

**"THE TEACHINGS OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS
AND JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES
ON THE LIFE AFTER DEATH"**

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Appendix E
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KM Note: We have divided this appendix into two documents corresponding to the two aspects of eschatological teaching to which the opening paragraph below refers. What follows here is the first part of the appendix.

In this appendix attention will be given to two aspects of the eschatological teaching of both Seventh-day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses: the question of soul-extinction and the question of the annihilation of the wicked.

PART I: SOUL-EXTINCTION

It was pointed out in Chapter 3 that, according to Seventh-day Adventists, there is no soul which survives after the body dies, that after death nothing of man survives, and that therefore at death man becomes completely nonexistent. Though they do teach that all men will be raised from the dead, the condition of man between death and the resurrection is, for them, not one of consciousness but of non-existence; hence their view, in distinction from the view usually called *soul-sleep*, can better be characterized as that of *soul-extinction*.¹

In Chapter 5 it was found that Jehovah's Witnesses have basically the same view of what happens after death. For them, too, there is no soul which survives when the body dies, since the soul cannot exist apart from the body. No aspect of man continues to exist consciously after death; hence when man dies he totally ceases to exist.² Thus their view, too, can be called that of *soul-extinction*. Though the Witnesses claim that not all people will be raised from the dead, but that some will remain in the condition of nonexistence into which death has plunged them, and though the Witnesses also teach that members of the 144,000 who die now do not sink into nonexistence, but are immediately changed into immortal spirits, it remains true, for them, that all who do not fall into the latter category will experience *soul-extinction* when they die.

What shall we say about this view? It should first be observed that this view of the future of man

¹ See above, pp. 110-11, 135-36. [Hoekema is referring to his own book here.]

² See above, pp. 265-66, 293-94.

between death and the resurrection has never been held by any recognized branch of the Christian Church. Though there have been groups which have embraced similar views,³ and though there have been and are occasional theologians who are so inclined,⁴ the position sketched above has never been incorporated into any of the historic Christian creeds.

It must be admitted, of course, that the Scriptures do not say a great deal about the so-called *intermediate state*,⁵ and that what is central in the Biblical message about the future life is the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. It must also be granted that the Bible does not give us a theoretical exposition of the nature of the intermediate state. G. C. Berkouwer, for example, in a recent book on eschatology, concedes that the New Testament nowhere gives us an anthropological description of man in the intermediate state, nowhere explains how man can still be conscious when separated from his body.⁶ The New Testament, he continues, does not satisfy our curiosity about the "how" of this intermediate state; it only tells us that we shall be *with Christ* -- and this ought to be sufficient.⁷ Berkouwer does, however, make clear, in Chapter Two of this volume, that he believes in a conscious existence of man in the intermediate state, even though he finds it impossible to describe the nature of this existence.

The word "psuchee." Let us, then, examine the Scriptural evidence for the conscious existence of man between death and the resurrection. As we have seen, Seventh-day Adventists contend that there is nothing in the use of either *nephesh* or *psuchee* (the Hebrew and Greek words for soul) which implies that there is in man a conscious entity that can survive the body.⁸ On the basis of their own studies of these same Biblical words Jehovah's Witnesses contend that there can be no soul that exists apart from the body.⁹

In reply, it should be pointed out first of all that the Greek word *psuchee* (to restrict ourselves to the New Testament word for soul) may have a variety of meanings. Arndt and Gingrich, in their Greek-English lexicon, suggest that *psuchee* in the New Testament may mean life, soul as the center of man's inner life, soul as the center of a life which transcends the earth, that which possesses life, a living creature, soul as that which leaves the realm of earth at death and lives on in Hades.¹⁰

There are at least two instances in the New Testament where the word *psuchee* is used to designate that aspect of man which continues to exist after death. The first of these is Matthew

3 E.g., the Anabaptists and Socinians of the 16th century, who maintained that the souls of men, though still in existence after death, exist in a state of complete unconsciousness (cf. H. Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, 3rd ed., IV, 672-73).

