INTRODUCTION

A longing for life beyond death has been the key note of all human desires. Even in pre-historic times the burial of tools, ornaments, etc., along with the dead indicated a hope of continued existence. The Greek legends reflect an yearning for life after death. David's agonised cry over the death of his son, "I shall go to him, but he will not return to me", expresses immortality more poignantly. Plato's description of the death of Socrates in Phaedo serves as a basis for the immortality of the soul. An average person of any religion, whether an intellectual or not would unhesitantly affirm his belief in 'the immortality of the soul'.

The belief in the immortality of the soul is an essential part of every religion, perhaps differently coined as 'disembodied survival', 'after-life', 'existence of the other world', 'life-hereafter' and such like. The relevance of the immortality of the soul, is
accepted in every scheme of religious and philosophical thought, and has been rethought and reconsidered by each successive age, in the light of a broader scientific development accompanied by deepened religious, ethical and cultural experiences. Though much has been said and written on death and life after death, the subject appears to be debated perennially.

Christianity distinguishes itself from almost every religion and all philosophy in that, it not only affirms belief in immortality but has resurrection as a distinctive contribution to human thought about survival hereafter, Christianity is inextricably linked with resurrection or to be precise, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, whose name it bears. Resurrection can never be separated from Christianity without destroying the entire Christian framework.

Resurrection of Jesus is a bed-rock on which the entire corpus of Christian truth and faith rests on. Resurrection is the heart of Christianity. There is
no way by which Christianity could have survived or can survive without the fact of resurrection.

This subject of perennial interest has been discussed by philosophers of different ages, from various viewpoints, owing to their times and perhaps their religious traditions as well.

Today, we hear of a modern trend to suggest that the doctrine of resurrection and the concept of immortality are untenable propositions. This trend is not only among scientists but also among theologians and philosophers (of religion) as well. To this trend of denial of resurrection there are leading theologians like, Rudolf Bultmann, Paul Tillich, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Gordon Kaufmann and many more, who subtly or blatantly deny resurrection and life hereafter. To this trend also belongs John Hick, a philosopher of religion.

We are going to consider in this thesis John Hick as a representative figure of this new trend. For the
others belong to theology proper but Hick belongs to philosophy proper. And therefore we are going to focus our attention on John Hick.

We would like to make it clear that the purpose of this thesis is not to defend the doctrine of resurrection but to carry out the philosophical enterprise on the subject of life-hereafter with special reference to the Christian framework, as seen in the writings of John Hick.

Before we proceed, any further we would like to make some clarifications about the usage of some terminologies and concepts, such as life-hereafter, resurrection, immortality and eternal life, which have been interchanged occasionally.

Life-hereafter or after-life is a term that is used in a general sense to express the belief or opinion, in any form of life after death, or any kind of future life anticipated beyond the grave. This ma"
include immortality of the soul, disembodied existence, or for that matter resurrection of resurrected life.

It is true, that resurrection is the distinctive contribution of Christianity to human thought about survival hereafter. The eschatological belief of Christianity is the recreation or a re-constitution of the human psycho and physical individual that has died, in a manner befitting the future life.

Though resurrection and life hereafter are not the same, resurrection is an expression of one's belief in life hereafter. In other words Christian belief in life hereafter is expressed in the idea of resurrection. Thus if life hereafter is indicated by a circle, resurrection or disembodied survival or immortality of the soul could be indicated by various smaller circles that could be drawn within this circle.

Although the belief in resurrection implies the belief in life hereafter, it does not necessarily
follow that the belief in life hereafter implies the belief in resurrection.

Similarly, eternal life, or eternity is an affirmation of Christian doctrine, which describes the unending nature of life after death. This could be in a state of bliss (heaven) or a state of punishment (hell), both describing a timeless state. Whereas, the immortality of the soul expresses the idea of death-less-ness, which is the nature of the soul, as opposed to the mortal nature of the body, i.e. the body is subjected to death.

Although, these are two distinct concepts, yet they are the necessary corollary of each other. For eternal and immortal are like the two sides of the coin, both indicating things of the yonder.

Further, we would like to point out that the thesis is not attempted from a historical perspective. We have not: gone into the historical or chronological
background of any of the concepts dealt in the course of our discussion. But our attempt here is only from a philosophical viewpoint, for our study is a philosophical study, more precisely a study in philosophy of religion.

Finally, we do not claim to 'prove' the present life could be identified with the future life, but our attempt here to show the possibility of identifying the present life with the future life.

The first chapter entitled "Resurrection and Life Hereafter: Hick's position" is an expository chapter on Hick's views on resurrection and life hereafter. In this chapter, we have discussed Hick in two phases, phase one has been termed as 'early Hick' and phase two as 'later Hick'.

From there we proceed to the second chapter entitled "Critique on early Hick". Where we shall discuss identity between resurrected body and
survey in the five sections is aimed at showing re-
surrection is not a peripheral matter but an inte-
gral part of the Christian doctrine.