

Paul and the Rebellion

1 Corinthians 15: 54.

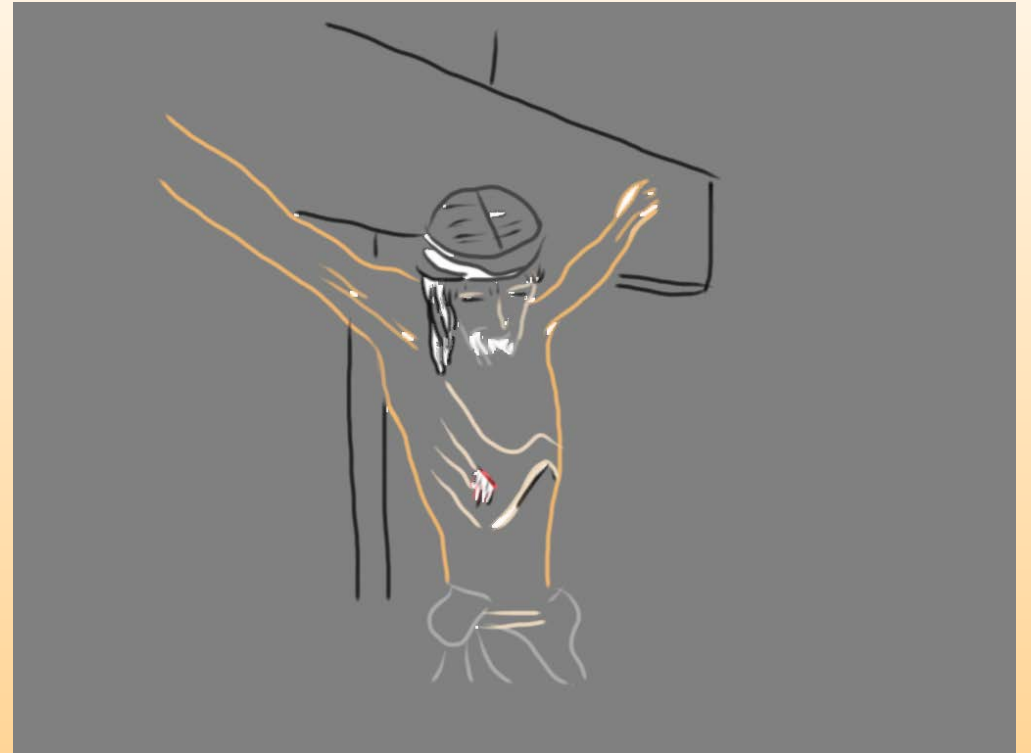


“So when this corruptible
has put on incorruption,
and this mortal has put
on immortality, then shall
be brought to pass the
saying that is
written: “Death is
swallowed up in victory.”
1. Corinthians 15: 54.