4 G. C. Berkouwer, in his *Mens het Beeld Gods* (Kampen: Kok, 1957), mentions such recent theologians as G. Vander Leeuw and Paul Althaus (p. 282). A similar position has been taken by a Reformed pastor in the Netherlands, B. Telder, in his *Sterven . . . en Dan?* (Kampen: Kok, 1960). The last-named work, however, evoked a storm of protest both in the Netherlands and elsewhere.

5 The condition of man between death and the resurrection.

6 *De Wederkomst van Christus* (Kampen: Kok, 1961), I, 62.

7 *Ibid.*, I, 64. Cf. Oscar Cullmann, *Christ and Time*, trans. F. Filson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1950), p. 241.

8 See above, pp. 110-11.

9 See above, pp. 265-66.

10 Wm. F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 901-902.

10:28, "And be not afraid of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul (*psuchee*); but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." In this passage *psuchee* cannot be another name for the whole person (compare the common Seventh-day Adventist and Jehovah-Witness assertion: man does not *have* a soul but *is* a soul); for, if so, the *psuchee* would be dead when the body is killed. What Jesus is saying here is this: There is something about you which those who kill you cannot touch! That something is that aspect of man which continues to exist after the body has been lowered into the grave.¹¹

The second of these two instances is Revelation 6:9-10, "And when he [the Lamb] opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls (*psuchas*) of them that had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held; and they cried with a great voice, saying, How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" *Souls* here cannot simply mean living creatures or persons, for it makes no sense to say, "the people of those that had been slain," or "the living creatures of those that had been slain." If *psuchas* here was intended to stand for persons, we would expect that the case of the perfect passive participle which follows would be the same as that of the word *psuchas*, so that the passage would read, "the slain persons," or "the persons that had been slain." Instead, the participle is in the genitive case (*esphagmenoon*), so that the words must be translated, the souls *of* of them that had been slain." The reference here is obviously to the *souls of people* who have been slain as martyrs for their loyalty to God -- to souls, in other words, who still exist after death and who are conscious. That these souls are in a conscious state is evident from the fact that they cry out, and that they are spoken to (v. 11). It is clear that these souls have not yet experienced the resurrection from the dead, for (1) the end of history has not yet come since they themselves affirm that their blood has not yet been avenged; and (2) they are told to rest yet for a little while, until their fellow servants should have fulfilled their course (v. 11).

So we have pictured here for us, in symbolic fashion, the souls of people who have been slain, who have not yet taken part in the resurrection from the dead, who are still waiting for the final consummation of all things. Both the content of their cry and the words addressed to them indicate that their happiness is still incomplete, that they are waiting for and looking forward to the final denouement, in which justice will be completely administered and God will be fully glorified.¹²

The objection might be raised that, since Revelation is a symbolic book, we have no right to draw teachings about the intermediate state from such symbols. The point is, however, that if there is no conscious existence between death and the resurrection, the entire passage becomes meaningless. Since the text cannot refer to people still living on earth, nor to people who have already received their resurrection bodies, it must have reference to individuals enjoying some kind of conscious existence between death and the resurrection.

Though this passage is not referred to in *Questions on Doctrine*, we do find a discussion of it in a Jehovah-Witness publication, *The Kingdom is at Hand*, pages 336-37. Here the passage is quoted in

¹¹ See above, p. 265, n. 190.

¹² See Berkouwer's discussion of this passage in *Wederkomst van Christus*, I, 154-55. Cf. also Cullmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 240-41.

the translation of the *Emphatic Diaglott*, which renders *psuchas* by *persons*. The Witnesses have corrected themselves on this score, however, since in their *New World Translation* the word is rendered *souls*. These *persons* or *souls* are interpreted in the first-named volume as standing for members of the anointed class or 144,000. The "white robe" which is said to have been given to each of them (v. 11) is understood to mean their "resurrection" as spirit creatures in 1918. At this point we must remind the Witnesses that, according to their own teaching,¹³ this so-called "first resurrection" was a transition from non-existence to spirit existence. If these *persons* or *souls* were non-existent between their death and their spiritual resurrection, how could they possibly be said to cry out during this period? On the basis of their own interpretation of the passage, therefore, Jehovah's Witnesses must admit that these *persons* or *souls* existed in a conscious state between their death and resurrection.¹⁴

