

Archpriest Georges Florovsky (1893-1979)

The “Immortality” of the Soul*

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ARE CHRISTIANS, AS CHRISTIANS, necessarily committed to the belief in the Immortality of the human soul? And what does Immortality actually mean in the Christian universe of discourse? These questions are by no means just rhetorical ones. Etienne Gilson, in his Gifford lectures, felt himself compelled to make the following startling statement: “On the whole,” he said, “Christianity without an immortality of the soul is not altogether inconceivable—the proof is that it has been so conceived. What is, on the contrary, absolutely inconceivable, is Christianity without a Resurrection of Man.”¹ The striking feature of the early history of the Christian doctrine of Man was that many of the leading writers of the second century seem to have emphatically denied the (natural) immortality of the soul. And this does not seem to be an exceptional or extravagant opinion of certain writers only, but rather the common teaching of the age. Nor was this conviction completely abandoned in a later age. Bishop Anders Nygren, in his famous book, *Den kristna karlekstanken genom tiderna*, praises the Apologists of the second century precisely for this courageous

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statement and sees in it an expression of the true Evangelical spirit. The main emphasis was then, as in Nygren’s opinion it should ever be, rather on the “Resurrection of the body” than on the “Immortality of *the soul*.”² An Anglican erudite of the XVIIth century, Henry Dodwell

* This article first appeared as “The Resurrection of Life” in the *Bulletin of the Harvard University Divinity School*, XLIX, No. 8 (April, 1952), 5-26.

¹ *L’Esprit de la Philosophie Medievale* (2 ed., Paris, 1944), p. 179.

² *Agape and Eros: The History of the Christian Idea of Love* (London, 1938), II:1, pp. 64 ff.

(1641-1711, one-time Camden "Praelector" of History in the University of Oxford), published in London a curious book, under a rather bewildering title:

An Epistolary Discourse, proving, from the Scriptures and the First Fathers, that the Soul is a Principle naturally Mortal; but immortalized actually by the Pleasure of God, to Punishment; or to Reward, by its Union with the Divine Baptismal Spirit. Wherein is proved, that None have the Power of giving this Divine Immortalizing Spirit, since the Apostles, but only the Bishops (1706).

Dodwell's argument was often confused and involved. The main value of the book, however, was in its immense erudition. Dodwell, probably for the first time, collected an enormous mass of information on the early Christian doctrine of Man, even if he could not use it properly himself. And he was quite right in his contention that Christianity was not concerned with a *natural* "Immortality," but rather with the soul's *supernatural* Communion with God, "Who only hath immortality" (I Tim. 6:16). No wonder that Dodwell's book provoked a violent controversy. A formal charge of heresy was brought against the author. Yet, he found some fervent supporters. And an anonymous writer, "a Presbyterian of the Church of England," published two books on the subject, presenting a careful study of the Patristic evidence that "the Holy Spirit (was) the Author of Immortality, or Immortality (was) a Peculiar Grace of the Gospel, (and) no Natural Ingredient of the soul," and that "Immortality (was) *preternatural* to Human Souls, the Gift of Jesus Christ, collated by the Holy Spirit in Baptism."³ What was of special interest in that controversy was that Dodwell's thesis was opposed chiefly by the "liberals" of that day, and his

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greatest literary opponent was the famous Samuel Clarke, of St. James, Westminster, a follower of Newton and a correspondent of Leibniz, notorious for his unorthodox beliefs and ideas, a typical man of the age of Latitudinarianism and Enlightenment. It was an unusual sight: "Immortality" contested by an "Orthodox" and defended by a Latitudinarian. In fact, it was rather what one should have expected. The belief in a *natural* Immortality was one of the few basic "dogmas" of the enlightened Deism of that time. A man of the Enlightenment could easily dismiss the doctrines of Revelation, but could not afford any doubt on the "truth" of Reason. Gilson suggested that "what is known under the name of the 'Moralist' doctrine of the XVIIth century was originally a return to the position of the Early Fathers and not, as seems to be usually believed, a manifestation of a libertine spirit."⁴ As a general statement, it is untenable.

³ The author is usually identified as Joseph (or John) Pitts, but nothing is known about the man. The name is given in old catalogues (e.g., of the British Museum, etc.) and bibliographies. The book-titles are too long to be given here in full. Both books were published in 1706. Dodwell defended his position in a book: *A Preliminary Defence of the Epistolary Discourse, Concerning the Distinction between Soul and Spirit* (London, 1707). Dodwell's starting point seems to be St. Irenaeus; s. *Dissertationes in Irenaeum, auctore Henrico Dodwello, A.M., etc., Oxoniae*, 16sq, p. 469 ff.— I am dealing with the whole controversy in another essay of mine, *The problem of Man in English theology and philosophy of the XVIIth century*, to be published shortly.

⁴ Gilson, 179, n. 1.

The whole situation in the XVIIth century was much more complex and mixed up than Gilson apparently surmised. Yet, in the case of Dodwell (and some others) Gilson's guess is fully vindicated. There was an obvious "return to the positions of the First Fathers."

II The Soul as 'Creature'

St. Justin, in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, tells the story of his conversion. In his quest for truth he went first to Philosophers, and for a time was fully satisfied with the teaching of Platonists. "The perception of incorporeal things quite overwhelmed me, and the Platonic theory of ideas added wing to my mind." Then he met a Christian teacher, an elderly and respectable man. Among the questions raised in the course of their conversation was that of the nature of the soul. We should not call the soul immortal, contended

