



HISTORY  
OF THE  
SOUL



S. W. Burton.

Missionary Class

1898

Union College

Chambersburg

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A  
HISTORY  
OF THE  
DOCTRINE OF THE SOUL,  
AMONG  
ALL RACES AND PEOPLES,  
ANCIENT AND MODERN,  
INCLUDING THEOLOGIANS, PHILOSOPHERS, SCIENTISTS,  
AND UNTUTORED ABORIGINEES;  
*CAREFULLY BROUGHT DOWN TO THE PRESENT TIME.*

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BY ELD. D. M. CANRIGHT.

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“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”—PAUL.

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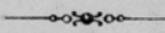
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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.



It is with earnest prayer to God that I send forth this little book, hoping that it may be useful in the cause of truth. Very many candid and pious minds are coming to be satisfied that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is not taught in the Bible; yet it is quite generally held by Christians. It is, therefore, both interesting and important to know how this doctrine came into the church, who has believed it, and who has not. To answer these questions is the object of these pages.

I have studied long, and read extensively, to gather the facts herein presented. I have been brief in my comments and quotations, to avoid making a bulky book. Other labors and lack of opportunities to obtain access to libraries, have not allowed me to be as full and make the points as strong in some places as I would like to have done, and as I know can be done. If the Lord will, I shall do this in a future edition. Much care has been used in these quotations and references, so they may be relied upon.

It seemed to me that such a work as this was needed. While much has been written upon the Bible argument concerning the nature of man, very few and meager have been the productions upon the historical argument. Indeed, I have never seen anything written upon several of the points here noticed. I hope, therefore, it may be of some little use to the friends of truth.



PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.



THE previous edition of this work being exhausted, many inquiries have been made for a new edition. For years the author has been reading and gathering material to perfect what was only begun in the former issue. Perhaps few other subjects require so extensive reading as this, in order to get at all the truth in the case. It must be gleaned, a little here and a little there, from histories, travels, biographies, essays, sermons, and all kinds of literature.

The author has been particular to give full and careful references to works quoted, so that the reader can satisfy himself of their correctness, if he desires. The facts plainly show that the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul is purely a heathen dogmā. These pages point out its origin, its gradual development, the course by which it came into the Christian church, and the baleful effects which it there produced. They also show that the mortality of the soul, the sleep of the dead, and the destruction of the wicked, were doctrines held by all the apostolic Fathers, and after them by many of the most eminent of the early Fathers. Since that time it brings to light a host of pious men who have rejected the pagan doctrine of man's immortality.

May the God of truth grant his blessing upon this work, and may it open many eyes to see that our only hope of a future life is through the Lord Jesus Christ and the resurrection of the dead.

D. M. C.

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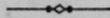
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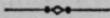
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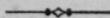
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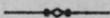
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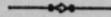
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A HISTORY  
OF THE  
DOCTRINE OF THE SOUL.

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CHAPTER I.

*The Bible does not Teach the Immortality  
of the Soul.*

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ANY learned men who believe in the immortality of the soul, have frankly confessed that it is not taught in the Bible.

Olshausen, in his comments on 1 Cor. 15 : 13, says: "The doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and the name, are alike unknown to the entire Bible."

Bishop Tillotson says: "The immortality of the soul is rather supposed, or taken for granted, than expressly revealed in the Bible."<sup>1</sup>

The celebrated Richard Watson corroborates, thus: "That the soul is naturally immortal, . . . is contradicted by the Scripture, which makes our immortality a gift dependent on the will of the giver."<sup>2</sup>

Archbishop Whately says: "To the Christian, indeed, all this doubt would be instantly removed, if he

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<sup>1</sup>Tillotson's Sermons, Vol. II., Sermon 100.

<sup>2</sup>Theological Institutes, Vol. II., Part 2, Chap. 18, p. 83.

found that the immortality of the soul, as a disembodied spirit, were revealed in the word of God. . . .

. In fact, however, no such doctrine is revealed to us; the Christian's hope, as founded on the promises contained in the gospel, is the resurrection of the body."<sup>3</sup>

Bishop Lowth, in his "Lectures on Hebrew Poetry," says, "We there find no exact account, no explicit mention of immortal spirits."<sup>4</sup>

This is a significant confession, since the bishop was a firm believer in the soul's immortality. Dr. Neander says, "It was an old Jewish notion that immortality was not founded upon the nature of the soul, but a peculiar gift of divine grace."<sup>5</sup>

Here is another good admission from an orthodox writer: "We would express our conviction that the idea of the immortality of the soul *has no source in the gospel*; that it comes, on the contrary, *from the Platonists*."<sup>6</sup>

Says Gibbon, "We discover that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is omitted in the law of Moses."<sup>7</sup>

In his note on this passage from Gibbon, the orthodox Milman thus admits the same: "Modern writers have accounted in various ways for the silence of the Hebrew legislator on the immortality of the soul."<sup>8</sup>

Nemesius, bishop of Emesa, in the fifth century, thus states the doctrine of the Jews: "The Hebrews say that originally man was evidently neither mortal nor immortal; but on the confines of either nature; so that, if he should yield to the bodily affections, he should share also the changes of the body; but if he should prefer the nobler affections of the soul, he should be deemed worthy of immortality."<sup>9</sup>

This plainly shows the faith of the ancient He-

<sup>3</sup>Quoted by Horne in the "Watch Tower," p. 8.

<sup>4</sup>Id., p. 12.

<sup>5</sup>Church History, p. 444.

<sup>6</sup>Darby's Hopes of the Church.

<sup>7</sup>Decline and Fall, Vol. I., Chap. 15, p. 530.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., note.

<sup>9</sup>Hudson Debt and Grace, p. 310.

brews, as well as the doctrine of the Bible on this point. Dr. Edward Beecher, in a late excellent work upon the subject of Scriptural Retribution thus frankly confesses that the Bible does not teach the natural immortality of the soul: "But before doing this, it will be expedient to consider the real foundations of any reliable belief in immortality. Plato sought to find them in the inherent nature of the deathless soul, existing from eternity to eternity. Others have sought them in the aspirations of the soul, and the imperfect development of retribution in this life. But the fundamental positions of the system of the Bible are not of this kind. It does not recognize, nay, it expressly denies, the natural and inherent immortality of soul. It assures us that God only hath immortality. 1 Tim. 6:16."<sup>10</sup>

Again he says: "There are passages in the Old Testament which were regarded of old, and still are by many, as teaching the ultimate annihilation of the wicked."<sup>11</sup>

So manifestly true are the foregoing statements that many pious and learned Christian men who have carefully examined the Bible upon this subject, have become thoroughly satisfied that it does not teach the immortality of the soul. Hence they have written many books, abundantly showing that no such doctrine is taught in the Bible, but the reverse.

They have rejected the popular doctrine of man's natural immortality for many reasons which to us seem conclusive against it.

1. IT IS UNREASONABLE.—It is not reasonable that the all-wise Creator should bestow unconditional immortality upon all the race without regard to their moral character, and before any of them had been tested to see what they would develop. What good could come of it? None at all; but much evil. The Scriptures plainly teach that man was placed upon

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<sup>10</sup> Doctrine of Scriptural Retribution, p. 58.

<sup>11</sup> Id., p. 72.

probation. Good and evil were set before him. He was left to develop his own character, and determine his own destiny for eternity. The Creator certainly knew that it was possible for man to develop an evil character. If, then, he should first make him immortal, sin and evil would thus become immortalized. God would then have an eternal foe of his own creating. Through the endless cycles of eternity this evil, corrupt, and God-hating creature must continue to insult Heaven and pollute the fair universe of God. Such a supposition, to our mind, impeaches the wisdom of the Creator. Besides, it is answerable for the following erroneous doctrines:—

(1.) *Eternal Misery*.—Growing out of the supposition of man's natural immortality, is the horrid doctrine of an endless hell of torment for the lost. The Bible plainly teaches that a large share of men will be damned, being found utterly unworthy of the kingdom of God. Just as plainly it declares that all such shall go into a lake of fire. Now if all men are immortal by their very nature, then, all who are lost must continue to live in unutterable anguish and eternal burnings through unending ages. And this is the very doctrine that is professed by the churches of the day. We believe it to be a reproach on God, and a stone of stumbling to thousands of thoughtful people. We do know that large numbers are driven into infidelity by this very doctrine.

