

# Eternal Life

by Henry T. Anderson

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*Christ has abolished death for us, and we receive eternal life by believing in him and being united with him.*

**Scripture:** John 11:25, Romans 6:23, 1 Corinthians 15:54, 2 Corinthians 5:1, 1 John 5:11

**Topics:** "Eternal Life", "Spiritual Death"

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## Description

Henry T. Anderson preaches about the paradox of living and yet being dead, emphasizing that believers in Christ shall never truly die as Jesus died for their sins, abolishing death and offering eternal life. He delves into the concept of spiritual death as separation from God due to sin, and how Christ's sacrifice frees believers from this death. Anderson highlights the divine nature imparted to believers through Christ, giving them victory over sin and the promise of everlasting life, ultimately leading to the abolishment of death and the transformation of mortal bodies into immortal ones.

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## Transcript

In 1859, page 125 [sic], "H. T. A." (Henry T. Anderson) writes:

What can appear more paradoxical than this: to live, and yet be dead; to be dead, and yet live? How difficult, how hard to be heard, [579] was the word of the Messiah--"if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." Is it possible that a believer in Christ shall never die? Jesus said to Mary, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; he that liveth and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this?" What say you, kind reader? Believest thou that thou shalt never die? If thy faith is not yet established, come, let us reason together.

We will visit first the garden of Gethsemane. Who is this, that lies upon the ground and prays--"O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me?" Why is it that he is in such agony? Do you see that his sweat is, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground? Can it be that he fears the suffering which his body must undergo, while upon the cross? Can the prospect of physical suffering account for this agony? The thieves, who suffered with him, are they enduring this intense agony in view of the cross? Where will you find an instance like this? It can not be found. This is the Saviour of the world. He has come to the hour which he has dreaded. The sins of the human family are laid upon him; and he suffers for man. He is about to become a curse for us, while he bears, in his body, our sins upon the tree of the cross. He is about to make his soul an offering for sin, and endure, in mind and body, that curse that is due to us. See, now, an angel comes and strengthens him; and he arises and goes to his disciples, and meets the traitor and his company of officers and men, who have come to take him. He is bound and carried to

the High-priest. He is delivered to Pilate, and condemned to death. There is darkness over all the land, from the sixth till the ninth hour. Hear him as he cries, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" What means this? Has God forsaken him? Yes; for he has become a curse for us; and God withdraws from him while he is a curse. Sin is upon him. Our sins are counted to him. He dies for us; and we can never die. He abolishes death. By his death he takes away death; and we live forever in him. If he dies for us, we can not die. Strange, would it be, that we should die after that he has suffered death for us. It can not be that we shall ever die. We live because he lives.

But God had forsaken him only while the curse was upon him. The wages of sin is death. He has now endured the curse. He has discharged the debt. The curse is removed, and he rises, no longer cursed; but now, free from the curse, he is accepted of God, and offers himself, to God, in the Holy of Holies in heaven. God accepts the offering, and we are free. We can not die. "If any man will keep my saying, he shall never see death." "He that believeth on me shall never die." Do you believe this, reader? If you do not believe this, then, do you believe that he has died for you? How, then, can you [580] die? Do you think of the dissolution of soul and body, and conclude that this has been the lot of the Apostles and Prophets, and of all the followers of Christ, in all ages? And do you count this the death from which you are freed? If so, you labor under an error. The dissolution of soul and body is not the death from which you are freed. Nor was it the dissolution of soul and body that the Messiah so much dreaded. He was separated from God on account of sin. Inasmuch as he assumed our nature, and our sins were laid upon him, he must endure that which was due to sin--a separation from God, while he thus endured the curse. This is the death which he underwent for sin. And, as he took our sins upon him, and died for our sins, we are surely free from death, being free from sin, whose wages is death.

