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Body and Soul in Early Reformation Exegesis: Resurrection or Immortality of the Soul?

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More than a decade ago when I was preparing my MA thesis, in which I studied Philippians 1,18-26 in light of Pauline Eschatology, I made an extensive study of the monist-dualist debate in biblical anthropology of the past century with regard to the after-life expectations of the Apostle Paul and his Pagan, Jewish and Christian contemporaries. In my thesis I came to the finding that the question of the possibility of the existence of an immortal soul and an intermediate state between the time of death of the human person and the bodily resurrection at the end of the world in the *parousia*, has been a hotly debated issue in the exegesis of the twentieth century. Without any evidence to the contrary, I concluded that the idea of an essentially monistic biblical anthropology in which body and soul are not separable components of the human person but two aspects of the same reality, and accordingly in which there is no place or possibility for an intermediary state of an *anima separata* between death and resurrection surfaced only with or in the wake of the findings of the *Religionsgeschichtliche Schule*. In other words I thought that the idea of a development of a monistic Jewish anthropology evolving under the influence of a dualistic Greek philosophy into the mediaeval scholastic teaching on body and soul and eventually being officially promulgated in 1215 at the Fourth Lateran Council was one of modern exegesis.

Great was my surprise then when in my study of sixteenth-century biblical translations and exegesis I came across the same idea in the writings of the English reformer and Bible translator William Tyndale. And as it turned out the issue was a hotly debated one in the age of the reformers.

In fact doubts about the possibility of an immortal soul that could exist apart from the body predated Luther's appearance and came from a philosophical corner at the dawn of the Reformation as a reaction to the philosophy of Marsilio Ficino, the most prominent and most influential philosopher of the Italian Renaissance. Ficino in his work *De animarum Immortalitate*, published in 1482 in Florence, had argued for the immortality of the soul based on his Christianised neo-Platonic view. Although Ficino believed that death is the liberation of the imprisoned soul, he also believed in the bodily resurrection, which he accepted on the authority of the Church. But his neo-Platonic anthropology was questioned openly by Pietro Pomponazzi some thirty years later. In his *Tractatus de immortalitate animæ*, published in Bologna in 1516, Pomponazzi denied Ficino's arguments and rejected the idea that the immortality of the soul could be proved by rational arguments. As a result Pomponazzi was declared a heretic in Venice and his book was burned publicly. Pomponazzi responded the following year with a more detailed statement of his position, in his *Apologia Petri Pomponatii* (1517) and two years later in his *Defensorium adversus Augustinum Niphum* (1519). Pomponazzi maintained that only the *intellectus agens* is one and the same in every person, which he identified with God. The intellective soul is the same as the sensitive soul and is therefore mortal. In death, it becomes deprived of body

upon which it depends for its object. Accordingly it can no longer act and must perish with the body. Pomponazzi also denied the possibility of miracles, and the efficacy of prayer and relics¹. He claimed that these were merely inventions to enforce morality. Based on the doctrine of ‘double truth’ Pomponazzi nonetheless held that his views were true only in philosophy but false in theology. Pomponazzi’s views were condemned by the Fifth Lateran Council (1512-1517) where the immortality of the soul was promulgated as the official doctrine of the Catholic Church².

The question gained more importance with the appearance of Martin Luther. Luther entered into debate on the question of the practice of indulgences and initially did not deny either the existence of Purgatory or the possibility of an intermediate state of the soul. With the advance of his biblical works and translations, he became more and more convinced that the ideas of Purgatory and the intercession of the saints were later doctrinal developments and were utterly unbiblical. The German reformer also reconsidered the official teaching on the fate of the dead. In a letter dated 13 January 1522, written to his Wittenberg scholar friend Canon Nicholas von Amsdorf (1483-1565) Luther addressed the idea of soul sleep for the first time³. Here Luther states that he is ready to concede that the souls of the righteous sleep until the Day of Judgement at an unknown place⁴. This is what 2 Sam 7,12 (in the Vulgate’s reading: *dormiunt cum patribus suis*) seems to suggest, Luther argued. But taking the rapture of Paul (2 Cor 12,2), of Moses (Deut 35,5f) and of Elijah (2 Kings 2,11) into consideration, Luther was not sure whether this sleep is the case for all souls. The appearance of these last two on Mount Tabor (Matt 17,3), Luther maintained, and also the story of Lazarus and the Rich Man in the Gospel of Luke seem to contradict such a sleep of the souls after death. Therefore, Luther claimed, it is not sure what God does with the souls separated from their bodies⁵. It also remains unresolved whether the damned will receive their punishment immediately after their death or only at the end of the world, but it is conceivable that they, too are asleep and insensible until the Second Coming⁶. In any case, the denial of the existence of Purgatory in the traditional understanding (which is a necessary conclusion if one assumes the souls to be asleep) cannot render anyone a heretic, Luther asserted⁷. For Purgatory is not so much a distinct place, Luther wrote, but a state of purging by tormenting⁸.

¹ M. PINE, *Pomponazzi and the Problem of “Double Truth,”* in *The Journal of the History of Ideas* 29 (1968), 163-176, p. 163.

² During Session VIII (1513), the council fathers condemned all that held the soul to be mortal: *Damnatus et reprobatus omnes assertentes animam intellectivam mortalem esse*. Cf. P.O. KRISTELLER, *Eight Philosophers of the Italian Renaissance*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 1964, p. 47. On the history of the Fifth Lateran Council see: C. STANGE, *Luther und das fünfte Laterankonzil*, Gütersloh, Bertelsmann, 1928; N.H. MINNICH, *The Fifth Lateran council (1512-17). Studies on Its Membership, Diplomacy and Proposals for Reform*, (Variorum Collected Studies Series, 392), Aldershot, Variorum, 1993.

³ M. Luther. *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Briefwechsel*, B. II (1520-1522), Weimar, Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1931 [further abbreviated as *WA BW II*], pp. 422-424.

⁴ “Proclive mihi est concedere tecum in eam sententiam, iustorum animas dormire ac usque ad iudicii diem nescire, ubi sint” (*WA BW II* (n. 3), p. 422).

⁵ “Quis enim novit, quomodo Deus agat cum animabus separatis?” (*WA BW II* (n. 3), p. 422).

⁶ “Veresimile autem, exceptis paucis omnes dormire insensibiles” (*WA BW II* (n. 3), 422).

⁷ “Non enim, si neges purgatorium, haereticus es” (*WA BW II* (n. 3), p. 422).

⁸ *WA BW II* (n. 3), pp. 422-23.