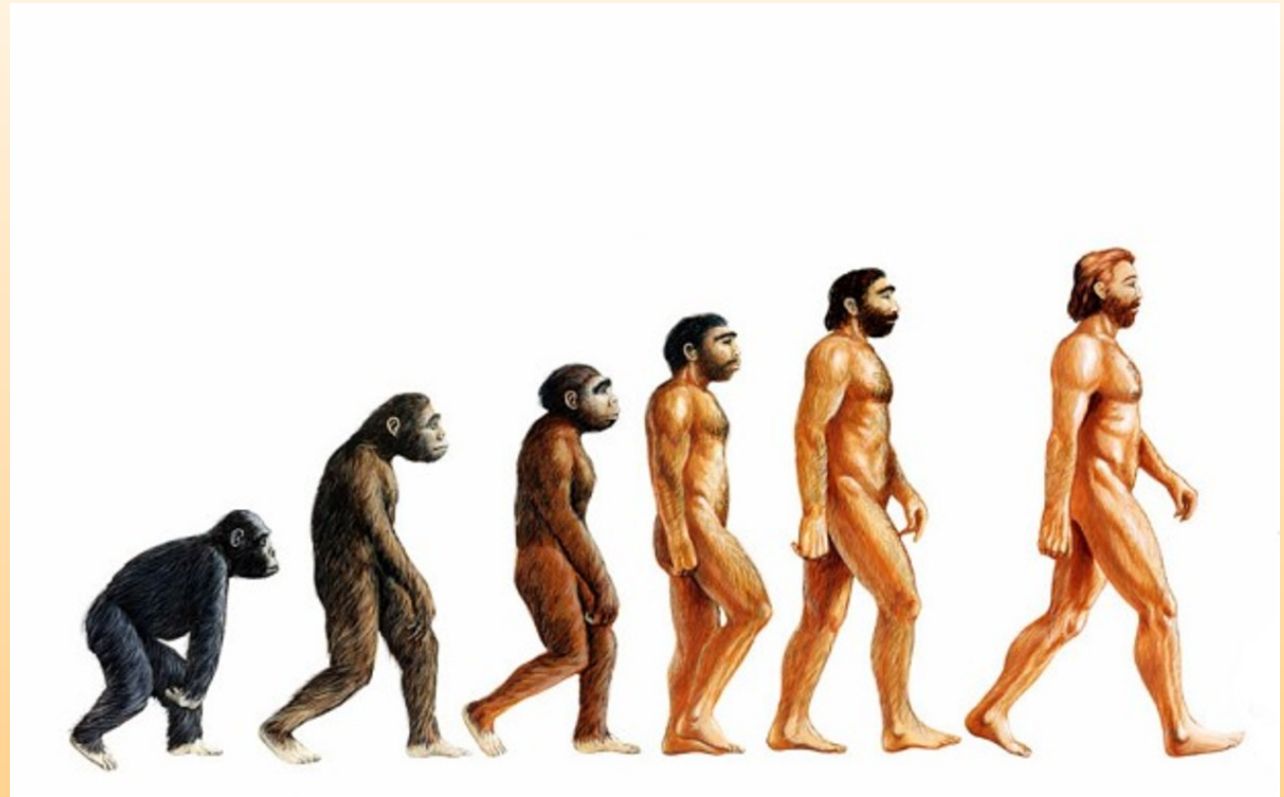


I. Introduction: PERFECTION

As long as corruption and mortality exist in the world and are part of our everyday experiences, the ultimate perfection is unreachable. We need God's intervention and the elimination of the last enemy in order to envision the ultimate perfection, as it was the reality at the time of the creation of our planet.



"I have no faith in human perfectibility. I think that human exertion will have no appreciable effect upon humanity. Man is now only more active - not more happy - nor more wise, than he was 6000 years ago."
Edgar Allan Poe



"I am careful not to confuse excellence with perfection. Excellence, I can reach for; perfection is God's business."
Michael J. Fox



A Christian has to be always reminded of the impossibility to achieve perfection. He understands that his salvation depends of a gift of Christ's perfection.

"Perfection' is man's ultimate illusion. If you are a perfectionist, you are guaranteed to be a loser in whatever you do."

David D. Burns



"God's demand for perfection need not discourage you in the least in your present attempts to be good, or even in your present failures. Each time you fall He will pick you up again. And He knows perfectly well that your own efforts are never going to bring you anywhere near perfection. On the other hand, you must realise from the outset that the goal towards which He is beginning to guide you is absolute perfection, and no power in the universe, except you yourself, can prevent Him from taking you to that goal."

C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, p. 174-75.



"God is a fire that warms and kindles the heart and inward parts. Hence, if we feel in our hearts the cold which comes from the devil - for the devil is cold - let us call on the Lord. He will come to warm our hearts with perfect love, not only for Him but also for our neighbor, and the cold of him who hates the good will flee before the heat of His countenance."

Seraphim of Sarov (1759-1864)



"If the Lord be with us, we have no cause of fear. His eye is upon us, His arm over us, His ear open to our prayer—His grace sufficient, His promises unchangeable."
John Newton (1725-1807)



Jesus Christ is not accommodating Himself with our imperfection. He came to live among us in order to help us to accommodate with His perfection. This is why all aspects of the salvation process are about Him. And our eternal life is the gift of his grace."
(DS)



"It is growth in knowledge of the character of Christ that sanctifies the soul.... To discern and appreciate the wonderful work of the atonement transforms him who contemplates the plan of salvation. By beholding Christ he becomes changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. The beholding of Jesus becomes an ennobling, refining process.... The perfection of Christ's character is the Christian's inspiration... Jesus, precious Saviour! assurance, helpfulness, security, and peace are all in Him... Jesus is the fullness of our expectation. He is the melody of our songs, the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. He is living water to the thirsty soul. He is our refuge in the storm. He is our righteousness, our sanctification, our redemption. The power of Christ is to be the comfort, the hope, the crown of rejoicing, of every one that follows Jesus in his conflict, in his struggles in life. (1 John 5:4)." Ellen G. White, *Our Father Cares*, p. 126.