The word "pneuma." Seventh-day Adventists also contend that neither the Hebrew word *ruach* nor the Greek word *pneuma* (the two words usually translated *spirit*) ever denotes a separate entity capable of conscious existence apart from the physical body.¹⁵ Since Jehovah's Witnesses take a similar position, it may be assumed that they would agree with the Adventists that *ruach* or *pneuma* cannot mean "an entity" capable of conscious existence apart from the body; the various meanings assigned to these two words on page 357 of *Make Sure of All Things* do not include the one just mentioned.

Restricting ourselves to the Greek word *pneuma*, let us note that in at least three New Testament instances *pneuma* must refer to that aspect of man which continues to exist after death. (1) There is, first, Luke 23:46, Jesus' seventh word from the cross, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit (*pneuma*)." According to Arndt and Gingrich, *pneuma* may have the following range of meanings: wind, breath, life-spirit, soul, the spirit as a part of the human personality, state of mind, a spirit as an independent being, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit.¹⁶ To commend one's breath to the Father is meaningless. To commend one's state of mind also makes little sense. By a process of elimination we discover that the only meanings of *pneuma* that make sense here are soul, or spirit as a part of the human personality. Jesus thus commends or entrusts his human soul or spirit to the Father. Since He was not immediately raised from the dead, we conclude that His human spirit went to be with the Father in heaven during the time when His body was in the tomb.

Jehovah's Witnesses comment on this passage as follows:

In the light of the foregoing it is clear that when Jesus, dying on the tree, said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," he was commending to his heavenly Father his power of life. He trusted that on the third day God would restore the power of life and would raise him from the dead (Lk. 23:46).¹⁷

¹³ See above, pp. 302-6.

¹⁴ The above discussion does not imply agreement with the Watchtower interpretation of this passage, but is an attempt to refute the Witnesses on their own grounds.

¹⁵ See above, p. 111.

¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, pp. 682-84.

¹⁷ *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, p. 109.

As can be seen, however, from a perusal of the above range of meanings, *pneuma* never means "power of life." On the page preceding the one from which the above quotation is taken, it is said that "the spirit" which returns to God after death means "the life forces or the power of life which is sustained by breathing." It would appear that this power of life no longer exists after one has stopped breathing. Was it, then, this non-existent power which Christ commended into His Father's hands?

(2) Let us look next at Acts 7:59, where the dying Stephen is reported as saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit (*pneuma*)." This passage is to be understood in the same way as Jesus' seventh word from the cross. Note that whereas Jesus had commended His spirit to the Father, Stephen asks Jesus to receive his spirit, thus equating Jesus with the Father and confessing Christ's full deity. What would be the point of Stephen's asking Jesus to receive his spirit if his spirit simply ceased to exist at death?

(3) Finally, let us examine Hebrews 12:22, 23: "Ye are come . . . unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect . . . (*pneumasi dikaion teteleioomenon*)." You should appreciate your spiritual privilege as those who belong to the new covenant, the author of Hebrews is saying to his readers. As you have come into the fellowship of God's people through faith in Christ, you have not come to a mountain that burned with fire, which even beasts might not touch, but you have come to the heavenly Jerusalem, you have come into fellowship with "innumerable hosts of angels" and with "the spirits of just men made perfect."

Pneumasi, the dative plural of *pneuma*, cannot here mean angels, since angels have just been mentioned. Neither can *pneumasi* designate people still on earth, for (1) why would the author describe people on earth as spirits? If he had intended to refer to people on earth, why did he not simply write, *dikaiois teteleioomenois* ("to just men made perfect")? (2) Can we say, moreover, that people on earth have been made perfect? Paul, in fact, tells us in Philippians 3:12 that he has not yet been made perfect, using the same tense of the same verb: *teteleioomai*. The reference here is clearly to the *spirits* of just or righteous men, who are here said to have been perfected, to have been brought to their goal (*telos*). It is to the spirits of such perfected men that the readers are said to have come. This expression therefore points to the spirits of perfected saints who are now in heaven. The author does not have resurrected saints in mind, since his readers are said to have already come (*proseleluthate*) to these spirits: that is, already to have a kind of fellowship with them, in the sense of knowing themselves to be one with them.