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the Christian. "For, if it were, we would certainly have to call it unbegotten also," *ei athanatos esti kai agennêtos dêladê*. This was, of course, the thesis of the Platonists. Now, God alone is "unbegotten" and immortal, and it is for that very reason that He is Divine. The world, on the other hand, is "begotten," and the souls make part of it. "Perhaps, there was a time when they were not in existence." And therefore they are not immortal, "since the world has appeared to us to be begotten." The soul is not life by itself, but only "partakes" of life. God alone is life, the soul can but have life. "For the power to live is not an attribute of the soul, as it is of God." Moreover, God gives life to souls, "as He pleases." All created things "have the nature of decay, and are such as may be blotted out and cease to exist." Creatures as such are "corruptible" (*Dial.*, 5 and 6). The main classical proofs of immortality, derived from *Phaedo* and *Phaedrus*, are disavowed and declined, and their basic presuppositions openly rejected. As Professor A. E. Taylor pointed out, "to the Greek mind *athanasia* or *aphtharsia* regularly signified much the same things as 'divinity' and included the conception of ingenerability as well as of indestructibility."⁵ To say "the soul is immortal" would be for a Greek the same as to say "it is uncreated," i.e., eternal and "divine." Everything that had a beginning was bound to have an end. In other words, for a Greek, "immortality" of the soul would immediately imply its "eternity," i.e., an eternal "pre-existence." Only that which had no beginning could last for ever. Christians could not comply with this "philosophical" assumption, as they believed in Creation, and therefore they had to deny "immortality" (in the Greek meaning of the word). The soul is not an independent or self-governing being, but precisely a *creature*, and its very existence it owes to God, the Creator. Accordingly, it cannot be "immortal" *by nature*, i.e., by itself, but only by "God's pleasure," i.e., *by grace*. The "philosophical" argument for (natural) "immortality" was based on the

⁵ A. E. Taylor, *Plato: The man and his work*, p. 176; cf. J. Lebreton, *Histoire du Dogme de la Trinite*, t. II (Paris, 1928), p. 635 ff.

“necessity” of existence. On the contrary, to say that the world is *created* is to emphasize, first of all, its radical *contingency*, and precisely a contingency *in the order of existence*. In other words, a created world is a world which *might not have existed at all*. That is to say that the world is, utterly and entirely, *ab alio*, and in no sense *a se*.⁶ As Gilson puts it, “there are some beings that are radically different from God at least in this that, unlike Him, they might not have existed, and still may, at a certain time, cease to exist.”⁷ “*May cease*,” however, does not mean necessarily “*will (actually) cease*.” St. Justin was not a “conditionalist,” and his name has been invoked by the defenders of a “conditional immortality” quite in vain. “I do not say, indeed, that all souls die...” The whole argument was polemical, and its purpose was to stress belief in Creation. We find the same reasoning in other writings of the second century. St. Theophilus of Antioch insisted on the “neutral” character of Man. “*By nature*,” Man is neither “immortal” nor “mortal,” but rather “capable of both,” *dektikon amphoteron*. “For if God had made him immortal from the beginning, He would have made him God.” If Man from the beginning had chosen things immortal, in obedience to God’s commandments, he would have been rewarded with immortality and have become God, “an adoptive God,” *deus assumptus, theos anadeichtheis* (*Ad Autolyicum* 2.24 and 27). Tatian went even further. “The soul is not in itself immortal, O Greeks, but mortal. Yet it is possible for it not to die” (*Oratio ad Graecos*, 13). The thought of the early Apologists was not free from contradictions, nor was it always accurately expressed. But the main contention was always clear: the problem of human immortality had to be faced in the context of the doctrine of Creation. One may say also: not as a metaphysical problem only, but as a religious one, first of all. “Immortality” is not an attribute of the soul, but something that ultimately depends upon man’s actual relationship with God, his Master and Creator. Not only

the ultimate destiny of Man can be achieved only in Communion with God, but even Man’s existence itself and his “survival” or endurance depend upon God’s will. St. Irenaeus continued the same tradition. In his struggle against the Gnostics he had a special motive to emphasize the creaturely character of the soul. It does not come from “another world,” exempt from corruption; it belongs precisely to this created world. It has been contended, says St. Irenaeus, that in order to stay in existence souls had to be “unbegotten” (*sed oportere eas aut innascibiles esse ut sint immortales*), for otherwise they would have to die with the body (*vel si generationis initium acceperint, cum corpore mori*). He declines this argument. As creatures, the souls “endure as long as God wills them to endure” (*perseverant autem quoadusque eas Deus et*

⁶ Cf. my article: “The Idea of Creation in Christian Philosophy,” *The Eastern Churches Quarterly*, VIII, *Supplementary issue: Nature and Grace*, 1949; s. also Gilson, op. cit., Ch. IV: “Les êtres et leur contingence,” p. 63 ff.

⁷ Gilson, *God and Philosophy*, 1941, p. 52,

esse, et perseverare voluerit). *Perseverantia* here obviously corresponds to the Greek: *diamonê*. St. Irenaeus uses almost the same phrases as St. Justin. The soul is not life by itself; it partakes of life, by the grant of God (*sic et anima quidem non est vita, participatur autem a Deo sibi praestitam vitam*). God alone is Life and the only Giver of Life (*Adversus haereses*, 2.34). Even Clement of Alexandria, in spite of his Platonism, would occasionally recall that the soul was not immortal “by nature” (*Adumbrationes in I Petri* 1:9: *hinc apparet quoniam non est naturaliter anima incorruptibilis, sed gratia Dei... perficitur incorruptibilis*).^{7a} St. Athanasius would demonstrate the immortality of the soul by arguments which can be traced back to Plato (*Adv. Gentes*, 33), and yet he insisted very strongly that everything created is “by nature” unstable and exposed to destruction (*ibidem*, 41: *physin reustên ousan kai dialyomenên*). Even St. Augustine was aware of the necessity to qualify the immortality of the soul: *Anima hominis immortalis est secundum quendam modum suum; non enim omni modo sicut Deus* (*Epist. VFF* [sic in Nordland ed.—“VII”?], *ad Hieronymum*). “According to the mutability of this life, it may be said to be mortal.” (*In Joh. tr.* 23, 9; cf. *De Trinitate*,

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1.9.15, and *De Civ. Dei*, 19.3: *mortalis in quantum mutabilis*). St. John of Damascus says that even Angels are immortal not by nature, but only by grace (*De fide orth.* 2.3: *ou physei alla chariti*), and proves it more or less in the same way as the Apologists (*Dial. C. Manich.*, 21). We find the same emphatic statement in the “synodical” letter of St. Sophronius, the Patriarch of Jerusalem (634), which was read and favorably received at the Sixth Ecumenical Council (681). In the latter part of his letter Sophronius condemns the errors of the Origenists, the pre-existence of the soul and apokatastasis, and states plainly that “intellectual beings” (T&vofl-r6c), though they do not die (*thnêskei de oudamôs*), nevertheless “are not immortal by nature,” but only by the *grace of God* (*Mansi*, XI, 490-492; *Migne*, LXXXVII. 3, 3181). It may be added that even in the XVIIth century this early tradition was not forgotten in the East, and we have an interesting contemporary record of a dispute between two Greek bishops of Crete exactly on this question: whether the soul was immortal “by nature” or “by grace.”⁸ We may conclude: When we discuss the problem of Immortality from a Christian point of view, we must keep in mind the creaturely nature of the soul. The very existence of the soul is contingent, i.e., as it were, “conditional.” It is conditioned by the creative *fiat* of God. Yet, a *given* existence, i.e., an existence which is not necessarily implied in the “essence,” is not necessarily a transient one. The creative *fiat* is a free but *ultimate* act of God. God has created the world simply *for*

^{7a} It may be argued, however, that the translation (by Cassiodorus) is not reliable.