II. Context



The text about the victory over death is part of the long argument of the apostle Paul against the opinion of some Christians in Corinth that there is no resurrection of the dead (15: 12). Paul confirms that the resurrection of Christ is the fundamental message of the Christian faith. Without His resurrection life is meaningless ("If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable")



1 Corinthians 15: 50 – 58. Structure

A	50a	Brethren
B	50b	Kingdom of God (INHERITANCE)
C	51 - 52	When the last trumpet sounds (CHANGE)
D	53	A Mandatory Change (MUST)
C'	54 - 56	<u>C'. When the corruptible put on incorruption (VICTORY)</u> a. (WHEN) 54. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, b. (THEN) then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." c. (QUESTIONING DEATH) confirming that the death is now powerless (55. "O Death, where is your sting?) d. SIN (The sting of death is sin) e. LAW (And the strength of sin is the law)
B'	57	Victory of God (GIFT)
A'	58	My Beloved Brethren (Be steadfast, immovable, working hard...)

The structure of 1 Corinthians 15: 50 – 58 helps us to understand that the resurrection (change from mortality to immortality) is essential. At the same time Paul underlines the fact that the immortality is the gift of God, and not the result of our obedience to the Law of God.



III. The good news of salvation is not essentially to transform our everyday life and to allow us to become more successful. It is more to connect us with Jesus Christ so that we can receive the gift of the eternal life.



1. The corruption and the mortality have the expiration date

“So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality”



“If living flesh cannot inherit,
how much less dead and
corrupted flesh.”

Archibald Robertson and
Alfred Plummer, First Epistle of
St Paul to the Corinthians,
International Critical
Commentary. (Edinburgh: T&T
Clark, 1999), p. 376.



“Death has as yet a sting even to the believer, in that his body is to be under its power till the resurrection. But then the sting and power of death shall cease for ever.”

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown
Commentary

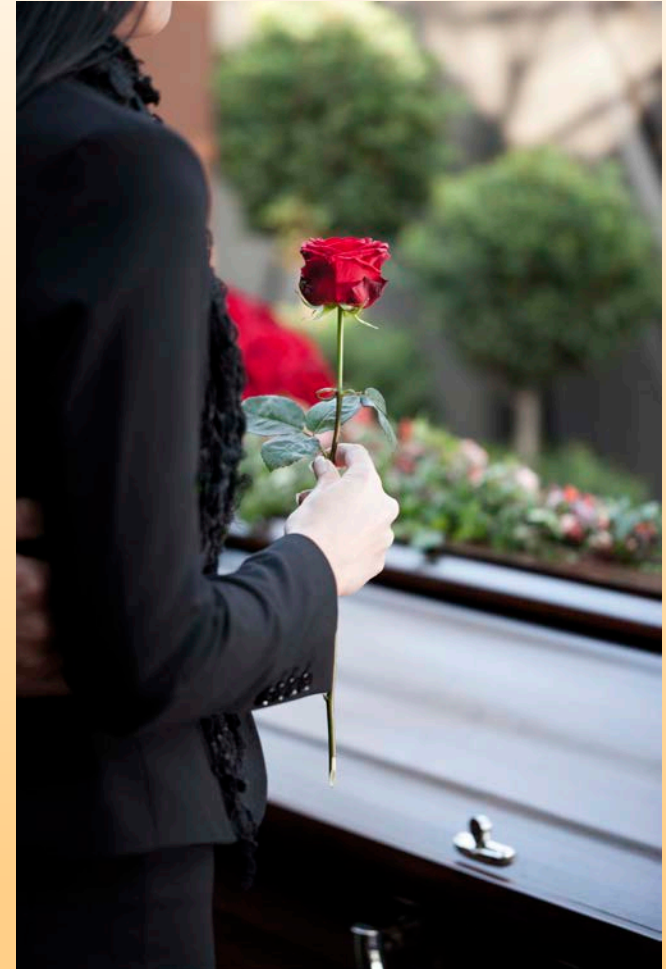


Paul says, "There is coming a transformation." We're gonna be changed. Something's gonna happen to redo us. You see, our earthly state is corrupt, mortal. We're susceptible to disease. We're susceptible to injury. We're susceptible to death. Indeed, it's inevitable. We are victims of our mortality. In fact, Paul, in another place, calls our bodies the bodies of humiliation. And you know it. And the older you get, the more stark it becomes. You discover all kinds of new deteriorating things...More wrinkles, gray hairs, the inability to do what you used to be able to do, all of this. And we make light of it and we say, "Life begins at 40". We are, and get it, we are in the process of dying...You see, we live a dying life. But Paul says, "That's okay. Doesn't matter, because there's gonna be a transformation take place. You're gonna become incorruptible. That's a great transformation. God's gonna take this corruptible me, this mortal me, and reverse it and make me something that I never was. Because I belong to Christ, because I am His, incorruption and immortality shall be mine."