Though the manner of their existence is not described, this passage does reveal that the spirits of believers who have been translated to heaven do have some kind of existence between death and the resurrection. The *New World Translation* renders this passage, "and the spiritual lives of righteous ones who have been made perfect." This is, however, a mistranslation. The Greek does not say, "spiritual lives"; it says *spirits: pneumasi*.

In Christ. Approaching the question of the intermediate state from a different angle, we must next

observe that the New Testament frequently speaks of the believer as being "in Christ." The expression "in Christ," or a cognate expression such as "in the Lord" or "in him," occurs 164 times in the writings of Paul alone.¹⁸ The idea that the believer is in Christ is therefore a central concept in the New Testament. From eternity believers have been chosen in Christ (Eph. 1:4), believers are united with Christ in regeneration (Eph. 2:4, 5), and Christ continually lives in them (Gal. 2:20). Believers are said to die in Christ (Rom. 14:8), to be about to be raised with Christ (I Cor. 15:22), and to be destined for eternal glorification with Christ (I Thess. 4:17). Does it seem likely, now, that believers who were chosen in Christ from eternity and who are in Christ during this life will, at the time of their death, lapse into nonexistence, only to be recreated at the time of the final resurrection? If Christ is God and if, as our Lord Himself tells us in John 10:28 and 29, no one can ever snatch believers out of either Christ's hand or the Father's hand, does it seem likely that death can do so? One might counter that, since these believers are held in God's memory and are bound to be raised again, death does not really snatch them out of Christ's hand. But how can one be said to be still in Christ's hand if he no longer exists?

Consider also the testimony of Romans 14:8, "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." According to the last part of the verse, we are the Lord's whether we live or die. In what sense, however, can we be the Lord's if we are nonexistent? If Seventh-day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses were right, Paul should have said, "Whether we live, therefore, or arise again, we are the Lord's"; on their basis he ought never to have said, "whether we die, we are the Lord's."

Consider further the testimony of I Thessalonians 4:16, "the dead in Christ shall rise first," and of I Corinthians 15:23, "But each [shall be made alive] in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; then they that are Christ's, at his coming." How could Paul speak of the "dead in Christ" if the dead are completely nonexistent? How could he speak of "they that are Christ's," meaning those who died as believers, if the dead no longer exist in any way? The implication of the passages just quoted is clear: if we are once truly in Christ, we shall remain in Christ forever, even after we die. The fact precludes the possibility of nonexistence between death and the resurrection.

The God of the Living. In connection with what has just been said, let us look at Luke 20:27-38. The story is a familiar one: The Sadducees come to Jesus with a "parable" about the resurrection, and with a question: "Whose wife shall she be?" In reply Jesus quotes the well-known words, "I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob." Jesus then adds, "Now he is not the God of the dead but of the living; for all live unto him" (v. 38). Jesus thus proves the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, which the Sadducees denied, from the Pentateuch, which they accepted as authoritative.

For our purpose, however, it is significant to note something else. Josephus tells us that the Sadducees denied the continued existence of the soul after death as well as the resurrection of the body: "But the doctrine of the Sadducees is this: that souls die with the bodies. . . ." ¹⁹ Note now that in his reply Jesus was correcting their view of the intermediate state as well as their denial of

¹⁸ B. M. Metzger, *The Jehovah's Witnesses and Jesus Christ*, p. 68.