(2.) *Universalism*.—The unscriptural and unreasonable doctrine of universal salvation has grown out of the doctrine of man's natural immortality. Assuming that all men must, by their very nature, live eternally, the Universalists, being shocked by the horrors of the endless-hell theory, have tried to twist the Scriptures to justify themselves in believing that all men, without regard to character, or faith in Christ, will ultimately be saved.

(3.) *Spiritualism*.—The very corner-stone of Spir-

itualism, the foundation on which it rests, the very tap-root which supplies it with nourishment and vigor, is the theory of the natural immortality of the soul. Assuming that the soul is the real man, that it lives when the body dies, they ask why this living soul cannot come back and communicate with men in the flesh. Granting these premises, their conclusion is a reasonable one, and hence has grown up the abominable system of modern Spiritualism, with all its blasphemous assumptions and moral pollutions. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul is responsible for the whole thing.

(4.) *Purgatory*.—At the door of this same theory of natural immortality, may be laid all the abominations of the papal purgatory. It supposes that when the body dies the soul goes into a place of suffering where it is purified from its sins. The prayers, the money, the sacrifices of its friends on earth can aid in releasing it from this horrible place. Hence, the Romish purgatory.

All the above and some other abominable doctrines which have cursed the world, have had their root in this theory of natural immortality. If man is mortal, if the dead are unconscious, then all the above theories fall to the ground in a moment.

2. IT CONTRADICTS SOME OF THE FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE.—The common theory is not only that the dead are conscious, actually living, but that the wicked go straight into hell at death, and the righteous immediately into heaven. Now if this be so, it virtually nullifies the doctrine of a future judgment. One of the plainest doctrines of the Bible is that there is to be a future, definite, grand day of Judgment, in which all men, good and bad, will be arraigned before God and judged for the actions of this life. But we ask, What would be the use of a future judgment if men are sent immediately to Heaven or hell when they die? Shall God torment a man a

thousand years and then call him up to be judged to see whether he should be punished or not? Shall God reward a man in heaven for ages, and then call him down to earth and judge him to see what his doom should be? How utterly unreasonable is all this! We repeat that it virtually nullifies the future judgment.

Moreover, if the soul is the real man, the thinking, intelligent, active man; if it can live as well or better without the body than with it; if the body is only a prison, a cage, a clog; then what is the use of a future resurrection? If the soul is ever freed from this old body, why should God ever put it back again? Why raise this clog of clay and again imprison the immortal soul within it? Such a theory naturally leads to the rejection of the Bible doctrine of the resurrection of the body, than which nothing is more plainly taught throughout the Holy Scriptures.

Furthermore, if the saints go immediately to Heaven at death, if they become like angels, and dwell in the presence of God, what will they care for the second advent of Christ to earth? It can be of no account to them. They are with him already; safe, immortal, and unspeakably happy. Why should they long for the return of the Master? This doctrine, it will be seen, throws its whole weight directly against the literal return of Jesus to this earth. But on turning to the Bible, we find the second advent of Christ to be the grand, central theme, the all absorbing hope of every Bible writer, while all of them are entirely silent with regard to the immortality of the soul. These two doctrines do not naturally go together; hence we invariably find that the stronger a man believes in the immortality of the soul, the less he cares for the Judgment, the resurrection, and the second advent. These facts alone should lead us to look with suspicion upon that theory.

### Scriptural Meaning of Hell.

To the popular mind at the present day the word "hell," wherever found, conveys the idea of a vast burning, smoking pit of eternal fire, in which are devils and damned souls suffering in unutterable agony. This is its exclusive meaning as now used. Hence, when the word "hell" is found in the Bible, the common reader immediately associates that idea with it, supposing that this is what it must necessarily mean. But every well-informed person knows that there is no foundation for this popular error.

But the original Hebrew and Greek terms most frequently translated hell, which are used to represent the place or state of the dead, never have the meaning of our modern word "hell." In the Hebrew original of the Old Testament we have the word *sheol* occurring sixty-five times. It is translated hell thirty-one times; grave, thirty-one times; and pit, three times. The corresponding Greek term is *hades*. It occurs in the New Testament eleven times, and is rendered hell ten times, and grave once. The revised version always renders it *hades*. Neither of these terms, *sheol* or *hades*, ever means the place of future punishment or a lake of fire. They simply mean the grave or realm of the dead.

In proof of this we will offer testimonies from the most eminent authors upon the point.

"A new and critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament," by E. W. Bullinger, thus defines *hades*:—

"*Hades*, therefore, denotes the realm of the invisible, the kingdom of the dead, graveland, gravedom, all the graves in the world viewed as one; the place where the declaration of God is fulfilled, 'Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return.' *Hades* is the grave of the human race; not the grave of the individual (for which other words are used), but of all the

dead, whether they lie in the sepulcher, or are torn by beasts (Gen. 37:35), or consigned to the deep." No better definition of the word could be given. It means the place or region of the dead, good and bad.

Another high authority in defining *hades* says, "For the same reason, the ideas entertained even by God's people upon the subject, were predominantly somber and gloomy. *Sheol* wore no inviting aspect to their view, no more than *hades* to the superstitious heathen; the very men who believed that God would accompany them thither, and keep them from evil, contemplated the state as one of darkness and silence, and shrunk from it with instinctive horror, or gave hearty thanks when they found themselves for a time delivered from it."

Yes, *hades* is the dark and silent realm of the dead. The late popular work, "Smith's Dictionary of the Bible," Art. Hell, truthfully says of the word hell:—

"This is the word generally and unfortunately used by our translators to render the Hebrew *sheol*. We say *unfortunately*, because although, as St. Augustine truly asserts, *sheol*, with its equivalents *inferni* and *hades*, is never used in a good sense, yet the English word hell is mixed up with numberless associations entirely foreign to the minds of the ancient Hebrews. It would perhaps have been better to retain the Hebrew word *sheol*, or else render it always by the grave, or the pit. Ewald accepts Luther's word *holle*; even *underwelt*, which is suggested by De Wette, involves conceptions too human for the purpose. Passing over the derivations suggested by older writers, it is now generally agreed that the word comes from the root *sha-al*, 'to make hollow,' (Comp. Germ. *holle*, 'hell,' with *hohle* 'a hollow,') and therefore means the vast hollow subterranean resting place of the dead." "Generally speaking, the Hebrews regarded the grave as the final end of all sentient and intelligent existence, the land where all things are forgotten."

Even the old English word hell formerly had no such meaning as is now attached to it. It simply meant a dark, concealed, or hidden place, or what was out of sight. So Dr. Parkhurst says: "Our English, or rather Saxon, word *hell*, in its original signification, exactly answers to the Greek word *hades*, and denotes a concealed or unseen place; and this sense of the word is still retained in the Western countries of England; *to hele* over a thing is to cover it."

Again, McClintock and Strong's Cyclopaedia says, on the word hell, it is "a term which originally corresponded more exactly to *hades*, being derived from the Saxon *helen*, to cover, and signifying merely the covered or invisible place, the habitation of those who have gone from this visible terrestrial region to the world of spirits. But it has so long been appropriated in common usage to the place of future punishment for the wicked, that its earlier meaning has been lost sight of." This is the simple historical truth in the case. We must remember this when we read the Bible.