In his sermons on the story about the Rich Man and Lazarus (1522 and 1523), Luther taught that the bosom of Abraham is not a carnal reality (because Abraham's body is buried in Canaan and his soul has no bosom) but refers to God's blessing of Abraham in Gen 22,18: "by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves"⁹. Therefore all those who died before Christ with a firm faith, were transferred to Abraham's bosom, that is to say, they are stored and kept as if in a bosom until the Day of Judgement, except for those who already are resurrected together with Christ (Matt 27,52)¹⁰. In his later sermon, Luther claimed that everyone would be transferred to Abraham's bosom, which is to be understood as a metaphor for the Gospel¹¹. But if the bosom of Abraham refers to God's promise wherein the blessed rest, are kept and preserved until the last day, then hell where the rich man is depicted in the story, must also refer to the absence of God's word from which the infidels are deprived until the end of the world¹². Now the question arises, Luther wrote, whether the rich man is going to be tormented until the end of the world. This is a subtle question, Luther claimed, and is not easy to answer. But in the other world, Luther asserted, there is no temporality, but everything happens as if in an eternal wink of the eye (cf. 2 Pet 3,8)¹³. Therefore, the rich man could have experienced all this in the wink of an eye when his eyes were opened in death, and the next thing he will know, will be the end of the world¹⁴. Hence Luther finds it impossible to say whether the rich man is still being and will be continuously kept tormented until the end of the world¹⁵. In a later sermon, Luther restates the atemporality of the other world claiming that at the resurrection, Adam and the ancient Fathers will feel as if they had still been alive only half an hour earlier¹⁶.

⁹ M. Luther. *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*. B. X/3 (Predigten 1522), Weimar, Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1905 [further abbreviated as *WA X/3*], p. 191. M. Luther. *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, B. XII (Reihenpredigt über 1. Petrus 1522; Predigten 1522/23; Schriften 1523), Weimar, Hermann Böhlhaus, 1891 [further abbreviated as *WA XII*], pp. 595-596.

¹⁰ "Also sind alle Vetter für Christus gepurt ynn den schoß Abrahe gefaren, das ist sie sind am sterben mit festem glawben an dißem spruch Gottis blieben und ynn das selbige wortt entschlaffen, gefasset und bewartet als ynn eynem schoß, und schlaffen auch noch drynnen biß an den iungsten tag, außgenommen die ßo mit Christo sind schon aufferstande, wie Mattheus schryebt am 26. [*sic*] Capitel [*vere* 27,52]" (*WA X/3* (n. 9), p. 191).

¹¹ "Derhalebn dise schoß ist das Ewangelium, die verhaissung die dem Abraham geschehen ist, da müssen wir alle hynein, wenn ich unnd ein yeglicher Christ sterben muß, so muß er die augen zuthun und allain an gottes wort hangen und got vertrauen, das er unns auff nemen werdt" (*WA XII* (n. 9), p. 596).

¹² "Denn gleych wie Abrahams schoß Gottis wort ist, darynnen die die glawbigen rugen, schlaffen, und bewaret werden biß an den iungsten tag, Also muß yhe widderumb die helle syen, da Gottis wort nicht ist, darynnen die unglewbigen durch den unglawben verstossen sind biß an iungsten tag: Das kan nicht anders den eynn leer, unglewbig, sundig, böße gewissen seyn" (*WA X/3* (n. 9), p. 192).

¹³ "Denn hie muß man die zeyt auß dem synn thun unnd wissen, das ynn yhener welt nicht zeyt noch stund sind, sondern alles eyn ewiger augenblick, wie Sanct Petrus am zweyten Pet: am zweyten sagt" (*WA X/3* (n. 9), p. 194).

¹⁴ On atemporality after death in Luther's eschatology see: R.B. BARNES, *Prophecy and Gnosis. Apocalypticism and the Wake of the Lutheran Reformation*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 1988, pp. 36-37.

¹⁵ *WA X/3* (n. 9), p. 194.

¹⁶ "Und wenn man auffersteen wirt, so wurde es Adam und den alten vetern werden, gleich als weren sie vor einer halben stundt noch im leben gewest. Dört is kain zeyt" (*WA XII* (n. 9), p. 596).

By 1525, Luther openly endorsed the idea of soul sleep. Expounding John 8,51 (“Very truly, I tell you, whoever keeps my word will never see death”) in a Lenten church postil, Luther differentiated between dying (*sterben*) and seeing or tasting death (*den tod sehen oder schmecken*)¹⁷. The faithful, he claimed, in spite of the fact that they, too, have to die, will not see or taste death, because they keep and cling unto Christ’s words. But the infidels will taste death, that is to say, the power and might or bitterness of death, which is eternal death and hell because they do not keep Christ’s word¹⁸. For Luther, the future destinies of the human person, death or hell on the one hand and heaven or resurrection on the other, are only the *termini*, the final stages of a process that can be already experienced by the person during his or her earthly life. The Christians are already saved from death and hell in this earthly life, so even when they die, Luther held, they will live (John 11,25), for they will have no recollection of the atemporal soul sleep¹⁹. The Scriptures call death ‘sleep,’ he argued, and just as one who falls asleep and wakes up the next morning does not know what has happened in the meantime, so will the just rise up suddenly on the Last Day unaware that they were in and had passed through death²⁰. A year later (1526), he remarked that Eccles 9,5 (“the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no more reward, and even the memory of them is lost”) is the most powerful passage in Scripture to show that the dead are asleep and do not know anything about earthly affairs²¹. Luther argued that this stands clearly in opposition to the invocation of the saints and the fiction of purgatory.

Finally, in his sermon on Easter Monday, 6 April 1534, preaching about Jesus’ encounter with the disciples on their way to Emmaus, Luther wondered what Jesus possibly could cite from Moses (Luke 24,27) to prove that the Son of Man had to suffer and rise again²². One such possible text is recorded in Matt 22,32, which Christ used to prove resurrection during His earthly life in his discussion with the Sadducees²³. God is not the God of things that do not exist, Luther explained, and therefore, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets, and those in the grave must be alive in the eyes of God, because God said to Moses, that His name will be “the God

¹⁷ M. Luther. *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*. B. XVII/2 (Fastenpostille 1525; Roths Festpostille 1527), Weimar, Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1927 [further abbreviated as *WA XVII/2*], p. 234.

¹⁸ “Also das man den tod schmecken wol mag heysen die kraft und macht odder bitterheyt des tods, ia es ist der ewige tod unde die helle” (*WA XVII/2* (n. 17), pp. 234-235).

¹⁹ *WA XVII/2* (n. 17), p. 235.

²⁰ “Drumb heyst auch der tod ynn der schrift eyn schlaff. Denn gleich wie der nicht weys, wie yhm geschicht, wer eynschlefft und kompt zu morgen unversehens, wenn er aufwacht. Also werden wyr plötzlich aufferstehen am Jüngsten tage, das wyr nicht wissen, wie wyr ynn den tod und durch den tod komen sind” (*WA XVII/2* (n. 17), p. 235.)

²¹ *WA XVII/2* (n. 17), p. 147.

²² “Ego optarem, das man mocht wissen, quales scripturas hab gfüert ex Mose et propheteis, quibus rntzundet und grftrret corda et ubersruget, quod must triden, resuregere et in nomine eius praedicari remissio peccatorum, weil man doch so gar wenig in Noth findet, als trstt sich ansthen, quod tale nihil in Mose sthet” (M. Luther. *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, B. XXXVII (Predigten 1533–1534), Weimar, Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1910 [further abbreviated as *WA XXXVII*], p. 363).