⁸ The record of the disputation between Athanasius Caravella, Bishop of Hiera, and Neophytus Patellarius, Metropolitan of Crete, with the participation of Panagiotis Nicousius, the famous dragoman of Porta, who was instrumental in the publication of the “Orthodox Confession” of Peter Moghila in Holland and of the Acts of the Synod of Jerusalem in 1672, was published by Archimandrite Arsenius (Ivascenko). “Description of a Manuscript, once in the Library of the Monastery of Mount Sinai,” *Khristianskoe Chtenie*, 1884, July-August, pp. 181-229.

existence: ektise gar eis to einai ta panta (Wis. 1:14). There is no provision for revoking this creative decree. The sting of the antinomy is exactly here: the world has a *contingent beginning, yet no end*. It stands by the immutable will of God.⁹

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III Man Is Mortal

In current thinking nowadays, the “immortality of the soul” is usually overemphasized to such an extent that the basic “mortality of man” is almost overlooked. Only in the recent “existentialist” philosophies are we again strongly reminded that man’s existence stands intrinsically *sub specie mortis*. Death is a catastrophe for man. It is his “*last* (or rather, *ultimate*) *enemy*,” *eschatos echthros* (I Cor. 15:26). “Immortality” is obviously a *negative* term; it is correlative with the term “death.” And here again we find Christianity in an open and radical conflict with “Hellenism,” with Platonism first of all. W. H. V. Reade, in his recent book, *The Christian Challenge to Philosophy*,¹⁰ very aptly confronts two quotations: “And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14) and “Plotinus, the philosopher of our time, was like one ashamed of being in the flesh” (Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus*, I). Reade then proceeds: “When the message of Christmas Day and Porphyry’s brief summary of his master’s creed are thus brought into direct comparison, it should be plain enough that they are totally incompatible: that no Christian can possibly be a Platonist, nor any Platonist a Christian; and of this elementary fact the Platonists, to do them justice, were perfectly aware.”^{10a} I would only add that, unfortunately, Christians did not seem to be aware “of this elementary fact.” Through centuries, down to our own age, Platonism has been the favorite philosophy of Christian wise men. It is not our purpose now to explain how it could and did happen. But this unfortunate misunderstanding (not to say more) has resulted in an utter confusion in modern thinking about death and immortality. We may still use the old definition of death: it is a separation of soul from body, *psychês chôris mos apo sômatos* (Nemesius, *De natura hominis*, 2; he quotes

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Chrysippus). For a Greek it was a *liberation*, a “return” to the native sphere of spirits. For a Christian it was *the catastrophe*, a frustration of human existence. The Greek doctrine of Immortality could never solve the Christian problem. The only adequate solution has been offered by the message of Christ’s Resurrection and by the promise of the General Resurrection of the dead. If we turn again to Christian antiquity, we find this point clearly made at an early

⁹ This point was very well worked out by Hermann Schultz in his valuable book: *Die Voraussetzungen der christlichen Lehre von der Unsterblichkeit* (Göttingen, 1861).

¹⁰ London: S.P.C.K., 1951.

^{10a} *Op. cit.*, p. 70. In the Eastern rite John 1:1-17 is the lesson for Easter, and not for Christmas (as in the West).

date. St. Justin was quite emphatic on the point. People “who say there is no resurrection of the dead, and that their souls, when they die, are taken to heaven are not Christian at all” (Dial., 80). The unknown author of the treatise *On Resurrection* (traditionally ascribed to St. Justin) states the problem very accurately. “For what is man but a reasonable animal composed of body and soul? Is the soul by itself man? *No*, but the soul of man. Would the body be called man? *No*, but it is called the body of man. If neither of these is by itself man, but that which is made up of the two together is called man, and God has called *man* to life and resurrection, He has called *not a part*, but *the whole*, which is the soul and the body” (*De resurr.*, 8). Athenagoras of Athens develops the same argument in his admirable treatise *On the Resurrection of the Dead*. Man was created by God for a definite purpose, for perpetual existence. Now, “God gave independent being and life neither to the nature of the soul by itself, nor to the nature of the body separately, but rather to men, composed of soul and body, so that with these same parts of which they are composed, when they are born and live, they should attain after the termination of this life their common end; soul and body compose in man *one living entity*.” There would no longer be a man, Athenagoras argues, if the completeness of this structure were broken, for then the identity of the individual would be broken also. The stability of the body, its continuity in its proper nature, must correspond to the immortality of the soul. “The entity which receives intellect and

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reason is man, and *not the soul alone*. Consequently man must for ever remain composed of soul and body.” Otherwise there would be no man, but only parts of man. “And this is impossible, if there is no resurrection. *For if there is no resurrection, the nature of men as men would not continue*” (15). The basic presupposition of the whole argument is that the body intrinsically belongs to the fullness of human existence. And therefore man, *as man*, would cease to exist, if the soul had to remain for ever “disembodied.” It is precisely the opposite of what the Platonists contended. The Greeks dreamt rather of a complete and ultimate disincarnation. An embodiment was just the bondage of the soul. For Christians, on the other hand, death was not a normal end of human existence. Man’s death is abnormal, is a failure. The death of man is “the wages of sin” (Rom. 6:23). It is a loss and corruption. And since the Fall the mystery of life is displaced by the mystery of death. Mysterious as the “union” of soul and body indeed is, the immediate consciousness of man witnesses to the organic wholeness of his psycho-physical structure. *Anima autem et spiritus pars hominis esse possunt, homo autem nequaquam*, said St. Irenaeus (*Adv. haereses* V, 6.1). A body without a soul is but a corpse, and a soul without body is a ghost. Man is not a ghost without body, and corpse is not a part of man. Man is not a “bodiless demon,” simply confined in the prison of the body. That is why the “separation” of soul and body is the death *of man himself*, the discontinuation of his existence, of his existence *as a man*. Consequently death and the corruption of the body are a sort of fading away of the “image of God” in man. A dead man is not fully human. St. John of Damascus, in one of his glorious anthems in the Burial Service, says of this: “I weep and I

lament, when I contemplate death, and see our beauty, fashioned after the image of God, lying in the grave disfigured, dishonored, bereft of form.” St. John speaks not of man’s body, but of man himself.