¹⁹ *Antiquities*, XVIII, 1, 4. It would appear, therefore, that the Sadducees were the first proponents of the "soul-extinction" theory in the Christian era. Their position on this point seems to have been identical to that of present-day Seventh-day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses.

the resurrection. He was saying, in effect, "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, though they died many years ago, are actually living today. For God, who calls Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is not the God of the dead but of the living." To be sure, in order that these patriarchs may live in the full sense of the word, their bodies must be raised. But Jesus' words imply that the patriarchs are living even now, after their death, but before their resurrection. This point is made explicit by the words recorded only by Luke: "For all live unto him." Though the dead seem to us to be completely nonexistent, they are actually living as far as God is concerned. Note that the tense of the word for live is not future (which might suggest only that these dead will live at the time of their resurrection) but present, teaching us that they are living now. This holds true not only for the patriarchs but for all who have died. To suggest, now, that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are nonexistent between death and the resurrection violates the thrust of these words, and implies that God is, with respect to the patriarchs, for a long period of time the God of the dead rather than the God of the living.²⁰

The Second Word from the Cross. Let us look next at the words of Jesus to the penitent thief, recorded in Luke 23:43, "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Both Seventh-day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses punctuate the words as follows, in order to evade the teaching that this man would be in Paradise that very day: "Verily I say unto thee today, Thou shalt be with me in Paradise."²¹ Though it is true that the oldest manuscripts of the New Testament have no punctuation, and though the above punctuation is grammatically possible, it does not make good sense. For when else could Jesus say these words to the thief but today?

To understand why Jesus said *today*, we must note what the thief asked: "Jesus, remember me when thou comest in (or into) thy kingdom" (v. 42). This man believed that Jesus would come into His kingdom at the end of the world, and therefore asked to be remembered by Him at that time. Jesus' reply, however, promises him even more than he had asked for: "Today [not just at the end of the world] shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

The word *paradeisos* is used only here and in two other New Testament passages: II Corinthians 12:4 and Revelation 2:7. In the II Corinthians passage Paul tells us that he was caught up into Paradise in a vision; the expression *Paradise* is parallel to *third heaven* in v. 2. Here, therefore, Paradise means heaven, the realm of the blessed dead, and the special habitation of God.²² In Revelation 2:7 we read about the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God -- a passage which reminds us that *paradeisos* is the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew word *gan* in the expression, "garden of Eden." The reference to the tree of life (compare 22:2) tells us that this is a picture of "Paradise regained"; here again Paradise refers to heaven, though to the final state rather than the intermediate state. We conclude that Jesus promised the penitent thief that the latter would be with Christ in heavenly bliss that very day. Surely there would have been no point to Jesus' words

²⁰ On this passage, see K. J. Popma, *Levensbeschouwing* (Amsterdam: Buijten en Schipperheijn, 1958), III, 196, 210.

²¹ Seventh-day Adventists justify this punctuation by quoting from Mrs. White's *Desire of Ages* (*Principles of Life from the Word of God*, p. 323). Jehovah's Witnesses thus punctuate the verse in their NWT; in their other publications they interpret the verse as meaning that during the millennium the thief will be raised in the "resurrection of judgment," and given an opportunity to live in the paradise of the new earth (*This Means Everlasting Life*, pp. 281-83; *New Heavens and a New Earth*, p. 349; *Paradise Lost*, p. 229).

²² See note on "The Third Heaven" in Philip E. Hughes, *Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Eerdmans, 1962), pp. 432-34.

if the thief would, at the moment of his death, enter a state of unconsciousness or nonexistence!

To Depart and Be With Christ. We turn now to a very significant passage, Philippians 1:21-23, which in the American Standard Version reads as follows:

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if to live in the flesh, -- if this shall bring fruit from my work, then what I shall choose I know not. But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better. . . .

Note that Paul here calls death gain. How could he do this, if death meant entering a state of nonexistence? One could argue, I suppose, that Paul thinks here only of the final resurrection, which, as far as his subjective experience is concerned, will follow immediately after his death. Verse 23, however, sheds light on what Paul has in mind. Paul's desire to depart is not a morbid longing for death as such, but an eagerness to be closer to Christ than he is while still on earth -- and this eventuality, he says, would be very far better.