²³ “Accepit das grmrinfr wort, quod Iudaei habebant: ‘Ego deus Abraham.’ Ista optime noverunt, fuit communissimus textus” (*WA XXXVII* (n. 22), p. 365).

of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” forever (Exod 3,15)²⁴. But this being alive in the eyes of God, the resurrection, has already started in this life, as Luther argued on the basis of 2 Cor 4,12 in his sermon on the following day²⁵. But even if Paul is speaking spiritually about resurrection, flesh and blood will be risen on Judgement Day, for this is the ultimate promise and hope of the believer (cf. Rom 8,11)²⁶. Luther also warned that dying spiritually (*geistlich*) with Christ, being buried spiritually with Him and rising spiritually together with Him, should not denote the detestation of the body or the physical reality²⁷. Obviously Luther’s spiritualised explanation of Jesus’ words to the Sadducees is a far cry from the traditional vindication of the immortality of the soul. The more Luther wondered about questions concerning the afterlife, the more he became convinced that souls in the hereafter are asleep and unconscious. Therefore he even propagated the siting of new cemeteries

²⁴ “Quid struiff Christus drauff? Sadducaei non de spiritu, angelis. Ibi Christus facit Mosen strhen und rrdn, qui cecus &c. quid? deus est Abraham, Iacob, & das sagt Moser. Num putatis deum, qui sit mortuus? si est deus, oportet vivere, qualis &. Si est deus, Abraham oportet vivat, et tamen mortuus. Sic Isaac, Iacob mus leben, et tamen omnes mortui et sepulti. Si deus et omnium prophetarum, oportet sint vivi, quia deus non est rei, quae non est. Qualis est deus, oportet sit deus huius, quod est. Ideo Abraham, qui est in terris, oportet sit. Coram oculis sunt mortui, Sed in oculis dei vivi. Ideo dicit: ‘Hoc nomen meum in ewigheit’” (WA XXXVII (n. 22), p. 365).

²⁵ “Dicit ergo Paulus: sic est resurrectio grthan, tam efficax sol trin, quod in vobis operetur, das ir auch auffrethet, etiam hic in terris, et hic mori, ut dicit: ‘mortui,’ ‘et vita vestra’ &c. Ist nu rreht, quod mortui et resurrexistis, so strht drauff, wir ir lebt, thut, rrdt, tum in vobis invenientis, an vera et efficax in vobis, ut non sit resurrectio mit wortn, sed vivens, quam sentitis in vobis et bewrist. Qui nondum cum Christo auffrstandn, den ist Christus noch nicht auffrstandn, quanquam pro sua persone, tamen mihi et tibi nisi et ipse moriar et resurgam” (WA XXXVII (n. 22), p. 368).

²⁶ “Ideo docet Paulus, ut quisque Christianus, si verus est Christianus, sol tod trin und leben, gestorben et cum Christo, sepultus et auffrstandn et in gloria leben vel non, Das ist brschlossen, da ligt dir prob, ob wir cum Christo auffrstandn, an eius resurrectio efficax, obf wort vel opera &c. Quomodo resurgemus vel quod mortui, et tamen vivimus? Oportet hic esse, vel sumus Christiani. Ista verba pseudapostoli intellexerunt so gar, quod negarent corporis resurrectionem: qui credit in Christum, ille resurgit, et sic impletur in quodlibet Christiano &c. Haben eben ex eius verbis grforhten contra resurrectionem mortuorum novissimo die. Nos intelligere debemus, ut Paulus intellexit et seipsum statim exposuit. Loquitur de spirituali resurrectione, denn sol wir gristlich, Si cum carne et sanguine in extremo die solten auffrstrhen, tum oportet hic gristlich auffrstandn trin. Ro. ‘Spiritus, qui Christum’ &c. Et corpora sterblich erwercken umb des willen, quod intus vos excitavit und from und strig gemacht, Quando anima auffrstandn, i.e. vivificata, tum in extremo die spiritus sanctus illud corpus, quod herberg resurgentis spiritus, auch mit &c. Denn geist ist hie auf erden lebendig und auffrstandn i.e. anima est gerecht a sunden, Ideo dir hute sol er nach ex terra, quia fuit hospes et wird des strbigrn auffstandn griff, qui in terris hic in eo habitavit. Sic sol bride zusammen” (WA XXXVII (n. 22), p. 368).

²⁷ “Nam si Christiani, sol gristlich begraben trin cum Christo et contra. Nu was heist denn das? Ich sol gestorben trin und lebendig trin et per hoc bewristn, quod betracht, quod supra &c. Num non edendum, bibendum, num non agricolandum? Num inf grab strcken et nihil omnino facere et dicere, num nos mortui? Auff rrdn arker, wistr, fur, fruber, gelt, gulden, hauf, hof, wrib, kind, num ista omnia omittenda et nos abgrforben? Cur ergo dicis, quod non quaerendum, quod in terris, sed quod supra? Paulus postea se declarat, ut intelligatur, ne quis tr minr, quid auff rrdn &c. Nam Christus est nobiscum etiam in terris Matth. 28. Et baptismus est in terris et Sacramentum, Euangelium, quod corporaliter praedicatur. Sind alle sua, X praecepta, in quibus, uet eum pro deo &c. Hoc vocat in terris, non creaturam, de hoc non loquitur hic. Non de coelo et terra ut creata, Non de homine, ut habet animam, corpus, 5 sensus, wir tr rrbrit, Das ist alf a deo creata et omnia bona, quae dicit &c. De his non loquitur. Sed is est terrenus homo, qui est sine deo, non agnoscit a deo dari, nihil habet, et non curat, sed rationem, sym, sine verbo, unrrurtjt” (WA XXXVII (n. 22), p. 368).

outside busy town centres as an appropriate and quite place for the sleeping souls²⁸. For him, the specifically and genuinely divine act is the resurrection of the dead, in which all will participate, not only the believers²⁹.

As the ideas of Luther gained popularity throughout Europe, so grew the opposition to them as well. In England King Henry VIII, John Fisher, Bishop and Chancellor of the University of Cambridge and Sir Thomas More, Lord Chancellor to king, just to name a few, wrote treatises against the “pestilent sect of Luther” for an international readership. The latter, Sir Thomas More had showed his interest in matters of the afterlife even prior to Luther’s appearance. In his *Utopia*, published in 1516 in Louvain by Dirk Martens, he wrote that although Utopus decreed religious freedom, he made one remarkable exception, namely, that nobody should fall so far below human dignity as to deny the immortality of the soul by asserting that the soul dies with the body at death, because such people undermine society and advocate lawlessness by taking away the possible retribution or reward after death. Accordingly, More informed his readers, Utopians ostracized such people³⁰. The question at that time was only relevant to philosophical discussions, and More’s negative judgement was, no doubt, provoked by Pietro Pomponazzi’s position and the debate in Renaissance Italy about the natural mortality or immortality of the soul³¹.

²⁸ For Luther’s reasons for suggesting extra mural burial places see: C.M. KOSLOFSKY, *Reformation of the Dead: Death and Ritual in Early Modern Germany, 1450–1700*. (Early Modern History: Society and Culture), New York, St. Martin’s, 2000, pp. 48-49.