John Macarthur ministry

2. The Bible confirms that our last enemy is death

“Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written...”



"The key to your continuing adventure, according to the Bible, is Jesus' sacrifice for our sins and victory over death. Luke put it this way in Acts 2:24: "God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him" (NIV). Christ was a willing victim killed in the place of others to destroy the power of death. That's something God promised way back in the Old Testament (Hosea 13:14, NIV): "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" Death's sting is gone because the last enemy, death, has been conquered by Jesus. The best part is that we, too, can conquer death if we put our trust and hope in Christ."

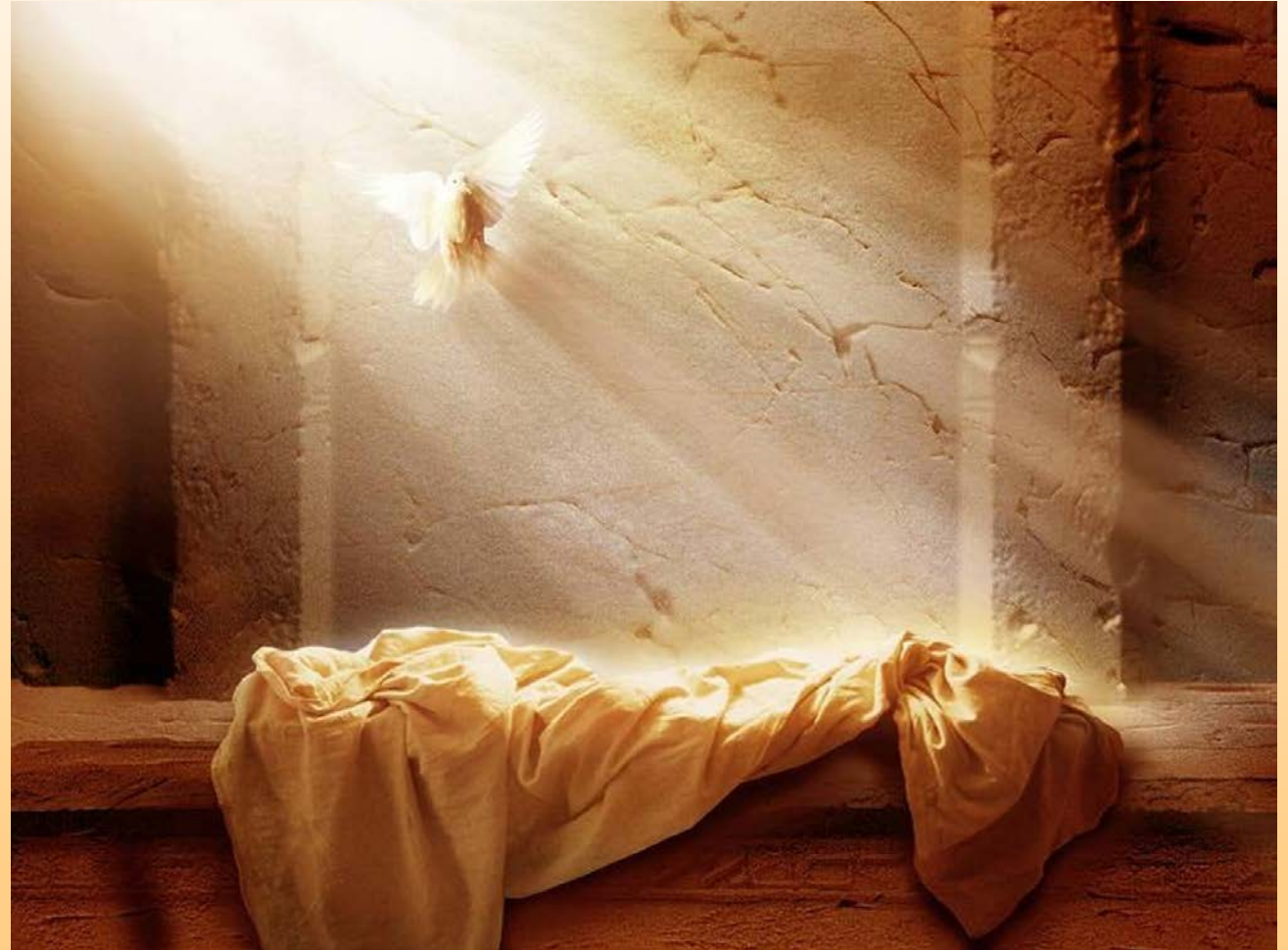
Sam O'Neal

“The Bible describes death as an enemy. It is not the only enemy of the Christian, but it is described as the “last enemy.” In 1 Corinthians, Paul affirms that Christ will reign until He has put all enemies under His feet, and the last of those enemies will be death (15:25–26). It should be a great comfort to the believer to know that the one in whom he places his trust is *Christus Victor*. We see this clearly in Hebrews, where the author describes Jesus as our *archegos*, or the “supreme champion” of His people.”

“Satan is very powerful. However, his only power is “to steal and kill and destroy”. The Bible confirms, “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb. 2:14–15). Therefore, don’t worry. Jesus is more powerful than all the forces of evil. Don’t fear anything and anyone. All your enemies, including the last one, are defeated. And you will see that the power of God’s love will remove fear from your heart. As Jesus said, “Let not your heart be troubled.” (DS)



3. In the context of
the great
controversy, the
victory of life over
death is a certitude
“Death is swallowed up in
victory.”



“Through union with Christ each of us may possess His immortal risen life, in which Death, the engulfer, is himself engulfed; Death, the conqueror, is conquered utterly and for ever; Death, the serpent, has his sting drawn, and is harmless. That participation in Christ’s life is begun even here, and God ‘giveth us the victory’ now, even while we live outward lives that must end in death, and will give it perfectly in the resurrection, when ‘they cannot die any more,’ and death itself is dead.”

Alexander Maclaren, (1826-1910), Expositions of Holy Scripture: Romans and Corinthians, p. 419.

“Death is here personified and represented as a devouring being, swallowing up all the generations of men; and by the resurrection of the body and the destruction of the empire of death, God is represented as swallowing him up, so that he is endlessly lost and absorbed in its illimitable waste. How glorious a time to the righteous, when the inhabitant shall no more say, I am sick; when God shall have wiped away all tears from off all faces, and when there shall be no more death. This time must come. Hallelujah! The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.”