Mr. Alger, in his "Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life," a very able work indeed, uses this language: "The term *rephaim* is used to denote the *manes* of the departed. The etymology of the word, as well as its use, makes it mean the weak, the relaxed. 'I am counted as them that go down into the under world; I am as a man that hath no strength.' This faint, powerless condition accords with the idea that they were destitute of flesh, blood, and animal life,—mere *umbræ*. These ghosts are described as being nearly as destitute of sensation as they are of strength. They are called 'the inhabitants of the land of stillness.' They exist in an inactive, partially torpid state, with a dreamy consciousness of past and present, neither suffering nor enjoying, and seldom moving. Herder says of the Hebrews: 'The sad and mournful images of their

ghostly realm disturbed them, and were too much for their self-possession.' Respecting these images, he adds: 'Their voluntary force and energy were destroyed. They were feeble as a shade, without distinction of members, as a nerveless breath. They wandered and flitted in the dark nether world.' This 'wandering and flitting,' however, is rather the spirit of Herder's poetry than that of the Hebrews; for the whole tenor and drift of their representations in the Old Testament show that the state of disembodied souls is deep quietude. Freed from bondage, pain, toil, and care, they repose in silence. The ghost summoned from beneath by the witch of Endor, said: 'Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?' It was indeed, in a dismal abode that they took their long quiet; but then it was in a place 'where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.'<sup>12</sup>

A careful examination of the Old Testament will show that these statements are correct. Hence, the Jews had no idea that the souls of the dead were in Heaven, or that they were alive and intelligent. Such was the idea which the Jews had of the dead in the Old Testament times. How different from the modern idea! Now the liberated soul immediately enters a world of life, glory, and happiness!

### Gehenna.

The Greek word *gehenna*, translated *hell* in the New Testament, always refers to the place of punishment of the wicked. It never means the grave. The following is its complete use:—

Matt. 5:22, shall be cast into *hell* fire.

29, whole body should be cast into *hell*.

30, whole body should be cast into *hell*.

10:28, to destroy both soul and body in *hell*.

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<sup>12</sup> Chap. 8, pp. 153, 154.

- Matt. 18: 9, two eyes to be cast into *hell* fire.  
 23: 15, more the child of *hell* than yourselves.  
 33, can ye escape the damnation of *hell* ?  
 Mark 9: 43, having two hands to be cast into *hell*.  
 45, having two feet to be cast into *hell*.  
 47, having two eyes to be cast into *hell* fire.  
 Luke 12: 5, hath power to cast into *hell*.  
 James 3: 6, is set on fire of *hell*.

The reader will readily see that every passage refers to the place of punishment, or hell, properly so called.

Greenfield, in his Greek lexicon, thus plainly gives its origin and meaning:—" *Gehenna*, pr. the valley of Hinnom south of Jerusalem, once celebrated for the horrid worship of Moloch, and afterward polluted with every species of filth, as well as the carcasses of animals, and dead bodies of malefactors; to consume which, in order to avert the pestilence which such a mass of corruption would occasion, constant fires were kept burning."

The word *gehenna*, as used in the Greek, occurs in the New Testament twelve times, as already given. It is always translated hell. As Greenfield says, the apostate Jews once celebrated the worship of Moloch in the valley of Hinnom. When they put away their idolatry, in order to show their contempt of Moloch and of his worship, they made that place a depository for all the filth and refuse of the city. Carcasses of beasts and malefactors were thrown there. Constant fires were kept burning, into which these carcasses were cast. But sometimes a carcass or some part of one was left out of the fire to be devoured by the worms. There were, therefore, two agents of destruction in the case,—the fire and the worms. It was a most repulsive picture of utter destruction. Jesus used this as an illustration to the Jews of how God would finally destroy the wicked. They will be cast into fire, and be consumed, the same as in the valley before them. Thus it became

a very forcible illustration of the utter destruction of the wicked.

### **Tartaroo.**

This word occurs only once in the Bible, and is in that case applied to the fallen angels. "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to *hell*, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." 2 Peter 2: 4.

This requires but a short notice. Mr. Parkhurst, in his Greek Lexicon, says, "Tartarus, in its proper physical sense, is the condensed, solid, and immovable darkness which surrounds the material universe." Probably it refers to those etherial regions surrounding this fallen planet, which Satan as the "prince of the power of the air" is said to inhabit.

The parallel text in Jude says, "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Jude 6.

From this it appears to be a place of darkness somewhere in the etherial regions. It has no reference to a lake of fire or to the final place of punishment, either of men or devils. It will be noticed that although the devils were in this place already in the days of Christ, yet they were not in torment then, for they said to Jesus, "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" Matt. 8: 29. This is sufficient to show that *tartaroo* is not the place of torment. As it has no reference to the punishment of men, we leave it here.

### **Josephus Unreliable.**

To the foregoing Scriptural facts it is objected that Josephus says that the Pharisees did believe the immortality of the soul. To this we answer, 1. What

Josephus does say about it is evidently intended by himself to be very vague, and capable of two meanings,—one to harmonize with the real doctrine of the Jews, the other to look like what the heathen philosopher taught. We will notice the reason for this. 2. If we interpret him to mean that the Jews did really hold to the proper immortality of the soul, it rests alone upon his assertion. No other ancient author can be brought to support him. Perhaps a passage in Tacitus may be construed as agreeing with Josephus; yet even this is quite susceptible of another meaning. It is supposed by some learned men that Tacitus drew his history of the Jews from Josephus; if so, of course he would follow him. Hence it stands alone upon Josephus' authority. 3. We have seen by the Old and New Testaments that the Jews did not believe the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Hence, Josephus would directly contradict them. Which would be the more reliable? 4. Josephus wrote his books after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation. He wrote them among the Romans, and for the Romans to read; hence there was a temptation for him to bend and color Jewish doctrines to suit his heathen conquerors. There is but too much proof that he did this in many points.

Here are a few testimonies from eminent men upon this point. Says the "New American Cyclopædia:" "Pride in the ancient glories of his nation, awe of the greatness and power of Rome, personal vanity, and a tendency to unbounded flattery of the Flavian family, appear with equal prominence in his writings."<sup>13</sup> This criticism is none too severe on him. The learned Dr. Knapp, in his "Christian Theology," says: "Josephus, in his usual manner, so designedly represents the Jewish doctrine, that the Greeks and Romans, to whom the resurrection of the body appeared absurd,

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<sup>13</sup> Article Josephus.

should suppose the transmigration of souls to be intended, while at the same time, the Jews should understand that the resurrection of the dead was spoken of." Again: "Josephus carefully avoids the words *anastasis* and *anistemi* when he describes the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and expresses himself ambiguously, in order not to displease the Greeks and Romans, for whom he principally wrote, and to whom the doctrine of the resurrection of the body would appear, not only new, but according to the principles of the philosophy prevailing among them, offensive and absurd."<sup>14</sup>

By this we see that there was a strong temptation for Josephus to dissemble and prevaricate on the subject before us. That he did this is clearly proved. How much confidence can we place in the testimony of such a man? Mosheim says that Josephus "is very inconsistent with himself in the account which he gives of them [the Pharisees], as may easily be perceived by any one who will compare the different passages relating to them in his works. It would also prove a task of some difficulty to reconcile everything which he says concerning the opinions of the Pharisees, with what is recorded of them in the writings of the New Testament."<sup>15</sup> He tries to reconcile it by supposing that the Pharisees were not fixed and settled in their opinions; but evidently the real facts are, Josephus was trying to cover up the truth.

Dr. Jorton also remarks: "In his antiquities, Josephus takes too great liberties with sacred history, and accommodates it too much to the taste of the Gentiles, which yet probably he did to recommend his oppressed and unhappy nation to the favor of the Greeks and Romans." "May it not have been the time-serving policy which suggested the flattery which he addressed to Vespasian, as before related, and even induced him in spite of his accurate knowl-

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<sup>14</sup>Pp. 530, 531.

<sup>15</sup>Commentaries, Vol. 1, Chap. 2, Sec. 11, note 2, p. 64.

edge of the Scriptures, to represent his patron, though a heathen and a stranger, as the promised Messiah?<sup>16</sup>

A man who will so grossly pervert God's word is not to be relied upon. Dr. A. Clarke, in giving Josephus' account of the pharisees' doctrine of the soul, says: "But it is very likely that Josephus has not told the *whole truth* here!"<sup>17</sup> The great Bochart, referring to Josephus' "Wars of the Jews," Book 6, Chap. x, Sec. 1, says: "There are in this clause of Josephus as many mistakes as words."<sup>18</sup> Dean Prideaux thus observes: "Sacred writ, as being dictated by the Holy Spirit of God, must ever be of infallible truth, which cannot be said of the writings of Josephus. For they have in them many great and manifest mistakes. . . . For therein he frequently varies from Scripture, history, and common sense."<sup>19</sup> Another writer observes: "It must be owned that in his account of the Scripture times, he has taken a bold liberty to vary from the Bible, to add, alter, retrench, and even sometimes contradict it."<sup>20</sup> Pococke remarks: "If we have not cited Josephus, it is no wonder; since, in giving the views of the sects he names respecting the other world, he seems to have used words better suited to the fashions and the ears of the Greeks and Romans, than such as a scholar of the Jewish law would understand, or deem expressive of his meaning.