²⁹ M. Luther. *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, B. XXX/1 (Katechismuspredigten 1528; Großer und Kleiner Katechismus 1529), Weimar, Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1910, p. 250; M. Luther. *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, B. XXVI (Vorlesung über 1. Timotheus 1528; Schriften 1528), Weimar, Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1909, p. 509. Cf. U. ASENDORF, *Eschatologie bei Luther*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1967, p. 287; P. ALTHAUS, *Die Theologie Martin Luthers*, Gütersloh, Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1962, p. 349.

³⁰ “Itaque hanc totam rem in medio posuit, & quid credendum putaret liberum cuique reliquit. Nisi quod sancte ac seure uetuit, ne quis usque adeo ab humanae naturae dignitate degeneret, ut animas quoque interire cum corpore, aut mundum temere ferri, sublata prouidentia putet. atque ideo post hanc uitam supplicia uitijis decreta, uirtuti praemia constituta credunt. contra sentientem, ne in hominum quidem ducunt numero, ut qui sublimem animae suae naturam, ad pecuini corpusculi uilitatem deiecerit, tantum abest ut inter ciues ponant, quorum instituta, moresque (si per metum liceat) omnes, floccifactor sit. Cui enim dubium esse potest, quin is publicas patriae leges, aut arte clam eludere, aut ui nitatur infringere, dum suae priuatim cupiditati seruiat, cui nullus ultra leges metus, nihil ultra corpus spei superest amplius” (Thomas More, *De Optimo Reipublicae Statu deque Nova Insula Utopia*, [Leuven], Theodoric Martin, [1516]; critical edition: Thomas More, *The Yale Edition of the Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, vol. IV (Utopia), ed. by J.H. Hexter, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1965, pp. 220-222). Besides the belief in the immortality of the soul, the belief in divine Providence is also regarded as non-negotiable by the Utopians. It should be pointed out, however, that the standpoints of the Utopians (e.g. with regard to religious freedom) do not necessarily reflect More’s own opinion.

³¹ A.H. DOUGLAS, *The Philosophy and Psychology of Pietro Pomponazzi*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1910, [facsimile reprint Hildesheim, Olms, 1962]; E. GILSON, *Autour de Pomponazzi: Pproblématique de l’immortalité de l’âme en Italie au début du XVIe siècle*, in *Archives d’Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge*, 36 (1969), pp. 163-279; E. KESSLER, *The Intellectual Soul*, in C.B. SCHMITT, Q. SKINNER, E. KESSLER & J. KRAYE (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 485-534.

With the Luther's advocacy of the tenet on soul sleep, the question received another dimension. In 1528 he published his *Dialogue concerning Heresies*³², in which he addressed the issue in Chapter 8 of Book II, where he answered the objections against praying to saints, raised by the Messenger, More's Lutheran-inclined partner in the dialogue. More, in order to defend the orthodox teaching on the disputed articles of faith resorted to biblical arguments, so as to accommodate the methodology of his protestant adversaries. The souls of the saints, filled with heavenly love, do intercede for the living, More asserted, because even the rich man of Jesus' parable (Luke 16,19-31), although being in Hell, pleaded for his kin out of carnal love³³. If the souls of the saints are alive, More argued, then they, too, pray for the living. And that they are indeed alive, can be seen in Christ's answer to the Sadducees, in which He called Himself the God of the living (Matt 22,32 par)³⁴. In the last book of the *Dialogue*, More returned to the question (IV,2), where he listed the errors in Luther's teaching. The Chancellor criticized Luther for denying the efficacy of the mass, of the invocation of the saints, the existence of Purgatory and believing that souls lie still and sleep until Judgement Day³⁵. In addition, More argued, Luther's sect itself is very the cause of the malice that is inflicted on them. One example to illustrate this was Luther's belief in predestination combined with soul sleep, which, according to More, is the basis of immorality³⁶. Followers of Luther, More explained, attribute the responsibility for all evil deeds to God by advocating predestination, and do not care about damnation, since they believe that judgment will not affect them for a long time³⁷.

³² Thomas More, *A dialoge of syr Thomas More knyghte: one of the counsayll of oure souerayne lorde the kyng & chauncellour of hys duchy of Lancaster. Wherin be treatyd dyuers maters/ as of the veneration & worshyp of ymagys & relyques/ prayng to sayntys/ & goyng o[n] pylgrymage. Wyth many othere thyngys touchyng the pestylent secte of Luther and Tyndale/ by the tone bygone in Saxony/ & by the tother laboryd to be brought in to Englonde, 1529*, critical edition published in Thomas More, *The Yale Edition of the Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, vols. VI/1-2, ed. Thomas M.C. Lawler, G. Marc'hador and R.C. Marius, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1981 [hereafter abbreviated as *CWTM* VI/1 and VI/2].

³³ "yf ye the ryche man that lay in hell/ had yet not onely for fere of encrease of his owne punysshment/ by his brothers dampnacyon growyng of his euyll ensample in synne/ but also of carnall loue & fleshly fauour towards his kynne (whiche fleshly affeccyon beyng without grace of vertue may peradventure stande with ye state of dampnacyon) had a cure & care of his fyue brethrene/ were it lykely that sayntes than beyng so full of blessed charyte in heuyn/ wyll nothyng care for theyr brethrene in Cryst/ whom they se here in this wretched worlde?" (*CWTM* VI/1 (n. 32), p. 212).

³⁴ "And as lytell doubt/ but that they be alyue/ if god be theyr god/ as he is in dede/ and he not the god of ded men but of lyuyng/ as our sauyour sayth in ye gospell" (*CWTM* VI/1 (n. 32), p. 212).

³⁵ "For he techeth also yt the masse auayleth no man quyck nor dede/ but onely to ye preste hym selfe. [...] Item he techeth that there ys no purgatory. Item that all mennys soulys lye still & slepe tyll the daye of dome. Item that no man sholde pray to sayntes nor sette by any holy relyques nor pylgrymagys/ nor do any reuerence to any ymagys" (*CWTM* VI/1 (n. 32), pp. 354-355).

³⁶ "What harme shall they care to forbare/ that byleue Luther/ that god alone wythout theyre wyll worketh all the myscheyf that they do them selfe? What shall he care how longe he lyue in synne/ that byleueth Luther/ that he shall after thys lyfe neyther fele well nor yll in body nor sowle tyll the daye of dome? Wyll not he trowe you saye as the Welsheman sayde?" (*CWTM* VI/1 (n. 32), p. 373).