The Greek here reads: *teen epithumian echoon eis to analusai kai sun Christoo einai. Adalusai, to depart*, is an aorist infinitive, depicting the momentary act of death. Linked with *analousai* by a single article is the present infinitive, *einai, to be*. The single article ties the two infinitives together, so that the actions depicted by the two infinitives are to be considered two aspects of the same thing, or two sides of the same coin.²³ What Paul is therefore saying here is that the moment he departs or dies, that very same moment he will be with Christ. Since the verb *to be* denotes continuing existence, Paul implies that he will then not only *be* with Christ but *continue to be* with Christ.

Paul does not tell us exactly *how* he will be with Christ, but he does clearly affirm that this *being with Christ* will begin as soon as he dies. If Paul were here referring only to the resurrection of the body, he could have made this plain -- see his unambiguous allusion to the resurrection which will occur at Christ's *parousia* in 3:20, 21. Here, however, he is simply thinking of the moment of his death -- and he has no guarantee that the resurrection of his body will occur at that moment. At that very moment of death, he says, I will be with Christ. This condition, he adds, will be "very far better" than his present existence, clearly refuting the thought that after death one enters a state of nonexistence. How could such a state be "very far better" than Paul's state while still on earth, in which he does have conscious, though imperfect, fellowship with Christ?

Seventh-day Adventists interpret this passage as referring to Paul's being with Christ at the time of the resurrection of the body.²⁴ But if this were what was in Paul's mind, he would have no problem. There would be no advantage to his departing at once, since he would then not be with Christ one moment sooner than if he should remain alive. He tells us here, however, that he has a

²³ See A. T. Robertson, *Grammar of the Greek Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934), p. 787: "Sometimes groups more or less distinct are treated as one for the purpose in hand, and hence use only one article." Cf. F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*, trans. R. W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), sec. 276, (3).

²⁴ *Questions on Doctrine*, pp. 527-28.

problem, for to die and be with Christ now (not, many years from now) would be very far better than remaining alive.²⁵

Jehovah's Witnesses try to make this passage refer not to Paul's death, but to the time of Christ's return and Second Presence. They teach, in other words, that Paul will not be with Christ until the members of the anointed class are "raised" in 1918. They base this interpretation simply on a dogmatic assertion: "Such getting to be with Christ the Lord will first be possible at Christ's return, when the dead in Christ will rise first. . . ."²⁶ This view has, however, been sufficiently answered by the above discussion.

Absent from the Body, at Home with the Lord. Another very important passage in this connection is II Corinthians 5:6-8. This passage reads as follows:

Being therefore always of good courage, and knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord (for we walk by faith, not by sight); we are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord.

Let us look carefully at the two verbs used in these verses: *endeemeoo* and *ekdeemeoo*. These verbs are compound forms derived from *deemos*, meaning *people*; *endeemeoo* thus means to be in among one's people or to be at home, where *ekdeemeoo* means to be away from one's people, or to be away from home. Moulton and Milligan cite an instance in which *ekdeemeoo* means to *go abroad*.²⁷ Note also the tenses used: present tenses in verse 6, aorists in verse 8.

"We are of good courage or good cheer," Paul says in verse 6, "knowing, as we do, that while we continue to be at home in the body (*endeemountes*, a present participle, implying continuing action), we are continually away from home as regards the Lord" (*ekdeemoumen*, a present indicative, again stressing the continuation of the action). These words sound strange. How can Paul say that he is now absent from the Lord? Does he not have fellowship with the Lord in this life? Yes, Paul replies in verse 7, but the fellowship which we have with Christ during this life is a walking by faith, not by sight. That is to say, our present fellowship with Christ, good though it be, is still incomplete, still leaves much to be desired.