His character is thus set forth in McClintock's and Strong's Cyclopedia. "Holding in the main, the abstract doctrine of a Pharisee, but with the principle and temper of a Herodian, he strove to accommodate his religion to heathen tastes and prejudices; and this by actual commission, no less than by a rationalistic system of modification. . . . 'In spite of his constant assertions,' says Fawar, 'he can have had no real re-

<sup>16</sup> Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, Vol. 1, p. 21 and note.

<sup>17</sup> Commentary on John 9:2.

<sup>18</sup> Whiston's Josephus, p. 761.

<sup>19</sup> Connection of Old and New Testaments, Vol. I, Part 1, B. 5, p. 302.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Hudson's Future Life, p. 335.

spect for the writings which he so largely illustrates. If he had felt, as a Jew, any deep or religious appreciation of the Old Testament history, which he professes to follow, he would not have tampered with it as he does, mixing it with pseudo-philosophical fancies. . . . The worst charge, however, against him is his constant attempt, by alterations and suppressions (and especially by a rationalistic method of dealing with miracles, which contrasts strangely with his credulous fancies) to make Jewish history palatable to Greeks and Romans.'"<sup>21</sup>

Numerous testimonies to the same effect might be given. Every careful reader of Josephus must see that these testimonies are true. Hence, little or no confidence can be placed in him on such a subject as the one before us. It was the very subject above all others upon which Josephus would be anxious to represent the ideas of his brethren as in harmony with the doctrines of those Romans who believe in a future life. These philosophers mocked at the idea of a resurrection of the dead, but held that there would be a future life through the immortality of the soul. Hence, as Dr. Knapp says, Josephus "so designedly represents the Jewish doctrine, that the Greeks and Romans, to whom the resurrection of the body appears absurd, should suppose the transmigration of souls to be intended, while at the same time, the Jews should understand that the resurrection of the dead was spoken of."

Now hear what Josephus does say of the Pharisees: "They also believe that souls have an immortal vigor in them, and that under the earth there will be rewards or punishments, according as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life; and the latter are to be detained in an everlasting prison, but that the former shall have power to revive and live again."<sup>22</sup> And, "They say that all souls are incorruptible, but

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<sup>21</sup> Article, Josephus.

<sup>22</sup> Antiquities, B. 18, Chap. 2, Sec. 3.

that the souls of good men are only removed into other bodies,—but that the souls of bad men are subject to eternal punishment.”<sup>23</sup>

The reader will notice the following points: 1. These souls are “under the earth,” not in heaven. 2. What he means by the “immortal vigor” which souls have in them he explains to mean that they “have power to revive and live again.” This is the resurrection. Carefully examined, this is all the immortality he attributes to the soul, viz., that it shall revive and live again. We believe in this kind of immortality. But the Sadducees denied all this. They said that there was no future life of any kind. The whole man utterly perished in death. There would be no re-living of the soul, spirit, or body—no resurrection. But the Pharisees said that death was only a sleep. The soul would revive and live again. This is just what Josephus says, only he colors it some with philosophical, instead of scriptural language. 3. The phrase “immortality of the soul” among ancient authors frequently means only a future life, without any reference to what we now mean by the technical term, “the immortality of the soul.” As we have seen, all the philosophers who taught a future life, taught it through the immortality of the soul. So it came to pass among the heathens that to deny the immortality of the soul was to deny a future life. Hence, to accommodate themselves to the understanding of the heathens, some of the early fathers used the term, “immortality of the soul” to represent the future life which Christians hoped for through the resurrection. Josephus plainly uses it in that accommodated sense.

The “Discourse Concerning Hades,” found in his works, it should be remarked, is unquestionably spurious. Kitto, in his “Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature,” says: “Josephus himself, in the discourse ascribed to him on hades, speaks of a subterraneous

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<sup>23</sup> Wars of the Jews, B. 2, Chap. 8, Sec. 14.

region, a lake of unquenchable fire, everlasting punishment, and of a worm never dying (Secs. 2, 6); but that homily, as Whiston calls it, abounds with other evidence that its author was a Christian." Alger says: "The fragment entitled, 'Concerning Hades,' formerly attributed to Josephus, is now acknowledged on all sides to be a gross forgery."<sup>24</sup>

It is a well-settled fact, then, that the writings of Josephus are not to be implicitly relied upon as giving a correct account of Jewish belief, especially when it was for his interest to dissemble to please the Romans, as it very manifestly was on the question of the nature of the soul. We must therefore go to the sure word of God, to find what was the faith of God's people at that time.

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<sup>24</sup> Future Life, Part 9, Chap. 8, p. 103.



## CHAPTER II.

The most Ancient Faith Was that Im-  
mortality Was to be only through the  
Resurrection of the Body.

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**T** is commonly asserted by the believers in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, that this doctrine has been universally believed in all ages and by all people. This is regarded as a strong presumptive argument that the doctrine must be true. But granting the premises, such a conclusion is not at all necessary, as we know that the masses of the world have always been in error, while but a very small portion have had the truth. Jesus said, "Fear not little flock."

The way to life is very narrow, and few walk in it; while the way to death is wide, and many walk therein. If men had always decided a thing to be true because the majority believed it, or false because but few received it, truth would have stood but a sorry show. In the days of Noah, all the world was wrong, and but one family right. In the days of Elijah, the prophet mournfully said, "I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men." 1 Kings 18:22. So it has ever been. The truth has generally been in the minority. The great philosopher, John Locke, once said, "An error is not the better for being common, nor truth the worse for having been neglected; and if it were put to the vote anywhere in the world,

I doubt, as things are managed, whether truth would have the majority, at least, while the authority of men, and not the examination of the things, must be its measure."<sup>1</sup> The history of the world shows this to be true.

The worship of idols, the doctrine of many gods, and other confessedly false doctrines have been held by the great majority of mankind. Yet no Christian regards this as proof that these doctrines are true. So, if it could be proved that the immortality of the soul had been held by the majority of the race, it would not prove that doctrine to be true. The doctrine of the *transmigration of souls* is manifestly a false doctrine; yet it has been very largely believed.

All heathens, and many Christians who have argued for the immortality of the soul, have with it, believed in the transmigration of souls. Thus writes an eminent author: "Certain it is that those philosophers who argued for the immortality of the soul universally held its pre-existence before it animated the human body, and laid the stress of the argument for its eternal existence after its departure from the body, upon its existence from times immemorial, or even from everlasting, before its entrance into it."<sup>2</sup>

What will our friends say to these facts? If universal belief would prove the immortality of the soul, it would as clearly prove the transmigration of souls; for the latter has been about as generally believed as the former.

### A False Assumption Exposed.

*A belief in a future life does not necessarily prove a belief in the immortality of the soul.*

But has the present doctrine of the immortality of the soul been the common sentiment of mankind? *It*

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<sup>1</sup> Essay on Human Knowledge, Book IV., Chap. 3, Sec. 6, note.

<sup>2</sup> Leland's Revelation, Vol. II., Part 3, Chap. 5, p. 328.

*has not. Very few have believed it.* Of this there is an abundance of proof, of which I can present but a small part. We know that all nations have generally had some ideas and traditions of a future life of some kind; but this by no means proves that they believed the soul immortal. We firmly believe in a future life, yet we do not believe in the immortality of the soul. When heathens and barbarians are found holding some ideas and traditions of a future life, even though they be the most vague and indistinct, they are immediately claimed as orthodox believers in the soul's immortality! This does not follow at all, as it often happens that they themselves cannot tell how they expect to obtain such a life; nay, the traditions of most of them show that they expect to live there with the same material persons that they have here, and not simply as immaterial spirits.

From the earliest ages, God has taught the human race that there is to be a life hereafter by means of a resurrection from the dead. Through patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, through all the inspired Word, this doctrine has been set before the people. Also, God has said that there shall be rewards for the righteous and punishments for the wicked in the future life, after the Judgment. As all nations have descended from Adam, and from Noah, God's servants, more or less knowledge upon this subject, through tradition from them, has been retained by all the nations of the earth.