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“Our beauty in the image of God” is not the body, but man. He is indeed an “image of the unfathomable glory of God,” even when “wounded by sin.” And in death it is disclosed that man, this “reasonable statue” fashioned by God, to use the phrase of St. Methodius (*De resurrectione* 1, 34.4: *to agalma to logikon*), is but a corpse. “Man is but dry bones, a stench and the food of worms.”¹¹ One may speak of man as being “one hypostasis in two natures,” and not only of, but precisely in two natures. And in death this one human hypostasis is broken up. And there is no man any more. And therefore man longs for “*the redemption of his body*” (Rom. 8:23: *ten apolytrōsin tou sōmatos hēmōn*). As St. Paul says elsewhere, “not for that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life” (2 Cor. 5:4). The sting of death is precisely in that it is “the wages of sin,” i.e., the consequence of a distorted relationship with God. It is not only a natural imperfection, nor is it just a metaphysical deadlock. Man’s mortality reflects man’s estrangement from God, Who is the only Giver of Life. And, in this estrangement from God, Man simply cannot “endure” as man, cannot stay fully human. The *status* of mortality is essentially “*subhuman*.” To stress human mortality does not mean to offer a “naturalistic” interpretation of human tragedy, but, on the contrary, it means to trace the human predicament to its ultimate religious root. The strength of Patristic theology was precisely in its interest in human mortality, and accordingly in the message of the Resurrection. The misery of sinful existence was by no means underestimated, but it was interpreted not only in ethical or moralistic categories, but in theological ones. The burden of sin consisted not only in self-accusations of human conscience, not only in the consciousness of guilt, but in an utter disintegration of the whole fabric of human nature. The fallen man was no man any more, he was existentially “degraded.” And the sign of this “degradation” was Man’s

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mortality, Man’s death. In separation from God human nature becomes unsettled, goes out of tune, as it were. The very structure of man becomes unstable. The “union” of the soul and the body becomes insecure. The soul loses its vital power, is no more able to quicken the body. The body is turned into the tomb and prison of the soul. And physical death becomes inevitable. The body and the soul are no longer, as it were, secured or adjusted to each other. The transgression of the Divine commandment “reinstated man in the state of nature,” as St. Athanasius puts it,— *eis to kata physin epestrepsen*. “That as he was made out of nothing, so also in his very existence he suffered in due time corruption, according to all justice.” For, being

¹¹ The Order for the Burial of the Dead, in Hapgood, *Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church*, etc., Revised edition (New York, Association Press, 1922), pp. 386, 389-390.

made out of nothing, the creature also exists over an abyss of nothingness, ever ready to fall into it (*De incarnatione*, 4 and 5). “For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again” (2 Sam 14:14). “The state of nature,” of which St. Athanasius speaks, is the cyclical motion of Cosmos, in which fallen man is hopelessly entangled, and this entanglement signifies man’s degradation. He loses his privileged position in the order of Creation. But this metaphysical catastrophe is just a manifestation of the broken relationship with God.

IV “I am the Resurrection, and the Life”

The Incarnation of the Word was an absolute manifestation of God. And above all it was a revelation of Life. Christ is the Word of Life, *ho logos tês zôês* (I John 1:1). The Incarnation itself was, in a sense, the quickening of man, as it were the resurrection of human nature. In the Incarnation human nature was not merely anointed with a superabundant overflowing of Grace, but was assumed into

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an intimate and “hypostatical” unity with Divinity itself. In that lifting up of human nature into an everlasting communion with the Divine Life, the Fathers of the early Church unanimously saw the very essence of salvation. “That is saved which is united with God,” says St. Gregory of Nazianzus. And what was not so united could not be saved at all (*Epist. 101, ad Cledonium*). This was the fundamental motive in the whole of early theology, in St. Irenaeus, St. Athanasius, the Cappadocians, St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. Maximus the Confessor. Yet, the climax of the Incarnate Life was the Cross, the death of the Incarnate Lord. Life has been revealed in full through death. This is the paradoxical mystery of the Christian faith: life through death, life from the grave and out of the grave, the Mystery of the life-bearing grave. And Christians are born again to real and everlasting life only through their baptismal death and burial in Christ; they are regenerated with Christ in the baptismal font (cf. Rom. 6:3-5). Such is the invariable law of true life. “That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die” (1 Cor. 15:36). Salvation was completed on Golgotha, not on Tabor, and the Cross of Jesus was spoken of even on Tabor (cf. Luke 9:31). Christ *had* to die, in order to bestow an abundant life upon the whole of mankind. It was not the necessity of this world. This was, as it were, the necessity of Love Divine, a necessity of a Divine order. And we fail to comprehend the mystery. Why had the true life to be revealed through the death of One, Who was Himself “the Resurrection and the Life”? The only answer is that Salvation had to be a victory over death and man’s mortality. The ultimate enemy of man was precisely death. Redemption was not just the forgiveness of sins, nor was it man’s reconciliation with God. It was the deliverance from sin and death. “Penitence does not deliver from the state of nature (into which man has relapsed through sin), it only discontinues the sin,” says St. Athanasius. For man not only sinned but “fell into cor-

