

The dissertation deals with a theme which in the final decades of the last century became the subject of many controversies, and which still today – perhaps together with the question of "salvation for all" – remains one of the most important and most widely-discussed issues in Christian eschatology. In comparison with the many serious questions with which contemporary theology is concerned, it may easily appear marginal or secondary, belonging to the sphere of ideas and speculation rather than the field of serious theological reflection. In fact, however, the question of the existence of human beings immediately after death – if it is not dismissed at once with a reference to allegedly "sober" and simple biblical testimonies or basic Christian confessions of faith – is one where basic theological viewpoints are confronted with positions that were adopted in eschatology and earlier dogmatic treatises.