Adam Clarke



“For this mortal shall put on immortality and this corruptible shall put on incorruption (see 1 Corinthians 15:54). It is the body that will be changed then, but now is the time for washing and ironing. It is the time to wash our robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

Ellen G. White, 9MR p. 262.



V. Conclusion



“Until death shall be swallowed up in victory, there will be orphans to be cared for, who will suffer in more ways than one if the tender compassion and loving-kindness of our church-members are not exercised in their behalf. The Lord bids us, “Bring the poor that are cast out to thy house.” Christianity must supply fathers and mothers for these homeless ones. The compassion for the widow and the orphan manifested in prayers and deeds, will come up in remembrance before God, to be rewarded by and by. There is a wide field before all who will work for the Master in caring for these friendless children and youth, placing them in a position favorable for the formation of a right character, that they may become children of God. There are unpromising children that need to be tenderly sought for; many that would otherwise grow up in ignorance, and drift into associations that lead to vice and crime, may be brought into favorable surroundings, and under Christ-like, tender watch care may be saved to Christ.”
Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, June 27, 1893, par. 4. 5.

"I had a dream of a place where everything was at peace.
There was no more pain, no hurting or crying,
A place where death forever ceased.

There was no more hunger or disease
Nor, nations rising up against each other.
All pride and jealousy were swallowed up in the final battle...

When I woke up from that beautiful dream
I gave thanks to Jesus Christ my Savior, Who will forever reign supreme.
So, read to me the Word of Life page by page
God's eternal love will never age."
Shane Dale Anders

“The life-work given to us is that of preparation for the life eternal, and if we accomplish this work as God has designed that we should, every temptation may work for our advance; for as we resist its allurements, we make progress in the divine life. In the heat of the conflict, while engaged in earnest spiritual warfare, unseen agencies are by our side, commissioned of heaven to aid us in our wrestlings, and in the crisis, strength and firmness and energy are imparted to us, and we have more than mortal power.”

Ellen G. White, Christian Education, p. 122.

Paul and the Rebellion

1 Corinthians 15: 54.