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ruption.” Now, the mercy of God could not permit “that creatures once made rational, and having partaken of the Word, should go to ruin and turn again to non-existence by the way of corruption.” Consequently the Word of God descended and became man, assumed our body, “that, whereas man turned towards corruption, He might turn them again towards incorruption, and quicken them from death by the appropriation of his body and by the grace of the Resurrection, banishing death from them like a straw from the fire” (*De incarnatione*, 6-8). Thus, according to St. Athanasius, the Word became flesh in order to abolish “corruption” in human nature. However, death is vanquished, not by the appearance of Life in the mortal body, but rather by the voluntary death of the Incarnate Life. The Word became incarnate on account of death in flesh, St. Athanasius emphasizes. “In order to accept death He had a body” (c. 44). Or, to quote Tertullian, *forma moriendi causa nascendi est* (*De carne Christi*, 6). The ultimate reason for Christ’s death must be seen in the mortality of Man. Christ suffered death, but passed through it and overcame mortality and corruption. He quickened death itself. “By death He destroyed death.” The death of Christ is therefore, as it were, an extension of the Incarnation. The death on the Cross was effective, not as the death of an Innocent One, but as the death of the Incarnate Lord. “We needed an Incarnate God, God put to death, that we might live,” to use a bold and startling phrase of St. Gregory of Nazianzus (*Orat. 45, in S. Pascha*, 28: *edeéthêmen theou sarkoumenou kai nekroumenou*). It was not a man that died on the Cross. In Christ there is no human hypostasis. His personality was Divine, yet incarnate. “For He who suffered was not common man, but God made man, and fighting the contest of endurance,” says St. Cyril of Jerusalem (*Catech.* 13, 6). It may be properly said that God died on the Cross, but in His own humanity (which was, however, “consubstantial” with ours). This was the voluntary death of One Who

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was Himself Life Eternal. A human death indeed, death “according to humanity,” and yet death within the hypostasis of the Word, of the Incarnate Word. And thence a resurrecting death. “I have a baptism to be baptized with” (Luke 12:50). It was the death on the Cross, and the shedding of blood, “the baptism of martyrdom and blood, with which Christ Himself also was baptized,” as St. Gregory of Nazianzus suggested (*Orat.* 37, 17). The death on the Cross as a baptism of blood, this is the very essence of the redeeming mystery of the Cross. Baptism is a cleansing. And the Baptism of the Cross was, as it were, the cleansing of the human nature, which was travelling the path of restoration in the Hypostasis of the Incarnate Word. This was, as it were, a washing of human nature in the outpoured sacrificial blood of the Divine Lamb, and first of all a washing of the body: not only a washing away of sins, but a washing away of human infirmities and of mortality itself. It was the cleansing in preparation for the coming resurrection: a cleansing of all human nature, a cleansing of all humanity in the person of its new and mystical First-born, in the “Last Adam.” This was the baptism by blood of the whole Church, and indeed of the whole world. “A purification not for a small part of man’s world, not for a short time, but for the whole Universe and through eternity,” to quote St. Gregory of Nazianzus once

more (*Orat.* 45, 13). The Lord died on the Cross. This was a true death. Yet not wholly like ours, simply because this was the death of the Incarnate Word, death within the indivisible Hypostasis of the Word made man, the death of the “enhypostatized” humanity. This does not alter the ontological character of death, but changes its meaning. The “Hypostatic Union” was not broken or destroyed by death, and therefore the soul and the body, though separated from each other, remained still united through the Divinity of the Word, from which neither was ever estranged. This was an “incorrupt death,” and therefore “corruption” and “mortality” were overcome

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in it, and in it begins the resurrection. The very death of the Incarnate reveals the resurrection of human nature (St. John of Damascus, *De fide orth.*, 3.27; cf. *Homil. in Magn. Sabbat.*, 29). “Today we keep the feast, for our Lord is nailed upon the Cross,” in the sharp phrase of St. John Chrysostom (*In crucem et latronem*, hom. 1). The death on the Cross is a victory over death not only because it was followed by the Resurrection. It is itself the victory. The Resurrection only reveals and sets forth the victory achieved on the Cross. It is already accomplished in the very falling asleep of the God-man. “Thou diest and quickenest me...”. As St. Gregory of Nazianzus puts it: “He lays down His life, but He has the power to take it again; and the veil is rent, for the mysterious doors of Heaven are opened; the rocks are cleft, the dead arise... He dies, but He gives life, and by His death destroys death. He is buried, but He rises again. He goes down into Hades, but He brings up the souls” (*Orat.* 41). This mystery of the resurrecting Cross is commemorated especially on Good Saturday. It is the day of the Descent into Hell (Hades). And the Descent into Hades is already the Resurrection of the dead. By the very fact of His death Christ joins the company of the departed. It is the new extension of the Incarnation. Hades is just the darkness and shadow of death, rather a place of mortal anguish than a place of penal torments, a dark “*sheol*,” a place of hopeless disembodiment and disincarnation, which was only scantily and dimly fore-illuminated by the slanting rays of the not-yet-risen Sun, by the hope and expectation yet unfulfilled. It was, as it were, a kind of ontological infirmity of the soul, which, in the separation of death, had lost the faculty of being the true *entelechia* of its own body, the helplessness of fallen and wounded nature. Not a “place” at all, but rather a spiritual state: “the spirits in prison” (I Pt. 3:19). It was into *this* prison, into *this* “Hell,” that the Lord and Savior descended. Amid the darkness of pale death shone the unquenchable light of Life, the Life

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Divine. The “Descent into Hell” is the manifestation of Life amid the hopelessness of mortal dissolution, it is victory over death. “It was not from any natural weakness of the Word that dwelt in it that the body had died, but in order that in it death might be done away by the power of the Savior,” says St. Athanasius (*De inc.*, 26). Good Saturday is more than Easter-Eve. It is the “Blessed Sabbath,” “*Sanctum Sabbatum, requies Sabbati magni*,” in the phrase of St. Ambrose.

“This is the Blessed Sabbath, this is the day of rest, whereon the Only-Begotten Son of God has rested from all His deeds” (Anthem, Vespers of Good Saturday, according to the Eastern rite). “I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead: and behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen. And I have the keys of death and of Hades” (Rev. 1: 17-18). The Christian “hope of immortality” is rooted in and secured by this victory of Christ, and not by any “natural” endowment. And it means also that this hope is rooted in a *historical event*, i.e., in a *historical self-revelation* of God, and not in any static disposition or constitution of human nature.