Besides this, men's consciences, more or less enlightened by the Spirit of God, admonish them that there shall be a future Judgment, where the wicked shall be punished and the righteous rewarded. The love of life is very great in all men, hence the strong desire and hope that there will be a future life. These facts readily account for the extensive prevalence of the idea of a future life, even among barbarous nations.

But when we go among those who have lost the

light of God's revelation, we find that their notions are exceedingly vague as to how they are to live hereafter. The idea of a future life of some kind is almost universal, but upon the manner of that life, whether it is to be through a resurrection or by being born into some other body, or by living without any body, there is utter confusion. Thus a learned advocate for the immortality of the soul is compelled to say, "We concede that the views of most rude heathen nations, both ancient and modern, respecting the state of man after death, are indeed dark and obscure, as well as their notion respecting the nature of the soul itself."<sup>3</sup> This is just the truth. Their ideas of a future life are so dark and obscure that no proof of a faith in the immortality of the soul can be drawn from them.

But God has clearly settled these things. It is by a resurrection from the dead that men are to live in the future. They are to be the same individual persons that they are in this life; and they are to live on this earth when it is renewed from the curse. Now, if we will look carefully into the religious ideas of the different nations and tribes, we shall find that this very idea of a future life is what the most of them still have. They expect to be raised from the dead, and live on this earth with the same bodies which they now have. If we go back into hoary antiquity and examine the faith of the most ancient nations, we find that they looked for a future life and immortality through the preservation of the body and the resurrection of the dead. Of this there can be no question.

### The Egyptians.

The Egyptians were among the most ancient of nations. It is a well-known fact that they were cel-

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<sup>3</sup>McClintock and Strong's Cyclopedia, Art. Immortality.

ebreated for embalming the dead. This they did at great expense, and so effectually that many bodies, called *mummies*, are preserved in quite a perfect condition to the present day.

Their object in thus embalming their dead was to preserve the body for the resurrection. This is admitted by the ablest scholars, as will be seen by the following testimonies which are from the very best authorities. The first is from Calmet's Dictionary of the Holy Bible: "The ancient Egyptians, and the Hebrews in imitation of them, embalmed the bodies of the dead. . . . The art of physic was by the Egyptians ascribed to Isis, and in particular the remedy which procured immortality, which, in my opinion, was no other than that of embalming bodies, and rendering them incorruptible."<sup>4</sup> This language is remarkable. Their first idea of immortality was to preserve the body from decay till it should live again, and thus become immortal.

Our next testimony on this point is from that celebrated work, "Kitto's Biblical Cyclopedia." "The feeling which led the Egyptians to embalm the dead, probably sprung from their belief *in the future reunion of the soul with the body*. Such a reunion is *distinctly spoken of in the 'Book of the Dead;*' and obscure as is the subject, probably on account of the obscurity of the details of the Egyptian belief, the statements are sufficiently positive to make this general conclusion certain."<sup>5</sup> Thus we see that this critical author considers it *certain* that embalming was practiced to preserve the body from decay till its reunion with the soul, or till it should live again. What is more natural than this conclusion? and if this were not their object in embalming their dead, what could it have been?

We will now introduce another witness, Mr. Bunsen, whose testimony on this subject should be deci-

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<sup>4</sup> Art. To Embalm.

<sup>5</sup> Art. Embalming.

sive. No author could be better prepared to judge than he is. "The real meaning," he says, "of the celebrated passage in Herodotus (ii. 135) about the reason why the Egyptians bestowed so much care on the preservation of the body, and as it were, on preventing it from passing away, must have been this: *The belief in a resurrection of the body. . . .* Man justified is one with God, the eternal Creator, self-created. His bodily organ, therefore, is holy. This doctrine we may now read in *every page of the sacred books*. Hence the *popular* notion in Egypt, that unless its old human envelop were preserved, the soul would be subject to disturbances and hindrances in performing its destined course. . . . The Greeks and Romans had an equal faith in burial as necessary to insure the entry of the soul into the invisible world of spirits."<sup>6</sup>

Another able author says: "The practice of embalming was not peculiar to Egypt. It was practiced among many nations of the Old World, and is in use among some people even at the present day."<sup>7</sup>

Thus the earliest doctrine of a future life was that it must be obtained through the resurrection of the body.

### The Ancient Persians.

The ancient Persians were among the oldest nations of antiquity, the immediate descendants of Noah. It is well known that they, too, hoped for a future immortality through the resurrection of the body. Says Alger, stating their doctrine: "But at last Ormuzd will rise in his might, and put an end to these awful scenes. He will send on earth a saviour, Sosiosch, to deliver mankind, to wind up the final period of time, and to bring the arch-enemy to judg-

<sup>6</sup> Egypt's Place in Universal History, Vol. IV, pp. 641, 642.

<sup>7</sup> Egyptian Antiquities, Vol. II, p. 121.

ment. At the sound of the voice of Sosiosch the dead will come forth. Good, bad, indifferent,—all alike will rise, each in his order. Kaiomorts, the original single ancestor of men, will be the firstling. Next Meschia and Meschiane, the primal parent pair, will appear. And then the whole multitudinous family of mankind will throng up. The genii of the elements will render up the sacred materials intrusted to them, and rebuild the decomposed bodies. . . . . ‘At the appointed epoch, Ahriman shall be subdued,’ and ‘men shall live again, and shall be immortal.’”<sup>8</sup>

Here, again, the same primitive faith in a future immortality through the resurrection is expressed.

### The Ancient Arabs.

Between Egypt and Persia lived the Arabians, one of the most ancient of the nations. They believed in a future life, but not in the immortality of the soul. So says the very learned Dr. Good, who was himself a believer in the doctrine that the soul is immortal. He writes thus: “If we turn from Persia, Egypt, and Hindoostan, to Arabia, . . . . we shall find the entire subject left in as blank and barren a silence as the deserts by which they are surrounded; or, if touched upon, only touched upon to betray doubt, and sometimes disbelief. The tradition, indeed, of a future state of retributive justice seems to have reached the schools of this part of the world, and to have been generally, though not perhaps universally, accredited; but the future existence it alludes to is that of a resurrection of the body and not of a survival of the soul after the body’s dissolution.” “And the same general idea has, for the most part, descended in the same country to the present day.”<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The Doctrine of a Future Life, Alger, Part I, Chap. i, pp. 138, 139.

<sup>9</sup> Book of Nature, Series 3, Sec. 2, p. 372.

This is another good proof as to what was the ancient faith of men.

### The Mohammedans.

The Mohammedans arose in Arabia in the seventh century, and now number over 160,000,000, more than one-tenth of the entire population of the world. Says Alger: "A very prominent doctrine in the Moslem creed is that of the resurrection of the body. This is a central feature in the orthodox faith."<sup>10</sup>

"They are not agreed on the subject of the condition of the soul between death and the resurrection. . . . Some maintain that their souls and those of the impious will alike sleep in the dust until the end, when Israfil's blast shall stir them into life to be judged."<sup>11</sup>

### The Jews.

The Jews were the near neighbors and contemporaries of the Arabians. We have the history of their ancestors from Adam. God directly and frequently instructed them concerning a future life. That, as a nation, they were firm believers in the resurrection of the dead, is well known to all readers of the Bible. We need not argue that point here. Even many learned men who believe in the immortality of the soul have frankly confessed that nothing is said upon this subject in the Bible.

### Christians.

It is well known that, with isolated exceptions, simply here and there one, the great body of the

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<sup>10</sup> *Doctrine of a Future Life*, p. 201.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

Christian nations have from first to last firmly held to the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. This is true of the Greek church numbering about 70,000,000; the Catholic church, about 170,000,000; and the Protestant churches, about 90,000,000, about one quarter of the race. We mention this to show how large a place the doctrine of the resurrection has always had in the faith of men; and it is because this is what God taught men from the very beginning of the world. Since that time, they have corrupted this simple doctrine by a thousand speculations of their own.