³⁷ "And yf they shall be dampned/ yet they say yt shall be long or they fele it. For Luther sayth that all soules shall slepe and fele neyther good nor bad after thy lyfe tyll domes day. And than they that shall be dampned/ shall be dampned for such euyll dedys/ as god onely forced and constreyned them vnto but as a ded instrument/ as a man heweth with an hachet" (*CWTM* VI/1 (n. 32), p. 377). In his *Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, More will make again several mentions of Tyndale's and Luther's adherence to soul sleep: Thomas More, *The Yale Edition of the Complete Works of St. Thomas*

The English Bible translator, William Tyndale, working in voluntary exile in Antwerp who sympathized with Luther's teaching, was also addressed by More on account of Tyndale's Lutheran New Testament translation published in 1526. Accordingly Tyndale entered into the literary conflict with Thomas More and published his *An answer vnto Sir Thomas Mores dialoge* in 1528. Tyndale, who believed that the veneration of the saints was something utterly unbiblical and therefore heretical and idolatrous, took great pains to disprove More's argument. He claimed that More's reading of Jesus' answer to the Sadducees is not correct and that More "steleth away Christes argument where with he proueth the resurreccion"³⁸. In fact, Tyndale stated, More made "Christes argument of none effecte" because Christ's point in that passage is to prove that there is a resurrection, and "so [Christ] proueth that Abraham must rise agayne"³⁹. According to Tyndale, More's interpretation of the passage necessarily denies the resurrection by asserting that the souls of the blessed are already in Heaven⁴⁰. But if this is the case, Tyndale argued, then Paul's proof of the resurrection is worthless in 1 Cor 15, where the Apostle wrote: "if there be no resurreccion, we be of all wretches the most miserablest"⁴¹. Here on earth, there is "no pleasure/ but sorow/ care/ and oppression," Tyndale interpreted Paul, and "therefore if we rise not agayne/ all our soferinge is in vayne"⁴². But if More is right, Tyndale maintained, then Paul's argument was pointless, because in that case we would not be the most miserable, even if there were no resurrection of the flesh, because our soul would enjoy heavenly bliss upon death⁴³. Yet it is strange, Tyndale argued, that Paul did not comfort the Thessalonians with this doctrine when he wrote to them about the fate of the dead⁴⁴. Apparently, the immortality of the soul, or rather the participation of the soul in heavenly bliss immediately after death, rendered the resurrection of the flesh superfluous, in the eyes of Tyndale⁴⁵. Evidently he regarded these two possibilities

More, vol. VIII/1 (The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer), ed. L.A. Schuster, R.C. Marius and J.P. Lusardi, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1973, pp. 288, 626, 796.

³⁸ Tyndale, *An answer vnto Sir Thomas Mores dialoge made by Uvillyam Tindale*, Antwerp, Symon Cock, July 1531, sig. I8^v (Critical edition: William Tyndale, *An Answer vnto Sir Thomas Mores Dialoge*, ed. A.M. O'Donnell & J. Wicks, (The Independent Works of William Tyndale 3), Washington DC, Catholic University of America Press, 2000 [hereafter abbreviated as *IWWT 3*], p. 117).

³⁹ Tyndale, *An answer vnto Sir Thomas Mores dialoge*, (n. 38) sig. I8^v (*IWWT 3* (n. 38), p. 117).

⁴⁰ Cf. Tyndale's sarcastic remark: "I deny christes argument and saye with More/ that Abraham is yet aliue/ not because of the resurreccion/ but because his soule is in heuen" (Tyndale, *An answer vnto Sir Thomas Mores dialoge* (n. 38), sig. I8^v (*IWWT 3* (n. 38), p. 117).

⁴¹ Tyndale, *An answer vnto Sir Thomas Mores dialoge* (n. 38), sig. I8^v (*IWWT 3* (n. 38), p. 117).

⁴² Tyndale, *An answer vnto Sir Thomas Mores dialoge* (n. 38), sigs. I8^v-K1^r (*IWWT 3* (n. 38), p. 117).

⁴³ "Nay Paul/ thou art vnlearned: goo to master More and lerne a newe waye. We be not most miserable/ though we rise not agayne/ for oure soules goo to heuen assone as we be deed/ and are there in as greate ioye as christ that is rysen agayne" (Tyndale, *An answer vnto Sir Thomas Mores dialoge* (n. 38), sig. K1^r (*IWWT 3* (n. 38), pp. 117-118)).

⁴⁴ "And I maruell that Paul had not comforted the Thessalonians with that doctrine/ if had wist it/ that the soules of their deed had bee in ioye/ as he did with the resurreccion/ that their deed shuld rise agayne" (Tyndale, *An answer vnto Sir Thomas Mores dialoge* (n. 38), sig. K1^r (*IWWT 3* (n. 38), p. 118)).

⁴⁵ "If the soules be in heuen in as greate glorie as the angels aftir youre doctrine/ shewe me what cause shulde be of the resurreccion" (Tyndale, *An answer vnto Sir Thomas Mores dialoge* (n. 38), sig. K1^r (*IWWT 3* (n. 38), p. 118)).

(the bodily resurrection and the soul's participation in heavenly bliss immediately after death) mutually exclusive.

In the last part of his work (*An answere vnto Master Mores fourth boke*) Tyndale returned to the theme of the soul sleep. More had criticised the Lutheran teaching for claiming that “all soules lye and slepe tyll domes daye”⁴⁶. Tyndale did not deny More's charge. Instead he claimed that More by “puttyng them [i.e. the souls of deceased] in heuen hell and purgatory/ destroye[s] the argumentes wherewith Christ and paule proue the resurreccion”⁴⁷. Tyndale believed that what happens to the souls of the dead is God's secret⁴⁸. At any rate, Tyndale asserted, the immortality of the soul is only maintained by the heathen philosophers who denied the resurrection of the body. But the idea of an immortal soul was alien to Jewish thinking, it was introduced into Christian theology only under the influence of Hellenistic philosophers, and accordingly the biblical view on afterlife in general, and Paul's view in particular are essentially what we would call today ‘monistic’, allowing only for the resurrection of the entire person (being the unity of body and soul). The pagan belief of an immortal soul was mixed up with Christ's teaching by “the pope” (*sic!*) in order to enrich himself and the church by indulgences, masses and other unbiblical practices⁴⁹. But “the true fayth putteth the resurreccion which we be warned to loke fore eury houre”⁵⁰. It is clear that in Tyndale's view the resurrection and the immortality of the soul are mutually exclusive ideas because the survival of the soul (and the individual judgement after death) makes the bodily resurrection unnecessary. For if the elect and the saints were already in heaven, Tyndale argued, then they would be participating in the beatific vision of God together with the angels. What extra could the resurrection of the body possibly add to their joy then⁵¹?

In his commentary on the First Letter of John, Tyndale repeated his agnostic stance about the fate of the souls after death. Commenting on 1 John 2,28, he wrote that according to the Bible all people will receive their rewards at the same time in the

⁴⁶ As quoted by Tyndale, *An answere vnto Sir Thomas Mores dialoge* (n. 38), sig. O8^v (*IWWT* 3 (n. 38), p. 181).

⁴⁷ Tyndale, *An answere vnto Sir Thomas Mores dialoge* (n. 38), sig. O8^v (*IWWT* 3 (n. 38), p. 181).

⁴⁸ “Moses sayth in Deute./ the secret thynges perteyne vn to the lorde/ and the thynges that be opened pertayne vn to vs/ that we doo all that is written in the boke. Wherfore Sir if we loued the lawes of god and wold occupye our selues to fulfill them/ and wolde on the other syde be meke and lett god alone with his secretes and soffre him to be wiser then we/ we shuld make none article of the faith of this or that” (Tyndale, *An answere vnto Sir Thomas Mores dialoge* (n. 38), sigs. O8^v-P1^r (*IWWT* 3 (n. 38), p. 182)).