V The Last Adam

The reality of death is not yet abolished, but its powerlessness has been revealed. “It is true, we still die as before,” says St. John Chrysostom, “but we do not remain in death, and this is not to die. . . the power and very reality of death is just this, that a dead man has no possibility of returning to life; but if after death he is to be quickened and moreover to be given a better life, then this is no longer death, but tL falling sleep” (*In Hebr.*, hom. 17, 2: *ou thanatos touto estin, alla koimêsis*). Or in the phrase of St. Athanasius, “like seed cast on the earth, we do not perish when we

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die, but having been sown, we rise” (*De inc.*, 21). This was a healing and renewal of human “nature,” and therefore all will rise, all will be raised and restored to the fullness of their natural being, yet transformed. From henceforth every disembodiment is but temporary. The dark vale of Hades is abolished by the power of the life-giving Cross. In the *first* Adam the inherent potentiality of death by disobedience was disclosed and actualized. In the *second* Adam the potentiality of immortality by purity and obedience was sublimated and actualized into the impossibility of death. This parallel was drawn already by St. Irenaeus. Apart from the hope of the General Resurrection, belief in Christ would be vain and to no purpose. “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruit of them that slept” (I Cor. 15:20). The Resurrection of Christ is a *new beginning*. It is a “*new creation*,” *hê kainê ktisis*. One may say even, an *eschatological* beginning, an *ultimate* step in the history of Salvation.¹² And yet, we have to make a clear distinction between the healing of nature and the healing of the will. “Nature” is healed and restored with a certain compulsion, by the mighty power of God’s omnipotent and invincible grace. The wholeness is as it were, “forced” upon human nature. For in Christ *all* human nature (the “seed of Adam”) is fully and completely cured from unwholeness and mortality. This restoration will be actualized and revealed to its full extent in due time, in the General Resurrection, in the resurrection of *all*, both of the righteous and the wicked. And no

¹² The word *kainos* in the New Testament use does not mean only anything new, but rather something final, “that belongs to the final consummation.” The word seems to have throughout an eschatological accent. Cf. Behm’s article *sub voce*, in Kittel’s *Wörterbuch*, III.451 ff.

one, so far as nature is concerned, can escape Christ's kingly rule, or alienate himself from the invincible power of the resurrection. But the *will* of man cannot be cured in the same invincible manner. The will of man must turn *itself* to God. There must be a free and spontaneous response of love and adoration, a "free conversion." The will of man can be cured only in the "mystery of freedom." Only by this free effort does man enter into that new and eternal life which is revealed in Christ Jesus.

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A spiritual regeneration can be wrought only in perfect freedom, in an obedience of love, by a self-consecration and self-dedication to God, in Christ. This distinction was made with great insistence by Nicolas Cabasilas in his remarkable treatise on *The Life in Christ*. Resurrection is a "rectification of nature" (*hê anastasis physeôs estin epanorthôsis*) and this God grants freely. But the Kingdom of Heaven, and the beatific vision, and union with Christ, presuppose the desire (*trophê estin tês thelêseôs*), and therefore are available only for those who have longed for them, and loved, and desired. And immortality will be given to all, just as all can enjoy Divine providence. It does not depend upon our will whether we shall rise after death or not, just as it is not by our will that we are born. The death and resurrection of Christ bring immortality and incorruption to all in the same manner, because all have the same nature as the Man Christ Jesus. But nobody can be compelled to desire. Thus Resurrection is a gift common to all, but the blessedness will be given only to some (*De vita in Christo* 2.86-96). And again, the path of life is the path of renunciation, of mortification, of self-sacrifice and self-oblation. One has to die to oneself in order to live in Christ. Each one must personally and freely associate himself with Christ, the Lord, the Savior, and the Redeemer, in the confession of faith, in the choice of love, in the mystical oath of allegiance. He who does not die with Christ cannot live with Him. "Unless of our own free choice we accept to die unto His passion, His life is not in us" (St. Ignatius, *Magnes.*, 5; the phraseology is Pauline). This is no mere ascetical or moral rule, no mere discipline. This is the ontological law of spiritual existence, even the law of life itself. For only in communion with God and through life in Christ does the restoration of human wholeness gain meaning. To those in total darkness, who have deliberately confined themselves "outside God," the Resurrection itself must seem rather unnecessary and unmotivated. But it will come, as

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a "resurrection to judgment" (John 5:29 *anastasis tês kriseôs*). And in this will be completed the tragedy of human freedom. Here indeed we are on the threshold of the inconceivable and incomprehensible. The *apokatastasis* of nature does not abolish free will, and the will must be moved from within by love. St. Gregory of Nyssa had a clear understanding of this. He anticipated a kind of universal *conversion* of souls in the after-life, when the Truth of God will be revealed and manifested with some ultimate and *compelling* evidence. just at this point the limitations of the Hellenistic mind are obvious. Evidence seemed to it to be the decisive reason or motive for the will, as if "sin" were merely "ignorance." The Hellenistic mind had to pass

through its long and hard experience of asceticism, of ascetical self-examination and self-control, in order to free itself from this intellectualistic *naivete* and illusion, and discover a dark abyss in the fallen soul. Only in St. Maximus, after some centuries of ascetic preparation, do we find a new, remodeled and deepened interpretation of the *apokatastasis*. St. Maximus did not believe in the inevitable conversion of obstinate souls. He taught an *apokatastasis* of nature, i.e., a restitution of all beings to an integrity of nature, of a universal manifestation of the Divine Life, which will be evident to every one. But those who have deliberately spent their lives on earth in fleshly desires, “against nature,” will be unable to enjoy this eternal bliss. The Light is the Word, that illuminates the natural minds of the faithful; but as a burning fire of the judgment (*têi kausei tês kriseôs*), He punishes those who, through love of the flesh, cling to the nocturnal darkness of this life. The distinction is between an *epignôsis* and a *methexis*. “Acknowledgment” is not the same as “Participation.” God will be in all indeed, but only in the Saints will He be present “with grace” (*dia tên charin*); in the reprobate He will be present “without grace” (*para tên charin*). And the wicked will be estranged from God by their lack of a resolute purpose of

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good.¹³ We have here the same duality of nature and will. In the resurrection the whole of creation will be restored, i.e., brought to perfection and ultimate stability. But sin and evil are rooted in the will. The Hellenistic mind concluded therefrom that evil is unstable and by itself must disappear inevitably. For nothing can be perpetual, unless it be rooted in a Divine decree. The Christian inference is exactly the opposite. There is the inertia and obstinacy of the will, and this obstinacy may remain uncured even in the “universal Restoration.” God never does any violence to man, and communion with God cannot be forced upon the obstinate. In the phrase of St. Maximus, “the Spirit does not produce an undesired resolve but it transforms a chosen purpose into *theosis*” (*Quaest. ad Thalass.*, 6). We live in a changed world: it has been changed by Christ’s redeeming Resurrection. Life has been given, and it will prevail. The Incarnate Lord is in very truth the Second Adam and in Him the *new* humanity has been inaugurated. Not only an ultimate “survival” is assured, but also the fulfillment of God’s creative purpose. Man *is made “immortal.”* He cannot commit an ultimate “metaphysical suicide” and strike himself out of existence. Yet even the victory of Christ does not force “Eternal Life” upon the “closed” beings. As St. Augustine says, for the creature “being is not the same thing as living” (*De Genesi ad litt.* 1, 5).