### Ancient Peruvians.

The Peruvians were among the oldest and most civilized of the nations of South America at the time of its discovery by the Spaniards. A high authority thus states their faith: "They did not understand that the future life was spiritual, but believed it to be corporeal, like this one." "The Incas believed in a universal resurrection, not for glory or punishment, but for a reward of this temporal life. They took extreme care to preserve the nail-pairings and the hairs that were shorn off or torn out with a comb, placing them in holes or niches in the walls; and if they fell out, any other Indian that saw them picked them up and put them in their places again. I very often asked different Indians, at various times, why they did this, in order to see what they would say; and they all replied in the same words, saying, 'Know that all persons who are born must return to life, and the souls must rise out of their tombs, with all that belonged to their bodies.'"<sup>12</sup>

They believed in the sleep of the dead and the resurrection.

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<sup>12</sup> Garcilasso de la Vega, First Part of the Royal Commentaries of the Incas [1609], London. Book II., Chap. 2.

### The Chibchas.

The Chibchas were another nation of South America. They believed the same as the Peruvians on this point.

"These Indians had the tradition from their ancestors that there would be a universal judgment. They believed that the dead were then to be raised and to live forever in this earth in the same way as they live now."<sup>13</sup>

They received these doctrines from tradition, and how remarkably their views harmonize with the Bible!

### The Africans.

Even among some of the degraded negro tribes of Central Africa, the notion of a resurrection is still held from tradition.

"The negroes in Ardrach carefully preserve nails and hair which have been cut off, in order that souls, which on rising out of their graves have to be united with their former bodies, may not need to search long for them."<sup>14</sup>

The Ashantees "supposed that their friends live over again in the other world the lives which they led on earth."<sup>15</sup>

The Bushmen regard death as a sleep. One of their proverbs is, "Death is only a sleep."<sup>16</sup>

### The Hawaiians.

These Islanders believe in the resurrection of the dead. Mr. Ellis relates a long conversation with them upon this point, in which he says they told him

<sup>13</sup> Descriptive Sociology, by Spencer, No. 2, p. 43.

<sup>14</sup> Bastian Mensch, II., p. 357.

<sup>15</sup> Beecham, p. 180.

<sup>16</sup> Descriptive Sociology, No. 4, p. 28.

that "all the people who had died would be restored to life," and live in *Hawaii* again.<sup>17</sup>

Thus it will be seen that traditions of the resurrection of the dead are still to be found in all parts of the world, even among the most barbarous nations. This was the ancient and true doctrine. In many cases this doctrine of the resurrection has been lost sight of, while the idea of a future life by some means has been retained. If we bear this in mind, it will be readily seen that the proof of a universal belief in the immortality of the soul is much less than is generally claimed. Indeed, a careful investigation shows that most barbarous nations have only an undefined idea of a future life of some kind. On this slender foundation is based the bold assumption that all nations believe the soul is immortal.

The custom so universally observed, among barbarous nations particularly, of burying with the dead valuables, implements, weapons, food, and money, indicates that they had some indistinct idea that in some way the bodies would live again, and these articles would be used. Even if these practices are kept up simply from custom, as may be the case in some instances, it is still evident that the custom originated in the idea that the dead would need these things. They certainly did not suppose that weapons of war, implements of husbandry, and articles of food, have spirits which could go with their departed friends. Hence it is evident that the sentiment that underlies this practice points to the resurrection.

Thus the Ostyaks, of Africa, bury with their dead a tinder-box, pipe, and tobacco. The Samoieds inter with the dead his dresses, his bows, his arrows, and whatever belongs to him, because they say he will need them in the next world. The Damaras lay the arms and property of the deceased on the grave. The Kaffirs bury household utensils with the dead.

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<sup>17</sup>Polynesian Researches, by Wm. Ellis, Vol. IV., Chap. vi, pp. 110, 111.

The Congo people embalm their dead. The Coast negroes take great care in wrapping up their dead, and a large share of their property is buried with them.

The Australians also bury the property of the deceased with him. The Sandwich Islanders bury provisions with the body. They think the future life is like the present. The Tahitians embalm the bodies of their chiefs, clothe them, and take great care of them. The Samoans also embalm the body. The Dyaks bury the property of the deceased with him. The Tasmanians bury their spears with the dead, whom they believe to be asleep.

The Ancient Mexicans buried, with the corpse, slaves and all kinds of property, saying that they were going to keep house in the other world.

The early inhabitants of Britain buried weapons of war, jewelry, and food with the deceased. In later times the Saxons buried valuable articles with their dead. The Normans, about the year 1000, embalmed their dead.

It is well known that all the Indian tribes of America bury various articles with the dead bodies of their friends.

Indeed, this universal custom of which we have been speaking is so well known that we need not mention more instances. The great care that has always been bestowed not only upon the dead body, but upon the tomb or grave where it is deposited, points to the same idea, the resurrection of the dead. The world over, without an exception, the notion has always obtained that the ghost, or phantom, of the deceased hovers around the grave. All these facts indicate the universal sentiment of the race that in some way the future life is connected with the dead body.

While searching into the doctrines of the various nations and tribes of the earth concerning the future life, I have been struck with the fact that most of the

barbarous nations which are set down by Christians as believers in the immortality of the soul, have only very confused ideas of the future life. They do expect to live hereafter in some way, but that is all that can truthfully be said about it. The advocates of the doctrine that the soul is immortal, seizing upon the slightest notion of a future life held by these people, immediately report them as believers in the immortal soul. But in fact there is no ground for such an assertion. A confused, indistinct idea of a future life by no means proves a faith in the immortality of the soul.



## CHAPTER III.

### *The Immortality of the Soul not Believed by the Ancient Philosophers.*

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**W**E shall now show by overwhelming evidence that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, as at present held, has not been generally believed by the human race.

Let us bear in mind, however, what the present orthodox doctrine of the immortality of the soul is, for which universal belief is claimed. It is that every man is born with an immaterial, spiritual, immortal soul, which simply lives in this body as in a house or cage. This soul, whether righteous or wicked, will live eternally as an individual, personal, conscious soul. It will never die, neither will it lose its personality. Such a doctrine, it is claimed, has been the common sentiment of mankind. This we deny, and now offer the proof. Paul says of the Gentiles that they were without God, and having no hope. Eph. 2 : 12. Had they believed the soul immortal, they would have had a hope of a future life. But they had no such hope, hence no such faith.

#### **The Ancient Greeks and Romans.**

When we go back to a period a few centuries before the birth of Christ, to the early ages of the world, we find no evidence that in the infancy of such nations as the Greeks and Romans the doctrine of the immortality of the soul was believed among them.

It cannot be proved that they did believe it. All their ideas and traditions of a future world, so far as they had any, represented it as a material place, and the people as material, corporeal beings, the same as in this world.

On this point the learned Dr. Priestly says: "It is expressly asserted by Aristotle and others, says Mr. Toland (Letters to Serena, p. 22), that the most ancient Greek philosophers did not dream of any principle or actuating spirit in the universe itself, no more than in any of the parts thereof; but explained all the phenomena of nature by matter and local motion, levity and gravity, or the like; and rejected all that the poets said of gods, demons, souls, ghosts, Heaven, hell, visions, prophecies, miracles, etc., as fables invented at pleasure, and fictions to divert their readers."<sup>1</sup>

Says a learned author: "The Greeks sometimes depicted *death* and *sleep* as twin boys, one black, one white, borne slumbering in the arms of their mother, night."<sup>2</sup> This was their idea of death,—a deep sleep. Many ages passed away before we learn of any one who had a notion of the immortality of the soul. It first originated with a few priests and lawgivers, was taken up by poets and philosophers, and finally was partly believed by many.

Herodotus, the oldest historian, says: "The Egyptians also were the first who asserted the doctrine that the soul of man is immortal."<sup>3</sup> Other nations did not believe it till they learned it of the Egyptians, as we will show in another place. This was not till a few centuries before Christ, about the time of Socrates and Plato, both of whom advocated that doctrine. They lived about B. C. 400. These philosophers confessed that their doctrine was not generally believed. One of Socrates' disciples, Cebes, told him that the

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<sup>1</sup> Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit, Vol. I., pp. 318, 319.