⁴⁹ “The hethen philosophours denyenge that [i.e. the resurrection of the body]/ did put that the soules did euer liue. And the pope ioyneth the spirituall doctrine of christe and the fleshly doctrine of philosophers to gether/ thynges so contrary that they can not agre/ no moare then the spirite and the flesh do in a Christen man. And because the fleshly mynded pope consenteth vn to hethen doctrine/ ther fore he corrupteth the scripture to stablish it” (Tyndale, *An answere vnto Sir Thomas Mores dialoge* (n. 38), sig. O8^v (*IWWT* 3 (n. 38), p. 182)).

⁵⁰ Tyndale, *An answere vnto Sir Thomas Mores dialoge* (n. 38), sig. O8^v, (*IWWT* 3 (n. 38), p. 182).

⁵¹ “And agayne/ if the soules be in heuen/ tell me whi they be not in as good case as the angelles be? And then what cause is there of the resurreccion?” (Tyndale, *An answere vnto Sir Thomas Mores dialoge* (n. 38), sig. P1^r (*IWWT* 3 (n. 38), p. 182)).

resurrection at the Second Coming, regardless of when they lived⁵². But Scripture does not say anything about the question of what happens with the souls in the meantime except that “they rest in the lorde and in their faith”⁵³. “What God doeth with them is a secret laide vp in the treasury of God,” Tyndale asserted, and therefore the faithful “ought to be patient/ beinge certified of the scripture that they which die in the faith are at rest/ & ought no moare to serche that secret/ then to serche the houre of the resurrection whiche God hath putt only in his awne power”⁵⁴. Accordingly, anyone who “determyne ought of the state of them that be departed/ doeth but teach the presumptuose imaginations of his awne brayne: Nether can his doctrine be any article of our faith”⁵⁵.

Similar position was taken by Andreas Karlstadt and Gerhard Westerburg and the idea of soul-sleep was held generally by various individuals and some radical groups of Reformers whom their contemporaries called Anabaptists. These groups were treated with much hostility not only by Catholic authorities but also by Protestants because they were seen as representing a threat to public order, social peace, moral conduct and religious stability. By the time of the Münsterite adventure in 1534-1535, they had been expelled from various places under the threat of the death.

Other Protestant writers, such as Philip Melancthon, Huldrych Zwingli, Martin Bucer, Heinrich Bullinger and Jean Calvin turned vehemently against Anabaptists and the defenders of the idea of soul-sleep. In the eyes of these Reformers, the advocacy of *psychosomnolence* is nothing less than the advocacy of *thnetopsychism*, i.e. the idea that the souls die after death. These South-German/Swiss Reformers were convinced that such a belief induced immorality because it removed the fear of and hope for a post-mortem retribution or reward. They argued that the Anabaptists were ignorant of the manner of speaking of the Bible, according to which, ‘sleep’ is used as a euphemism for the death of the body, but the soul cannot cease to be, and is judged immediately after leaving the body at the moment of death. In his *In catabaptistarum strophas elenchus* (1531) Zwingli, for example followed Aristotle and Tertullian, in claiming that the soul (which the Greek called ἐντελέχεια) cannot sleep (*dormire*) or die (*intermori*) as it is by nature spiritual and therefore incessantly active (*natura incessans operatio aut motus*)⁵⁶. It is as incapable of falling asleep as the sun is of

⁵² “A nother thinge is this/ al the scripture makyth mention of the resurrection and comyng agene of Christ: and that al men/ both they that go before/ and they that come after shal then receaue their rewardes to gether/ and we are commaundyd to loke euerye houre for that daye” (Tyndale, *The exposition of the fyrste Epistle of seynt Ihon with a Prologge before it: by W. T.*, [Antwerp, Merten de Keyser], September 1531, sig. E3^r).

⁵³ “And what is done with the soules frome theyr departinge their bodies vnto that daye/ doethe the scripture make no mention/ saue only that they rest in the lorde and in their faith” (Tyndale, *The exposition of the fyrste Epistle of seynt Ihon* (n. 52), sig. E3^r).

⁵⁴ Tyndale, *The exposition of the fyrste Epistle of seynt Ihon* (n. 52), sig. E3^r.

⁵⁵ Tyndale, *The exposition of the fyrste Epistle of seynt Ihon* (n. 52), sig. E3^r.

⁵⁶ “Coelstis ergo spiritus, quem nos animam, Græci ἐντελέχειαν vocant, tam vivax, constans, robusta, tenax ac vigilans substantia est” (Zwingli, Huldrych, *In catabaptistarum strophas Elenchus Huldrici Zuinglij, Tiguri ex aedibus Christophori Froschouer, 1527*. Critical edition: Huldreich Zwingli, *Huldreich Zwinglis Sämtliche Werke*, B. VI/1 (Werke Juli 1527-Juli 1528), ed. E. Egli (Corpus reformatorum, 93), Theologischer Verlag, 1982 [hereafter abbreviated as *HZSW* VI/1], p. 189).

being dark⁵⁷. Experience shows us that it is merely the body that sleeps, for at awakening one remembers one's dreams⁵⁸. Much less can the soul sleep when it is liberated from the body by death. It is therefore only the body that can fall asleep at death and remains so until the Day of Judgement⁵⁹. Furthermore, Zwingli argued, the Anabaptists are ignorant of the fact that the Hebrews used the word 'resurrectio' not always for the resurrection of the flesh, but also for the interim state, the continuation and existence of the soul, after having been freed from the body, in which state it can neither sleep nor die⁶⁰. To substantiate his point, Zwingli cited examples from the Scriptures. Joshua 7,12-13 uses twice the Hebrew verb קָם, translated by the Vulgate with a form of the verb *surgere*. In both instances the word means to stand fast, resist or endure⁶¹. Jesus' response to the Sadducees in Matt 22,31 proves that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are alive despite their actual physical death. Christ's answer confirmed what the Sadducees denied, namely 'resurrectio,' which means to be alive, and not the resurrection of the flesh⁶². In Heb 11,35, too, *resurrectio* is taken for the life of the soul severed from the body; the martyrs had such a firm faith that the 'resurrectio,' that is, the life after this one, will be a better life, that they refused to be saved for this life and embraced the life that follows after this life⁶³. Similarly Jesus' promise to the believers in John 6,40 should be understood as a promise to keep those who trust in Him alive even beyond their death⁶⁴.

⁵⁷ "Unde tam abest, ut dormire possit, quantum a luce aut sole abest, ut obscurum corpus sit. Quocunque solem abigas, splendet ac incendit, id quod *Phaëton* expertus est; sic anima, quocunque detrudas, animat, movet ac impellit, adeo ut corpore devincta dum ipsum, quę eius est inertia, dormit, ipsa tamen non dormiat" (*HZSW VI/1* (n. 56), p. 189).

⁵⁸ "Meminimus enim eorum, quę in somno vidimus. Quanto magis corpore liberata dormire nequit, cum sit substantia ad perpetuam operationem, quę defatigari non potest, concinnata" (*HZSW VI/1* (n. 56), pp. 189-190).

⁵⁹ "Dormit ergo corpus, anima nunquam; sed cum corpore liberatur, iam corpus noctem æternam dormit" (*HZSW VI/1* (n. 56), p. 190).