¹³ St. Maximus, *Quaest. ad Thalassium*, qu. 39, sch. 3; *Capit. quinquies cent.* II.39. Urs von Balthasar, *Kosmische Liturgie: Maximus der Bekenner* (Freiburg i/Br., 1941), 367 ff. (or French edition, Paris, 1947, pp. 265 ff.). Unfortunately, Balthasar’s interpretation is, at least, incomplete.

VI “And Life Everlasting”

There is an inevitable tension in the Christian conception between “the given” and “the expected.” Christians *look* “for the Life of the world *to come*,” but they are no less aware of the Life that *has* already *come*: “for the Life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness,

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and show unto you that eternal Life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us” (I John 1:2). This is not only a tension *in time*,— between the past, and the present, and the future. It is a tension between *destiny* and *decision*. Or perhaps one may say: Life Eternal is offered to Man, but he has *to receive* it. For individuals, fulfillment of “destiny” depends upon the “decision of faith,” which is not an “acknowledgment” only, but a willing “participation.” The Christian life is initiated with a new birth, by water and the Spirit. And first, “repentance” is required, *he metanoia*, an inner change, intimate and resolute. The symbolism of Holy Baptism is complex and manifold. But above all it is a symbolism of death and resurrection, of Christ’s death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-4). It is a sacramental resurrection with Christ, by the participation in His death, a rising up with Him and in Him to a new and eternal life (Col. 2:12; Phil. 3:10). Christians are co-resurrected with Christ precisely through burial: “for *if* we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him” (2 Tim. 2:11). Christ is the Second Adam, but men must be born anew and be incorporated into Him, in order to partake of that new life which is His. St. Paul spoke of a “likeness” unto the death of Christ (Rom. 6:5 *symphytoi... tôi homoiômati tou thanatou autou*). But this “likeness” means much more than a resemblance. It is more than a mere sign or recollection. The meaning of this likeness for St. Paul himself was that in each of us Christ can and must be “formed” (Gal. 4:19). Christ is the Head, all believers are His members, and His life is actualized in them. This is the mystery of the Whole Christ,— *totus Christus, Caput et Corpus*. All are called and every one is capable of believing, and of being quickened by faith and baptism so as to live in Him. Baptism is therefore a “regeneration,” an *anagennêsis*, a new, spiritual and charismatic birth. As Cabasilas says, Baptism is the cause of a beatific life in Christ, not merely of life (*De vita in Christo* 2.95). St. Cyril of Jerusalem in a lucid manner

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explains the true reality of all baptismal symbolism. It is true, he says, that in the baptismal font we die (and are buried) *only* “in imitation,” only, as it were, “symbolically,” *dia symbolou*, and we do not rise from a real grave. And yet, “if the imitation is in an image, the salvation is in very truth.” For Christ was really crucified and buried, and actually rose from the grave. The Greek word is *ontôs*. It is even stronger than simply *alethôs*, “in very truth.” It emphasizes the ultimate meaning of Christ’s death and resurrection. It was a new achievement. Hence He gave us the chance, by “imitative” sharing of His Passion (*têi mimêsei... koinonêsantes*), to acquire salvation “in reality.” It is not only an “imitation,” but a “similitude,” *to homoiôma*. “Christ was crucified and buried in reality, but to you it is given to be crucified, buried, and raised with Him in

similitude.” In other words, in baptism man descends “sacramentally” into the darkness of death, and yet with the Risen Lord he rises again and crosses over from death to life. “And the image is completed all upon you, for you are an image of Christ,” concludes St. Cyril. In other words, all are held together by and in Christ; hence the very possibility of a sacramental “resemblance” (*Mystag.* 2.4-5, 7; 3-1). St. Gregory of Nyssa dwells on the same point. There are two aspects in baptism. Baptism is a birth and a death. Natural birth is the beginning of a mortal existence, which begins and ends in corruption. Another, a new birth, had to be discovered, which would initiate into everlasting life. In baptism “the presence of a Divine power transforms what is born with a corruptible nature into a state of incorruption” (*Orat. cat.*, 33). It is transformed through following and imitating; and thus what was foreshown by the Lord is realized. Only by following after Christ can one pass through the labyrinth of life and come out of it. “For I call the inescapable guard of death, in which sorrowing mankind is imprisoned, a labyrinth.” Christ escaped from this after the three days of death. In the baptismal font “the imitation of

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all that He has done is accomplished.” Death is “represented” in the element of water. And as Christ rose again to life, so also the newly-baptized, united with Him in bodily nature, “does imitate the resurrection on the third day.” This is just an “imitation,” *mimêsis*, and not “identity.” In baptism man is not actually raised, but only freed from natural evil and the inescapability of death. In him the “continuity of vice” is cut off. He is not resurrected for he does not die, but remains still in this life. Baptism only foreshadows the resurrection; in baptism one anticipates the grace of the final resurrection. Baptism is the start, *archê*, and the resurrection is the end and consummation, *peras*; and all that takes place in the great Resurrection already has its beginnings and causes in baptism. One may say, baptism is an “Homiotic resurrection” (*Orat. cat.*, 35). It must be pointed out that St. Gregory specially emphasized the need of keeping and holding fast the baptismal grace. For in baptism it is not nature only, but the will as well, that is transformed and transfigured, remaining free throughout. And if the soul is not cleansed and purified in the free exercise of will, baptism proves to be fruitless. The transfiguration is not actualized, the new life is not yet consummated. This does not subordinate baptismal grace to human license; Grace does indeed descend. Yet it can never be forced upon any one who is free and made in the image of God: it must be responded to and corroborated by the synergism of love and will. Grace does not quicken and enliven the closed and obstinate souls, the really “dead souls.” Response and cooperation are required (c. 40). That is just because baptism is a sacramental dying with Christ, a participation in His voluntary death, in His sacrificial love; and this can be accomplished only in freedom. Thus in baptism the death of Christ on the Cross is reflected or portrayed as in a living and sacramental image. Baptism is at once a death and a birth, a burial and a “bath of regeneration,” *loutron tês palinggenesias*: “a time of