The Apostle to the Gentiles reasons thus--"The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." The human family is dead. Christ died for them, that they might live. If all have died, there is a cause--the sin of our first parents. "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." The fruit was eaten, and our parents died that very day. They were alienated in mind from God, and, as proof of that alienation, that inward death, they hid themselves from Jehovah. Man has hid himself from God, from the day of transgression until now, being alienated in mind. Separation from God is the consequence of alienation. Mental alienation, or, if any one wishes, spiritual alienation, is the death that Adam died on the day on which he ate the fruit. His personal separation from God was a consequence of that alienation. His posterity have been, and are now, alienated from God; and hence, their personal separation from him. Sin is the cause of this. Sin is begotten in the spirit. This is spiritual alienation. Sin is brought forth in an act; and then follows a separation of ourselves, in person, from God. Adam died in the garden, and was driven out because he was thus spiritually separated from God.

But now, Christ has died for us, having taken our sins upon him, and endured that most terrible of sufferings, being forsaken of his God. What now constitutes the glad tidings of great joy? Christ has died for our sins. We believe in Christ, and live. We pass from death unto life. We shall not come into condemnation. "He that heareth my word, and believeth in him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life. Jesus is that eternal life which was with the Father, but has been manifested to us. He came into the world in which darkness and death reigned without restraint. He is the true light, who, having come into the world, gives light to every man. As the sun is the source of light and life to the natural world, so is Jesus the source [581] of spiritual light and life to the spiritual world. Those who receive his truth are enlightened in mind, and warmed into life in spirit. The spirit of man, though an ever-active, ever-enduring, never-perishing substance, is, as respects

God, in a state of death. When the gospel is heard, which is the word of life, the spirit of man is made alive, begotten again, and by means of the word of life, has a new life imparted to it, by which it is enabled to enjoy the reign of God. The Spirit of God begets life in the human spirit by means of the truth. On the part of the spirit of man, there is a conception of divine life, which, diffusing itself through the whole inward man, manifests itself in the production of fruits of righteousness. This divine life, which is imparted by the Spirit of God, is the everlasting life which the Saviour promises to those who hear his words. The receiver of this life can not die, provided he remains faithful to the Lord Messiah. He is alive, and his life is sustained by the Lord of life.

Now, if the dissolution of soul and body, which was endured by Jesus, was the death which he suffered for us, it would follow that we could not suffer thus; for we can not endure that which he endured for us. We being under the power of death, he came and died for us, that we might be saved from that in which we were held. He entered the prison-house and broke its bars and set us free. Delivered from sin and death, we live to God in Christ.

To be or to exist, is not to live. The human spirit will endure through the ages of ages. Yet, whether it lives or not depends on its acceptance of that eternal life, which God gives through the Messiah. To cease to be, is an idea not to be found in the oracles of God. To perish or to be destroyed, is not to cease to be. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself." Yet Israel was in existence. The righteous perish, says Isaiah, and no man layeth it to heart. The righteous can not cease to be. To be dead, is not to cease to be. Death is not non-existence. It is true that the Sadducees used the word in this sense of non-existence; for they denied the existence of spirits or angels. When men died, they ceased to exist, in their estimation. When the Saviour, in reply to a question put by them on the subject of the resurrection, quoted the words of Jehovah--"I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob;" he most pertinently added, "God is not the God of the dead." If Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were dead, in the Sadducean sense; that is, if they had no existence; then, it would follow, that God is the God of nothing, or of something not existing--which consequence was so, obvious and so manifestly opposed to reason, that even the Sadducees were silenced by it. God, then, is the God of those who live; therefore, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob live; and as they live, they will again come forth to life. [582]

But Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are among the dead. Then, the dead yet live; and being dead is ceasing to be in a certain state or condition; in other words, death is a change of state. Dissolution of spirit and body is the death to which we all tend. By this dissolution we enter another state of being.