⁶⁰ "Postremo ignorant catabaptistę resurrectionem mortuorum *Hebręis* non semper accipi pro carnis ista suprema resurrectione, quam olim videbimus, sed interim pro hac, interim vero pro constantia aut perduratioe anime, qua corpore soluta in vita constat ac durat non somno aut morte depressa, neque enim potest deprimi" (*HZSW V VI/1* (n. 56), p. 190).

⁶¹ "*Iehosue* 7. sic loquitur dominus: 'Non potuerunt filii Israëli surgere coram hostibus suis', et paulo post: 'Non poteris surgere ante hostes tuos.' Hic utrobique ponitur 'surgere' pro: consistere ac perdurare; nam et Hieronymus 'stare' transtulit" (*HZSW VI/1* (n. 56), p. 190). In the autograph, Zwingli inserted the Hebrew consonantal form קָם and the vocalised form קָם before and after the verb *surgere* (the critical edition erroneously transcribed them as קָם and קָם resp.). He also introduced the Latin *consistere* at the same place.

⁶² "*Mat.* 22. sic loquitur Christus: 'De resurrectione mortuorum non legistis quod dictum est a deo dicente vobis: «Ego sum deus *Abraham* et deus *Isaac* et deus *Iacob*»? Non est deus mortuorum, sed viventium.' Qua responsione nihil aliud docet quam vivos esse *Abraham*, *Isaac* et *Iacob*, etiamsi essent mortui, quos Saducei aut prorsus negabant resurgere, hoc est vivere, at saltem catabaptistarum more aderebant dormire. Non enim quadrat responsio *Christi* ad resurrectionem carnis, sed ad hoc, quod *Abraham*, *Isaac* et *Iacob*, etiamsi mortui essent, viverent" (*HZSW VI/1* (n. 56), p. 190).

⁶³ "*Hebr.* 11. sic loquitur *Paulus*: 'Alii vero distenti aut crucifixi sunt nullam recipientes redemptionem, ut meliorem invenirent resurrectionem.' Ecce, ut hic 'resurrectio' pro vita anime, quam soluta corpore habitura est, accipitur. Ad hunc sensum: sic vitam istam, quę hanc sequitur, amplexi sunt, ut presentem nollent, etiam cum offeretur, recipere, tam constans enim erat fides, ut certi essent eam, quę sequeretur, meliorem esse" (*HZSW VI/1* (n. 56), p. 190).

⁶⁴ "Unde et *Christi* verbum, quod *Io.* 6. habetur: 'Ego resuscitabo eum in novissimo die' non debet in alium sensum detorqueri quam: ego, dum is moritur, qui me fudit, in vita servabo. Ut vel insinuet: nunquam intermorigatos, qui se fidant, vel nunquam non iucundissime pervicturos.

In 1 Cor 15, Zwingli claimed, the whole discourse on the resurrection of flesh is clearly linked to and depends on the immortality of the soul. For Paul speaks about ‘resurrectio’ in general terms, and from the beginning of the chapter until verse 35 the word is used not (exclusively) for the resurrection of the flesh, but (also) for the continuance or persistence of life after this life⁶⁵. It is only from there on that Paul speaks about the bodily resurrection, Zwingli maintained. To prove this, Zwingli used five arguments. (1) First he pointed to vv. 21-22, (as death came through a human being, the ‘resurrectio’ from the dead also comes from a human being, for as in Adam all die, so in Christ all are made alive). It is clear, Zwingli argued, that here ‘resurrectio’ pertains not only to the resurrection of the flesh, but also to that life which immediately follows after this present life: through Adam we all die, but through Christ we are preserved in life⁶⁶. That is why Christ promised that those who believe in Him, even though they die, will live (John 11,25)⁶⁷. (2) The second argument came from the (in Zwingli’s view) despicable custom of baptism for the dead (1 Cor 15,29). He contended that this practice proves and presupposes the survival and active character of the soul beyond death⁶⁸. (3) Zwingli’s third argument is Paul’s logic in vv. 30-31, which is, according to the Swiss theologian, that eternal life must follow immediately upon death, otherwise Paul would be a fool to expose himself to every danger day by day, if either there was no life after this one, or a sleep would follow upon death⁶⁹. (4) The fourth argument is provided by verses 32-33. There Paul disapprovingly quotes the Corinthians: “let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die,” and then he adds: evil communications corrupt good manners. But it is precisely the Anabaptists’ advocacy of soul sleep and their blasphemous tenet that even Satan would eventually be saved, Zwingli maintained, which undermine society and encourage crime, because such beliefs remove the fear of any post-mortem

Novissimus autem dies isthic non tam est ultimus ille omnium rerum presentis mundi quam postremus cuiusquam dum ex hoc mundo demigrat. Id quod *Io.* 5[24]. facile deprehenditur: ‘In iudicium non venit, sed transiit a morte in vitam’” (*HZSW VI/1* (n. 56), pp. 190-191).

⁶⁵ “In 1. Cor 15. de resurrectione loquens apostolus hanc, quę pro perduratione et consistentia in vita capitur, tanquam superiorem facit, de qua in genere loquitur, donec ad hunc locum veniat: “Quomodo resurgunt mortui aut quali corpore incedent?” Ibi tandem, quę aliquando ventura est, carnis resurrectionis disputationem ingreditur” (*HZSW VI,1*, p. 191).

⁶⁶ “Vides, ut istud: ‘Ex homine mors et ex homine resurrectione mortuorum; nam sicut in *Adam* omnes moriuntur, sic et in *Christo* omnes vitę restituuntur’ non solum ad carnis resurrectionem pertinet, sed ad istam vitam, quę hanc protinus sequitur. Per *Adam* enim moriuntur, sed per *Christum* in vita servamur” (*HZSW VI/1* (n. 56), p. 191).

⁶⁷ *HZSW VI/1* (n. 56), p. 191.

⁶⁸ *HZSW VI/1* (n. 56), pp. 191-192. The custom also serves as an argument for infant baptism for Zwingli.

⁶⁹ “Tertio istud considera, quod iungit: ‘et nos cuius causa in horam periclitamur?’, ‘quotidie morior’ etc.; huc enim et istud pertinet. Vult enim *Paulus*, si aut nulla vita istam sequitur aut somnus plus quam *Epimenideus*, stultus essem quotidie discrimen omne subiens. Sed longe aliter habet res; hanc vitam ęterna e vestigio sequitur, nam alioqui huiusmodi periculis me haud temere exponerem” (*HZSW VI/1* (n. 56), p. 192). Zwingli refers to the philosopher-poet Epimenides of Knossos (6th century BC). Reportedly, he fell asleep for fifty-seven years in a cave. When he woke up, he possessed the gift of prophecy. His poem *Cretica* (Κρητικά) is quoted twice in the New Testament (Tit 1,12 and Acts 17,28). See: F. JACOBY, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, vol. 3B, Leiden, Brill, 1999, 457 F 18-20; J.L. DE BELDER, *Epimenides’ ontwaken en andere gedichten*, Brussel, Manteau, 1943; E.R. DODDS, *The Greek and the Irrational*, Berkeley, Los Angeles & London, Cambridge University Press, 1951, pp. 141-146; G. HERMAN, *Nikias, Epimenides, and the Question of Omissions in Thucydides*, in *Classical Quarterly* 39 (1989), pp. 83-93.

penalty for the evil committed in this life⁷⁰. (5) The final argument is deduced from v. 34 where Paul calls upon the Corinthians to wake up and come to their senses from their folly: ἐκνήψατε δικαίως. Paul used the verb ‘to wake up’ with great pungency, for the Anabaptists, pressed in their sleep of ignorance, presume that the souls sleep, just as the wolf thinks that all animals eat raw food since it does so itself⁷¹. And when these would-be scholars think themselves to be awake, Paul rightly calls upon them to wake up, for while they think that they are awake and are exactly right, they dream somnolently about sleep⁷². Zwingli’s conclusion is that the apostle speaks in the first part of the chapter about the state of the souls after this life, and only in the second part Paul uses ‘resurrectio’ to mean the resurrection of the flesh⁷³.

