the eternal, continuous existence of the soul and spirit after the death of the body. This is true whether the person was a sinner or a Christian. The Apostle Paul says in Romans 6:23, "The wages of sin is death (eternal), but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." We conclude from this Scripture that there is eternal life and eternal death. The sinner *dies* forever and the Christian *lives* forever.

For the sinner (someone who is living in rebellion to God's will), eternity means being forever separated from God or anything that is good. The path of the Christian is always onward and upward to greater accomplishment and blessing. The course of the sinner is always downward into greater and more awful sin. The fact of our *death and resurrection* should make us want to know for sure that we know the place for which we are preparing. Would you live the hard, bitter life of sin here on the earth and then plan to suffer forever the endless punishment of hell?

Eternal life for the Christian is the natural result of a faith that accepts Jesus and allows Him to live His life in him. The Christian's life in this world is only the preparation stage, the training school to get him ready for the really serious business of living in heaven forever. Since this is true, the grave is not a blind alley as some believe, but a main street leading to the much richer life beyond.

Death is not a terror to this person. He sees it rather as the boundary line between this world and the next. He is ready and watching, knowing that when Jesus comes it will be for the purpose of leading him into his inheritance. It means leaving a world of sin and sorrow, of pain and disappointment. It is entering a far better world, a world of holiness and blessedness, of happiness and direct fellowship with God.

The Bible teaches that we die just as we live. There is no change of our eternal state after death. Jesus talked to the Apostle John of this after He had died and risen and returned to heaven: "He that is unjust let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:11, 12).

Let's consider an example of one who accepted the Saviour and Lord of his life as a young person and was happy in the service of the Lord.

My wife's father, Hubert D. Showalter, recently died unexpectedly. He was a firm believer in Jesus. At an early age he gave the control of his life to Jesus and lived a faithful, happy Christian life. He was active in the work of the Church. Hubert enjoyed Bible studies, song leading, and visiting as well as other areas of Christian work. Papa and Mama Showalter were a real encouragement to other Christians and were faithful in telling others of their faith in Jesus.

Not only was Hubert a worker in Christian service, helping to build the invisible Church of Jesus Christ, but he built church buildings also. He was both a masonry worker and a carpenter. As a builder, he was very careful to make a solid foundation before he started building. This was especially true in the building of his Christian life. The foundation of his life was Jesus and His teachings. The Apostle Paul wrote, "for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11).

Because Jesus was his Lord and Saviour, Hubert knew that when he died his body would be buried in the ground and his spirit would go to be with God. King Solomon wrote of this truth: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit unto God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7). Job had this same thought when he said, "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:25, 26). Remember, Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." The Psalmist also believed that he would live again after he died. He said, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I will be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness" (Psalm 17:15). Christians have much to look forward to in the life after death. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:9, 10).

Hubert lived his life in such a way that he was ready to die when God called him to his heavenly home. Dr. Charles Hodge once said, "It is important that when we come to die, we have nothing to do but die." Such persons can live calmly with the assurance that his sins are forgiven and that all is well.