<sup>2</sup> Alger, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus Uterpe, 2, Sec. 123, p. 144.

doctrine he taught concerning the immortality of the soul and a future state, "met with little credit among men;" that "most men seemed to think that the soul was immediately dissolved at death, and that it vanished and was dissipated like the wind or smoke, or became nothing at all; and that it needed no small persuasion and faith to believe that the soul exists and has some power and intelligence after the man is dead." Socrates himself had said the same thing just before,—that his doctrine was not believed by the generality of the people.

Simmius, another of the dialogists in the *Phædo*, represents it as the opinion of *many* that the soul is dissipated when a man dies, and that this is the end of its existence. And Socrates, speaking of the soul's being blown away, and perishing with the body, declares that this was what was said by most men.<sup>4</sup>

"From these testimonies it plainly appears," says Leland in his admirable work on the "necessity of a Divine Revelation," Vol. II., p. 383, "that the mortality of the soul was a doctrine which prevailed among the Athenians in the time of Socrates, who were looked upon as the most learned and polite of all the Grecians."

Plato complained that his argument on the subject met with little credit. But did not Socrates and Plato succeed in converting all men to their new ideas of the soul? By no means. The above author, on page 384, continues: "There is no great reason to think that the state of things among the Athenians grew better afterward, *but rather the contrary.*"

### In the Time of the Cæsars.

We now come to the time of Polybius, who was born B. C. 203. "There is a remarkable passage by Polybius," says Leland, "which shows that the disbe-

<sup>4</sup> Plato, Translated by Clay, Bohn's Class. Lib., Vol. I., pp. 68, 69, 79, 83.

lief of a future state had in his time become very common and fashionable, both among persons of superior rank and among the lower kind of people."<sup>5</sup> The doctrine of the immortality of the soul was, then, far from being universally believed as yet.

We next come to the time of Cicero, who was born B. C. 107. Perhaps this doctrine had gained greater credence by that time. Hear our learned author again: "What that great man Cicero says of the philosophers in his time is remarkable. In that celebrated treatise where he sets himself to prove the immortality of the soul, he represents the *contrary*, as there were crowds of opponents; not the Epicureans only, but, which he could not well account for, those that were esteemed the most learned persons had that doctrine in contempt."<sup>6</sup>

Mr. Watson, speaking of the same time, says: "Both philosophers and poets regarded them as vulgar fables. . . . Nor was skepticism and unbelief of the wise and great long kept from the vulgar, among whom they wished to maintain the old superstitions as instruments by which they might be controlled. Cicero complains that the common people in his day mostly followed the doctrine of Epicurus."<sup>7</sup> Epicurus denied the immortality of the soul. This testimony is worthy of consideration. The mass of the common people followed Epicurus, that is, they totally denied the doctrine that the soul is immortal. And the poets and philosophers taught them this! Then who believed the doctrine at that time? It was generally disbelieved.

Cæsar represents the same thing as being true in his day.<sup>8</sup> So it was in the time of Plutarch, who was born about the middle of the first century. "He intimates that these things were not commonly believed." Not only the philosophers, but the mass of

<sup>5</sup> Idem., p. 385.

<sup>6</sup> Idem., p. 235.

<sup>7</sup> Theological Institutes, Vol. I., Chap. 6, p. 54.

<sup>8</sup> Leland's Revelation, Vol. II., Part 2, Chap. 8, p. 337.

the Roman people, had no faith in the doctrine of future rewards and punishments.

Of the popular religion Mr. Jones says: "The Romans in general knew the whole to be an imposition, and many of them ridiculed the pretense that the institution was divine."<sup>9</sup> Again he says: "The doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and of a future state of rewards and punishments, was but little understood, and of course, only very partially acknowledged. Hence, at the period when Christ appeared, any notions of this kind found little or no acceptance among the Greeks and Romans, but were regarded in the light of old wives' fables, fit only for the amusement of women and children."<sup>10</sup>

The learned Mr. Milman bears this decided testimony: "One class of fables seems to have been universally exploded, even in the earliest youth,—those which related to another life. The picture of the unrivaled satirist may be overcharged, but it corresponds strictly with the public language of the orator, and the private sentence of the philosopher:—

"The silent realm of disembodied ghosts,  
The frogs that croak along the stygian coasts,  
The thousand souls in one crazed vessel steer'd,  
Not boys believe, save boys without a beard."

"Even the religious Pausanius speaks of the immortality of the soul as a foreign doctrine, introduced by the Chaldeans and the Magi, and embraced by some of the Greeks, particularly by Plato. Pliny, whose *Natural History* opens with a declaration that the universe is the sole Deity, devotes a separate chapter to a contemptuous exposure of the idle notion of the immortality of the soul, as a vision of human pride, and equally absurd, whether under the form of existence in another sphere or under that of transmigration."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Church History, p. 21.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid, 21. See also Mosheim's Commentaries, Vol. I., pp. 24, 25.

<sup>11</sup>History of Christianity, Chap. 1, p. 34.

Gibbon, the celebrated historian, thus confirms this statement of the case: "We are sufficiently acquainted with the eminent persons who flourished in the age of Cicero and of the first Cæsars, with their actions, their characters, and their motives, to be assured that their conduct in this life was never regulated by any serious conviction of the rewards or punishments of a future state. At the bar and in the senate of Rome the ablest orators were not apprehensive of giving offense to their hearers by exposing that doctrine as an idle and extravagant opinion, which was rejected with contempt by every man of a liberal education and understanding."<sup>12</sup> Nearly all the celebrated philosophers of Greece and Rome, and of the schools founded by them, rejected the doctrine that the soul is immortal.

### The Peripatetics.

Aristotle, a Greek, born B. C. 384, stands first among the philosophers. He founded a flourishing school called the Peripatetic, which through many ages had numerous followers. That he rejected the idea of the soul's immortality is abundantly proved. The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, art. Aristotle, says of him: "The soul of man he considered as an emanation from the Deity, but he says nothing of its immortality." Tatian says, "But Aristotle impugns the immortality of the soul."<sup>13</sup> Watson says, "The doctrine of Aristotle and the Peripatetics gives no countenance to the opinion of the soul's immortality, or even of its existence after death."<sup>14</sup>

The learned Ritter, who has carefully investigated the whole subject, says of Aristotle: "No passage in his extant works is decisive; but from the general

<sup>12</sup> Milman's Gibbon's Rome, Vol. I., Chap. 15. p. 528.

<sup>13</sup> Address to Greeks, Chap. 25. See also Alger's Future Life, p. 191.

<sup>14</sup> Theological Institutes, Vol. I., p. 53. See also Divine Legation of Moses, Vol. II., Part 3, Sec. 3, p. 167; Leland's Revelation, Vol. II., Part 3, Chap. 3, p. 284.

context of his doctrine it is clear that he had no conception of the immortality of any individual, rational entity."<sup>15</sup> Mosheim bears this testimony: "Therefore Aristotle's opinion was not a whit better than that of the Stoics, nor are those in error who consider that the prince of the Peripatetics augured ill of souls, and meant them to be perishable and mortal."<sup>16</sup>

The believers in the immortality of the soul were few and far between, and their speculations upon the subject were passed by unheeded, as not worthy of notice, by the mass of men both learned and unlearned.

### Epicureans.

Epicurus, a Greek, born B. c. 341, was the founder of this school. "The Epicureans . . . continued to flourish through a long course of years under the Roman emperors."<sup>17</sup> Paul met them at Athens. Acts 17:18. To their doctrine he refers, 1 Cor. 15:32, when he says: "If the dead rise not, let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die." They said that would be the end of man; that death was an eternal sleep; that there was no future life of any kind.

These facts are so well known that I need offer little proof upon them. Buck, in his *Theological Dictionary*, art. Epicureans, says: "They denied the immortality of the soul, and the existence of angels." Alger says: "Pliny, in his *Natural History*, affirms that death is an everlasting sleep. The whole great sect of the Epicureans united in supporting that belief by the combined force of ridicule and argument."<sup>18</sup> Of their numbers in the first century Mosheim says they were "everywhere so immensely great in the age to which we allude that whole armies might have been formed of them."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *History of Ancient Philosophy*, Part 3, Book 9, Chap. 4.