Bertholomäus Westheimer’s and Bruno Brunfels’s practical publications and other books, which were more accessible for a less educated readership than the theologically complex writings filled with quotations in Greek and Hebrew, popularized these arguments on a large scale among Protestants⁷⁴. Accordingly the idea of soul-sleep became rejected by mainstream Christianity in favour of the traditional teaching on the immortality of the soul. An interesting episode in this rejection of soul-sleep is the 1534-1535 Antwerp publication of Tyndale’s English New Testament translation. The Protestant English Bible translator, George Joye, who saw these two editions through the press of Catherine van Ruremond corrected in

⁷⁰ “Quarto, quod ait: ‘Edamus’ etc. et ‘corrumpunt mores sanctos commercia prava’ etiam huc pertinet. Nihil enim eque mores corrumpit atque docere animos intermori, aut, ut nunc catabaptistę blasphemant, dormire usque ad postremum diem ac deinde adserunt et demonem et omnes salvari. Quę igitur poena perfidos ac sceleratos manet? Quę corruptio non tam large seuqueretur, si isti solummodo negarent carnem revicturam” (HZSW VI/1 (n. 56), p. 192).

⁷¹ “Quinto ista quoque consideres: ἐκνήψατε δικαίως, hoc est: evigilate recte. Resipiunt enim hęc verba *Paulinam* acrimoniam. Cum enim isti somno ignorantię pressi putarent, quod lupus, qui omnia credit animalia crudis vesci, eo quod ipse vescitur, animas dormire ‘evigilate’ ait” (HZSW VI/1 (n. 56), p. 192).

⁷² “Cum autem propter acumen sibi doctuli viderentur ac ideo minime dormire, recte ait: ‘evigilate’; putatis enim vos vigilare et rem acu tetigisse, qum somniculose de somne somnietis” (HZSW VI/1 (n. 56), p. 192). Zwingli’s description of his adversaries is not particularly charming. He calls the arguments advanced by the Anabaptists “foolish, impious and absurd,” which lack any substantial backing from Scripture, and which he seeks to refute with the help of God. “Stulta igitur, impia et absurda, quę docent, adsignatis paucis scripturę locis (sed talibus, ut eis tota catabaptistarum caterva non possit resistere) convellemus σὺν τῷ θεῷ” (HZSW VI/1 (n. 56), p. 188). Cf. “Stultus stulta loquitur” (HZSW VI/1 (n. 56), p. 194). The Anabaptists are oppressed not so much by sleep as by wickedness, and teach whatever occurs to them. “Et videbis catabaptistas non tam somno quam nequicia depressos tradere, quicquid inciderit” (HZSW VI/1 (n. 56), p. 193).

⁷³ “Post hęc sequentia quoque expende, lector, et ubi videris in genere primum loqui apostolum de animę post hanc vitam vita, ac deinde ad carnis resurrectionem descendere, huc redi” (HZSW VI/1 (n. 56), pp. 191-192).

⁷⁴ Bartholomäus Westheimer, *Collectanea Troporum Commvnm Bibliorum, non aestimandis sudoribus recognita & locupletata, summa tum diligentia, tum iudicio, ex sacrorum Patrum scriptis, excerpta. Bartholomaeo Vesthemero collectore*, Basileae, apud Thomam Volfium, M.D XXXIII. Mense Martio. An earlier version was published with the title: *Tropi insigniores Veteris atque Novi Testamenti, summa*, Basel, 1527. Otto Brunfels, *Pandectarum Veteris et Noui Testamenti, Libri. XII. Othonis Brunfelsii*, Argentorati, apud Ioannem Schottum, 1527. Reprints e.g. in 1528 and in 1529 (Strasbourg), in 1530 (Strasbourg?), in 1543 (Baselae, Barptolemaeus Westhemerus), in 1551 and in 1557 (Baselae, Nicolaus Brylingerus) in 1563 (Baselae, Iacob Hertel). In German translation: *Pandect Büchlin Beylauffig aller Sprüch beyder Testament usszugt, in Titel zerlegt, und XII Büchlin verwasßt*, Straßburg: bey Hans Schotten zum Thyergarten, 1528. Rerpint e.g. in 1532 (Straßburg, bey Hans Schotten), in 1559 (Augsburg, Othmar).

twenty-two places the word “resurreccion” into “the lyfe after this” or some other similar expression to signify the intermediate state of the bodiless immortal soul rather than the bodily resurrection. Not surprisingly the places where Joye executed his concrete adaptation of Zwingli’s exegesis in the practice of bible translation were the texts referring to the beliefs of the Sadducees in Mk 12,18-27 par. and in Acts 23–24, as well as Jn 5,29 and Heb 11,35. Interestingly enough Joye rejected Zwingli’s understanding of 1 Cor 15, and kept the word “resurreccion” in the entire chapter.

By way of conclusion it is interesting to remark that although Luther, Tyndale and the Anabaptists arrived at the idea which was conceived by their adversaries as the tenet on soul sleep, the way they arrived at such a conclusion differed in each case. Luther’s conviction was the result of his biblical scholarship and of the exegesis of the key biblical texts. Tyndale’s advocacy of a Jewish, essentially monistic world-view was produced by his deep mistrust of philosophy that he connected with the Roman Church combined with his thorough biblical knowledge and his ‘feeling faith’. With this position he predated four centuries Oscar Culmann and other modern exegetes who arrived at the same idea in the course of the twentieth-century. Sixteenth-century theology was too much influenced by (neo-)Platonic and scholastic philosophy to be open to such an idea which explains –at least in part– why Tyndale’s proposal of a monistic biblical anthropology was suppressed by mainstream Christianity at the time.

It should also not be left unnoticed that the demarcation line between what we would today describe as a monist (‘soul sleep’) and a dualist (‘intermediate state’) position, did not lie along denominational divisions. Protestants were divided amongst themselves in that question, often within one, otherwise more or less unified group. The theological positions of Joye and Tyndale or of Luther and Melanchthon in that question were radically opposing each others, and many present-day churches of the Lutheran tradition in Europe and North America have had their share in the theological debate on the issue of soul sleep versus immortality of the soul throughout the centuries lasting well into the twentieth century. The question belongs ultimately to the field of theological anthropology.

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