It may be profitable, here, to notice the style of the inspired writers. The distinction between the "me" and the "not me," is made broad and clear by the inspired men. Hear Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, "I am in a strait between two, having a strong desire to depart and be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is now needful for you." There he speaks of himself as departing and abiding in the flesh. Now, if he departed, evident is it that he would leave behind him that in which he was then abiding--the flesh; for, surely, no one supposes that Paul went to heaven in the flesh. It is, therefore, evident that Paul, and Paul's flesh are not the same. The "I" that departed; the "I" that abode in the flesh, certainly was not the flesh. I, and my body, are two things. The "I" is not the body; but something, which, though abiding in the body for a while, departs after a while, and leaves the body. When I say my body, I speak of that, which, though mine, is not me or myself. Thus the Ego, and the non-Ego, are distinguished by the great philosophers of Holy Writ.

Peter also makes the same distinction. "The Lord Jesus has showed me how that shortly I must put off this, my tabernacle." Peter, and the tabernacle of Peter, are most obviously distinguished. Peter is the Ego; the tabernacle of Peter, the non-Ego. Peter is the true living being; the tabernacle of Peter, that in which he lived. The pulling down, the destruction of a tabernacle, is not the nonexistence of the inhabitant. Therefore, men, though dead to us, live to God. They are unseen of us, but known and seen by God.

But there is a life, which the righteous possess, which never dies--the everlasting life. The spirit of man possessed of the truth of God, becomes, as we have seen, alive to God; is possessed of a life which makes it akin to the divine nature--indeed, the Apostle Pete speaks of our being "partakers of the divine nature." This divine nature is the true source of the everlasting life. We receive Christ; and, from him, is imparted to us the divine nature, which gives that new life, by which we become victorious over sin and the flesh.

The Apostle John gives these words of John the Baptist: "He that believeth on the Son, hath life; he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." The wicked exist eternally without life--a paradox; be it so: it is true. They exist eternally; they possess that existence which belongs to the nature of spirits; but without that life, which results from being [583] partakers of the divine nature. Without the divine nature, no spirit can love God or be obedient to him. This divine nature is imparted to us when we believe in Christ. It is not faith which gives us this divine life. Jesus himself, who is the life of the world, gives us this life through faith. Strong, indeed, are the words of our holy Apostle:--"We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." We are to Christ what Eve was to Adam. We are his bride. We partake of his nature, being joint-partakers of his spirit. He took our nature, and thus raised the human to the divine. He lives eternally, and we are supported by him. He is our light, our life, our strength. From him there comes forth a vis activa, a vis viva, a living, active power, that entering into the spirit of man vivifies, enlightens, and transfuses life through the whole man.

God is light. God is life. God is love. What must be the condition of that spirit, which is enlightened by this divine light, quickened by this life, and filled with this love? Is it not a partaker of the divine nature? Has not the divine descended and taken flesh? Why should not the divine transfuse itself into the human? Is it credible that the Logos became flesh? Then the divine has united itself with the human. When we are united to Christ, the human becomes united with the divine. Else, how is he that is joined to the Lord, one spirit?

We are to Christ as Eve to Adam, Paul being judge: "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Wonderful words are these! Wonderful union with the Messiah!

How, then, can we die? Death is abolished. Life reigns in us. Though our bodies must see the dust, we live, and shall live, forevermore. The present body is unfit for that habitation, which God has prepared for the righteous. It must undergo a change, either by being raised from the dust, or by being changed when the Lord shall descend from heaven: "For we shall not all sleep," no; some will be found on earth when the Messiah comes, and these will not sleep, but undergo a change which is necessary for them, that they may meet our coming Redeemer. A living, regenerate, sanctified body in which to live forever--a resurrection, becomes a consequence of the possession of life by the spirit. To the body will be given a life which is eternal. A pure spirit will inhabit a body that is immortal and incorruptible. This mortal (body) must put on immortality: this corruptible (body) must put on incorruption. In this body there is nothing that can secure it from corruption. From the dust there can come nothing that is immortal. That which is immortal and incorruptible comes from heaven. So our Apostle teaches that, "if our earthly house of this tabernacle

perish, we have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." This heavenly house, or [584] body, which is immortal, will swallow up our mortality. Our mortal body will be clad with an immortal one from heaven, which will thus swallow up all that is mortal, and then our living spirit will inhabit forever a living, immortal, incorruptible, heavenly body. Death will then be swallowed up of life.

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