

## IMMORTALITY AND INCORRUPTION.

The following, in answer to a correspondent's question, may be of general interest to our readers: –

The Greek word *aphtharsia* is rendered *immortality* in Rom. 2:7 and 2 Tim. 1:10. The same word is rendered *sincerity* in Eph. 6:24 and Titus 2:7; and *incorruption* in 1 Cor. 15:42,50,53,54.

The Greek word *aphthartos* is rendered *immortal* in 1 Tim. 1:17; and *incorruptible* in Rom. 1:23, 1 Cor. 9:25 and 15:52, and 1 Pet. 1:4,23 and 3:4.

These are the only occurrences of *this* word. The Greek word *athanasia* is translated *immortality*, but *three times* – 1 Cor. 15:53,54 and 1 Tim. 6:16.

Both these words are given the sense of *immortal*, by lexicographers. Liddell and Scott, standard authorities, give it thus. Plutarch uses *aphthartos* as *incorruptible, immortal*. And it seems to be the exact word corresponding to our words, *incorruptible* [not liable to corrupt, or to be corrupted], and *immortal* [not mortal – not subject or liable to death].

*Athanasia*, while it is properly translated *immortal* according to usage, does not so much have the sense of *not liable to die*, as that of *unchangeability*. Hence *aphthartos* is the word which most closely corresponds to our word *immortal*, *i.e., not mortal, not perishable, not corruptible*. This is shown by the relationship between *corruptible* and *incorruptible* in 1 Cor. 15:53 and 54, which in the Greek as in the English stand related, of the same root, the Greek being *phthartos* and *aphthartos*. Not so, however, the words *mortal* and *immortal* in the same verses. In the English these words are closely related, but the Greek uses words totally distinct and

not related – *thnetos* and *athanasia*, the sense being, "This mortal [dying condition] shall put on [or assume] immortality" [a lasting or unchangeable condition].

So, then, the attempt of some to make out that *incorruptible* refers to one state, and *immortality* to another, is without foundation, and probably the result of lack of thoroughness in the examination of the subject. Prof. Young, Liddell and Scott, and all translators are right in using the two English words *immortal* and *incorruptible* interchangeably. As above suggested, however, we would have preferred it had *athanasia* been translated *unchangeability* in the three cases where it occurs, although our word *immortality* covers the idea of unchangeability.

With this change 1 Cor. 15:53,54 would read thus: – "The [special] dead [*i.e.*, the saints] will be raised incorruptible [*i.e.*, immortal, not liable to corrupt, decay, or perish] and *we* [of the same special class] shall be changed." "For of necessity this corruptible [diseased, perishable condition] must be invested with *incorruptibility* [imperishable quality] and this mortal [dying condition] must be invested with immortality" [*unchangeability*]. "And when this corruptible [perishable condition] shall be invested with incorruptibility [imperishable quality] and this mortal [dying condition] shall be clothed with unchangeability [immortality], *then* will that prophetic promise be fulfilled [which says] Death will be swallowed up in victory." That is to say: when this *special* class, *the* dead and *we*, the overcomers, the saints, are changed to undying, changeless conditions, *then* will that prophecy of Isaiah 25:8 begin to be fulfilled to the *world* – the Millennial work of abolishing death and restoring life will *then* go on successfully.

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