In the light of this background, we approach verse 8, where the thought is continued. "We are of good courage, I say and deem it better (*eudokoumen mallon*) to be once-for-all away from home as to the body (*ekdeemesai ek tou soomatos* -- an aorist infinitive, suggesting momentary or snapshot action), and once-for-all at home with the Lord (*endeemesai pros ton kurion* -- another aorist infinitive). Whereas the present tenses in verse 6 picture a continuing at-homeness in the body and a continuing away-from-homeness as to the Lord, the aorist infinitives of verse 8 point to a once-for-all momentary happening. What can this be? There is only one answer: death, which is

²⁵ See on this point Herbert S. Bird's *Theology of Seventh-Day Adventism*, (Eerdmans, 1961), p. 49. Cf. also Berkouwer's *Wederkomst van Christus*, I, 64-66; and Cullmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 239-40.

²⁶ *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures* (1951 ed.), p. 781.

²⁷ J. H. Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament Illustrated from the Papyri* (Eerdmans, 1957; originally published in 1930), p. 192.

an immediate transition from being at home in the body to being away from home as to the body. The first aorist infinitive, *ekdeemesai*, should probably be construed as an ingressive or inceptive aorist, indicating the momentary beginning of an action which thereafter continues.²⁸ Note, now, that this first aorist infinitive is followed by a second, *endeemesai*. This second aorist is probably also to be construed as ingressive, parallel to the first. In a moment, says Paul, I shall begin to be at home with the Lord. At what moment? Obviously, at the same moment indicated by *ekdeemesai*, the moment of death. If we look back at verse 6 again, we note that the time of *endeemountes* and *ekdeemoumen* is simultaneous: while we are at home in the body, we are away from home as to the Lord. Following this analogy, we expect that the two aorist infinitives in verse 8 also point to simultaneous time, only now to the instantaneous occurrence which ushers in a new condition: the moment we are away from home as to the body (the moment of death), that moment we shall be at home with the Lord. Observe, too, that the word *pros* suggests a very close fellowship, a face-to-face fellowship, implying that the fellowship with Christ which Paul expects to enjoy after death will be far closer than that which he has experienced here on earth. The passage thus teaches that at the moment of death the believer goes, not into an unconscious state or a state of nonexistence, but into a state of fellowship with Christ which is closer than that which he has enjoyed on earth.

Seventh-day Adventists contend that "there is nothing in this text to justify our coming to the conclusion that the being 'present with the Lord' will occur immediately upon being 'absent from the body.'" ²⁹ We have seen, however, that both the tenses of the infinitives in verse 8 and the parallelism between verse 8 and verse 6 indicate that being present with the Lord does occur the moment one dies. The authors of *Questions on Doctrine* further assert, on page 530, that what the apostle has in mind when he says that he desires to be present with the Lord is the resurrection day. The difficulty with this position, however, is that he speaks here about being absent from the body and present (or at home) with the Lord. Surely receiving a resurrection body is not a being *absent* from the body! If the Adventist interpretation of this passage were correct, we would have expected Paul to say something like this: "are willing rather to be absent from *this body* and to be at home in the *new body*." ³⁰

The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. We shall look finally at the parable of the rich man and Lazarus recorded in Luke 16:19-31. Though we may not interpret every detail of this parable literally, we may and must ask what is the main point of the story. As becomes quite clear from the context, that main point is the contrast between the lot after death of the unbelieving Pharisees (pictured by the rich man) and that of the publicans and sinners who believed on Jesus (pictured by Lazarus). Though on earth the rich man enjoyed luxury and Lazarus suffered poverty, after death the rich man is in torment, whereas Lazarus is comforted. It is quite obvious, now, that if after death people simply lapse into a state of unconsciousness or nonexistence, this parable

28 Blass-Debrunner, *op. cit.*, sec. 331.

29 *Questions on Doctrine*, p. 528.

30 This is not to deny that Paul will still be "at home with the Lord" after he has received his new body. It is, however, unwarranted to make this passage refer exclusively to the resurrection body. Cf. on this passage also Cullmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 238-40; Berkouwer, *Wederkomst van Christus*, I, 68-73; and Hughes, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-85. Hughes reacts critically to the position taken on these verses by E. Earle Ellis in Chap. II of the latter's *Paul and His Recent Interpreters* (Eerdmans, 1961).

would lose all point.