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death and a time of birth,” to quote St. Cyril of Jerusalem (*Mystag.* 2.4). The same is true of all sacraments. All sacraments are instituted just in order to enable the faithful “to participate” in Christ’s redeeming death and to gain thereby the grace of His resurrection. In sacraments the uniqueness and universality of Christ’s victory and sacrifice are brought forward and emphasized. This was the main idea of Nicolas Cabasilas in his treatise *On the Life in Christ*, in which the whole sacramental doctrine of the Eastern Church was admirably summarized. “We are baptized just in order to die by His death and to rise by His resurrection. We are anointed with the chrism that we may partake of His kingly anointment of deification (*theosis*). And when we are fed with the most sacred Bread and do drink the most Divine Cup, we do partake of the same flesh and the same blood our Lord has assumed, and so we are united with Him, Who was for us incarnate, and died, and rose again ... Baptism is a birth, and Chrism is the cause of acts and movements, and the Bread of life and the Cup of thanksgivings are the true food and the true drink” (*De vita* 2, 3,4,6, etc.). In the whole sacramental life of the Church the Cross and the Resurrection are “imitated” and reflected in manifold symbols. All that symbolism is realistic. The symbols do not merely remind us of something in the past, something which has passed away. That which took place “in the past” was a beginning of “the Everlasting.” Under all these sacred “symbols,” and in them, the ultimate Reality is in very truth disclosed and conveyed. This hieratic symbolism culminates in the august Mystery of the Holy Altar. The Eucharist is the heart of the Church, the Sacrament of Redemption in an eminent sense. It is more than an “imitation,” or mere “commemoration.” It is Reality itself, at once veiled and disclosed in the Sacrament. It is “the perfect and ultimate Sacrament” (*to teleutaion mystêrion*), as Cabasilas says, “and one cannot go further, and there is nothing to be added.” It is the “limit of life,”

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zôês to peras. “After the Eucharist there is nothing more to long for, but we have to stay here and learn how we can preserve this treasure up to the end” (*De vita* IV,i,4,15). The Eucharist is the Last Supper itself, enacted, as it were, again and again, and yet not repeated. For every new celebration does not only “represent,” but truly *is the same* “Mystical Supper” which was celebrated for the first time (and *for ever*) by the Divine High Priest Himself, as a voluntary anticipation and initiation of the Sacrifice of the Cross. And the true Celebrant of each Eucharist is always Christ Himself. St. John Chrysostom was quite emphatic on this point. “Believe, therefore, that even now it is that Supper, at which He Himself sat down. For this one is in no respect different from that one” (*In Matt.*, hom. 50,3). “He that then did these things at that Supper, this same now also works them. We hold the rank of ministers. He who sanctifieth and changeth them is the Same. This table is the same as that, and hath nothing less. For it is not that Christ wrought that, and man this, but He doth this too. This is that Upper Chamber, where they were then” (*Ibid.*, hom. 82,5). All this is of primary importance. The Last Supper was an offering of the sacrifice, of the sacrifice of the Cross. The offering is still continued. Christ is still acting as the High Priest in His Church. The Mystery is all the same, and the Priest is the same, and the Table is one. To quote Cabasilas once more: “In offering and sacrificing Himself once

for all, He did not cease from His Priesthood, but He exercises this perpetual ministry for us, in which He is our advocate with God for ever" (*Explan. div. liturg.*, c. 23). And the resurrecting power and significance of Christ's death are in the Eucharist made manifest in full. It is "the medicine of immortality and an antidote that we should not die but live for ever in Jesus Christ," to quote the famous phrase of St. Ignatius (*Ephes.*, 20.2: *pharmakon athanasias, antidôtos tou mê apothanein alla zên en Iesou Christôi*). It is "the heavenly Bread

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and the Cup of life." This tremendous Sacrament is for the faithful the very "Betrothal of the Life Eternal," just because Christ's death itself was the Victory and the Resurrection. In the Eucharist the beginning and the end are linked together: the memories of the Gospel and the prophecies of the Revelation. It is a *sacramentum futuri* because it is an *anamnesis of the Cross*. The Eucharist is a sacramental anticipation, a foretaste of the Resurrection, an "image of the Resurrection" (*ho typos tês anastaseôs*,— the phrase is from the consecration prayer of St. Basil). It is but an "image," not because it is a mere sign, but because the history of Salvation is still going on, and one has to look forward, "to look for the life of the age to come."

VII

Christians, as Christians, are not committed to any philosophical doctrine of immortality. But they are committed to the belief in the General Resurrection. Man is a creature. His very existence is the grant of God. His very existence is contingent. He exists by the grace of God. But God created Man for existence, i.e., for an eternal destiny. This destiny can be achieved and consummated only in communion with God. A broken communion frustrates human existence, and yet Man does not cease to exist. Man's death and mortality is the sign of the broken communion, the sign of Man's isolation, of his estrangement from the source and the goal of his existence. And yet the creative *fiat* continues to operate. In the Incarnation communion is restored. Life is manifested afresh in the shadow of death. The Incarnate is the Life and the Resurrection. The Incarnate is the Conqueror of death and Hades. And He is the First-fruit of the New Creation, the First-fruit of all those who slept. The physical death of men is not just an irrelevant "natural phenomenon," but rather an ominous

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sign of the original tragedy. An "immortality" of disembodied "souls" would not solve the human problem. And "immortality" in a Godless world, an "immortality" without God or "outside God," would be an eternal doom. Christians, as Christians, aspire to something greater than a "natural" immortality. They aspire to an everlasting communion with God, or, to use the startling phrase of the early Fathers, to a *theosis*. There is nothing "naturalistic" or pantheistic about the term. *Theosis* means no more than an intimate communion of human persons with the Living God. To be with God means to dwell in Him and to share His perfection. "Then the Son of God became the son of man, that man also might become the son of God" (St. Irenaeus, *Adv.*

haeres. 3,10.2). In Him man is forever united with God. In Him we have Life Eternal. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor 3:18). And, at the close, for the whole creation the "Blessed Sabbath," the very "Day of rest," the mysterious "Seventh day of creation," will be inaugurated, in the General Resurrection and in "the World to come."