One might reply, however, that the parable pictures conditions as they will be after the resurrection of the body has occurred, since the rich man is said to have a tongue, and Lazarus is described as having fingers. Against this interpretation the following objections can be registered: (1) In verses 27 and 28 the rich man refers to his five brothers who are still living on earth and whom he wishes to warn; this situation would not be possible if the general resurrection had occurred and the final state had been ushered in. (2) Verse 31 implies that the resurrection from the dead has not yet occurred at the time pictured by the parable: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead."

The diversified conscious existence of the rich man and Lazarus pictured symbolically in this parable, therefore, must be a reflection of conditions during the intermediate state. As such, the parable confirms what we have learned from other New Testament passages, namely, that believers immediately after death go to be with Christ in order to enjoy a provisional happiness in His presence (provisional because their bodies have not yet been raised), whereas unbelievers at death go at once to a place of provisional punishment.

The Watchtower interpretation of this parable, which was given previously,³¹ is so palpably absurd as to require no further comment. By means of this interpretation, which flatters their own egos, the Witnesses have simply closed their ears to what Christ is saying to them here. Seventh-day Adventists, while admitting that the parable portrays allegorically conditions before the resurrection,³² insist that "the story of the rich man and Lazarus in no way proves the consciousness of the dead. . . ."³³ They go on to assert that, though Christ knew perfectly well that there is no consciousness after death, He simply met the Pharisees on their own ground in the parable, placing His own teachings into the framework of their errors in order to reveal the unsoundness of their position.³⁴ This interpretation, however, implies that Jesus could use a lie to teach a truth! Though we are not permitted to draw from this parable a detailed description of conditions in the intermediate state, the story would be utterly without point if believers did not exist in conscious blessedness and if unbelievers did not suffer conscious torment immediately after death. How could Jesus have used this parable as a vehicle of divine revelation if the main lesson which it was intended to convey was based on a misconception about the future life?

In connection with the parable just discussed, the reader's attention is called to II Peter 2:9, which clearly teaches that the ungodly will endure conscious pain during the intermediate state: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment unto the day of judgment." The last part of the text reads as follows in the Greek: "*adikous de eis heemeran kriseoos kolazomenous teerein.*" Peter has been expounding the severity of divine judgments over the angels that sinned, over the ancient world, and over Sodom and Gomorrah. Verse 9 is a summary statement which serves, in turn, to introduce a further description of the terrible wickedness of the false teachers he has been writing about. The

31 See above, p. 251.

32 *Questions on Doctrine*, p. 560.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 558.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 564. This understanding of the parable is based on a quotation from Mrs. White's book, *Christ's Object Lessons* (found on p. 263 of the latter volume).

unrighteous mentioned in the text, in other words, are certainly inclusive of human beings who are unrighteous.

The same God who delivers the godly out of temptation, Peter says, knows how to keep unrighteous men (and angels) under punishment unto the day of judgment. *Kolazomenous* is a present passive (or middle) participle from *kolazoo*, to punish. God knows how to keep these unrighteous ones *kolazomenous*, says Peter; literally, keep them *being punished*, until the day of judgment. The present tense of the participle implies that this punishment is a continuing one. The words *eis heemeran kriseoos* tell us that what is here described is not the final punishment of the wicked, but a punishment which will precede the judgment day. It cannot be maintained, further, that the punishment here spoken of is one which is administered only during this life since the words "unto the day of judgment" clearly extend this punishment to that day. We learn from this passage, therefore, that the souls of the unrighteous will not be unconscious after death, but will undergo a continuing punishment even before their bodies are raised at the time of the final judgment.

We conclude that the position of Seventy-day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses on the condition of man between death and the resurrection is not in harmony with Scripture, and ought therefore to be abandoned by both of these groups.³⁵

³⁵ On the entire question of *soul-extinction* see, in addition to the literature already noted, Chap. II of Norman F. Douty's *Another Look at Seventh-day Adventism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1962); and Bird, *op. cit.*, Chap. III.