<sup>16</sup> *Cudworth's Intellectual System*, Vol. I., Chap. 1, p. 89, note.

<sup>17</sup> *Enfield's History of Philosophy*, p. 369.

<sup>18</sup> *Future Life*, p. 196.

<sup>19</sup> *Commentaries*, Vol. I., Chap. 1, Sec. 25, note 2.

Here, then, was another whole sect, great, popular, and numerous, spread over the civilized world, and flourishing through many ages, which arrayed itself against the doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

### Academics.

This school originated with Socrates and Plato. In time it was divided into the Old, the Middle, and the New. We might naturally expect that they would teach the immortality of the soul, but they did not. Mr. Leland justly remarks: "It is remarkable that though there were several sects of philosophers which professed to derive their origin from Socrates, scarcely any of them taught the immortality of the soul as the doctrine of their schools, except Plato and his disciples, and many even of these treated it as absolutely uncertain."<sup>20</sup> They held everything to be uncertain, and this with the rest. "This they held to be the case even in the most important subjects, such as the soul; and in the most interesting questions concerning it, as whether it was, in its nature, mortal or immortal."<sup>21</sup> Says the learned Bishop of Gloucester, "The sect was thoroughly skeptical."

The Religious Encyclopedia bears this testimony: "Among the Academics, the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, the preferableness of virtue to vice, were all held as uncertain. This sect and that of the Epicureans were the chief that were in vogue at the time of Christ's appearing, and they were embraced and supported by persons of high rank and wealth." Then at that time the immortality of the soul must have been generally disbelieved.

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<sup>20</sup> Leland's Revelation, Vol. II., Part 3, Chap. 4, p. 319.

<sup>21</sup> Divine Legation of Moses, Vol. II., pp. 123, 124.

### The Pyrrhonic Sect.

The Pyrrhonic sect was founded by Pyrrho about B. C. 340. (Smith's Classical Dictionary, art. Pyrrho.) The disciples of Pyrrho doubted everything, and believed nothing. They were purely skeptical. Warburton remarks: "The Eleatic line [of philosophers] was wholly composed of atheists of different kinds, as the Democratic, the Pyrrhonian, the Epicurean, etc., so these come not into the account" as believers in the soul's immortality. "So highly was he [Pyrrho] valued by his fellow-citizens that they made him their high-priest, and erected a monument to him after his death."<sup>22</sup> Here is another whole school of philosophers who not only did not believe in the soul's immortality, but utterly repudiated it.

### The Stoics.

The Stoics, founded by Zeno, a Greek who died B. C. 264, was another very celebrated and numerous sect of philosophers. Enfield says that "the Stoic as well as the Academic school was patronized by many eminent men in the Roman republic. The most distinguished lawyers were, as we have seen, inclined toward this sect."<sup>23</sup> Like those above mentioned, they rejected the soul's immortality. Mr. Jones says, "The Stoics denied the immortality of the soul."<sup>24</sup> Warburton remarks of Zeno: "We know, too, that the philosophical principle of this school was *that the soul died with the body*."<sup>25</sup> Mosheim confirms this testimony thus: "It is well known to the learned world that this [Stoic] sect denied the immortality of the soul."<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Smith's Classical Dictionary, art. Pyrrho.

<sup>23</sup> History of Philosophy, p. 304.

<sup>24</sup> Church History, p. 24.

<sup>25</sup> Divine Legation of Moses, Vol. II., Book 3, Sec. 3, p. 168.

<sup>26</sup> Commentary, Vol. I., p. 36.

Enfield says of this sect that it "became so popular as to threaten the destruction of the Platonic system."<sup>27</sup> Again he says, "From these and other causes, the Stoic sect, in the time of Juvenal, prevailed almost through the whole Roman empire."<sup>28</sup>

### The Heraclitean Sect.

This sect was founded at Ephesus by Heraclitus about 504 B. C. He had many followers who took up and taught his doctrine. He taught that souls were perishable. Thus Enfield says: "Human souls are liable to perpetual changes, and when they are loaded with moist vapors, they pass into the watery mass and perish; but if they are purified from these, they return into the soul of the universe."<sup>29</sup>

Thus it will be seen that nearly all the philosophical sects of ancient times avowedly rejected the notion of the immortality of the soul.

### The Doctrine of Emanation and Absorption.

We have now seen that of the different sects of philosophers, the Aristotelians, the Epicureans, the Stoics, the Academics, the Pyrrhonists, and the Heracliteans denied the immortality of the soul; and that the great mass of the people agreed with them on this subject. This leaves only the Platonics and Pythagoreans, and these sects, it is claimed, did believe the soul immortal. We know that they *talked* about the immortality of the soul, and *argued* about it, and professed to believe in it; but the doctrine they discussed was only that of emanation and immanation, or absorption. That is, they thought the soul a part of God, an emanation from him, separated from him for a short time, but destined finally, either

<sup>27</sup> History of Philosophy, Book 2, Chap. 8, Sec. 2, p. 142.

<sup>28</sup> Idem., Book 3, Chap. 2, Sec. 7, p. 357.

<sup>29</sup> Idem., Book 2, Chap. 14, p. 256.

at the death of the body or at some future time, to return to him, be re-absorbed into his being, and thus lose all personality and conscious existence. This view, it will be seen, virtually amounts to annihilation of the soul. It is not at all like the present doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

On this point Bishop Warburton remarks: "But when the ancients are said to hold the *pre* and *post* existence of the soul, and therefore to attribute a proper eternity to it, we must not suppose that they understood it to be eternal in its distinct and peculiar existence; but that it was discerped from the substance of God, *in time*, and would, *in time*, be *rejoined* and *resolved* into it again. This they explained by a closed vessel filled with sea-water, which, swimming awhile upon the ocean, does, on the vessel's breaking, flow in again, and mingle with the common mass. They only differed about the time of this reunion and resolution, *the greater part holding it to be at death*; but Pythagoreans, not till after many transmigrations. The Platonists went between these two opinions, and rejoined pure and unpolluted souls immediately to the Universal Spirit; but those which had contracted much defilement were sent into a succession of other bodies, to purge and purify them, before they returned to their parent substance"<sup>30</sup> Then he justly adds: "Thus we see this very opinion of the soul's *eternity*, which hath made modern writers conclude that the ancient sages believed in a future state of rewards and punishments, was, in truth, the very reason why they believed it not."<sup>31</sup>

This was the doctrine of the Platonists and Pythagoreans.

Speaking of this subject, Mr. Watson in his Theological Institutes remarks:—

"Thus philosophy refined upon the doctrine of immortality until it converted it into *annihilation itself*;

<sup>30</sup> Divine Legation of Moses, Vol. XI., Book 3, Sec. 4, pp. 214, 215.

<sup>31</sup> Idem., p. 216.

*for so it is, in the most absolute sense, as to distinct consciousness and personality.* The prevalence of this notion under different modifications is indeed very remarkable."<sup>32</sup>

Of the belief of the philosophers in the immortality of the soul, the *Encyclopedia Britannica* says:—

“This, however, appears by no means to have been the case with the systems of any, as far as we can learn, of those ancient philosophers who contended the most strenuously for the immortality of the soul. For not only do they seem to have agreed that no suffering could be expected by the wicked in another life, on the grounds that the gods were incapable of anger, and therefore could not punish; but the very notion of the soul’s immortality, as taught by them, involved the complete destruction of distinct, personal existence.”<sup>33</sup>

What will our friends say to these facts? Not one of the ancients believed in the eternal, personal, existence of the soul. All souls were finally to lose their separate existence, and be re-absorbed into God. Certainly, these will not be claimed as orthodox believers in the immortality of the soul! With these views they could not possibly believe in the eternal misery of the wicked.

### Periodical Destruction.

There was another point universally held by the ancients which utterly forbade their believing in the soul’s immortality. They held to a periodical destruction of all things, not excepting the soul.

Thus writes Mr. Leland: “It was a notion which generally obtained among them, [the philosophers], that at certain periods which the Stoics termed conflagrations, and which were to happen at the end of

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<sup>32</sup>Theological Institutes, Vol. I., p. 50.

<sup>33</sup>Encyclopedia Britannica, 8th Edition, Vol. I., p. 459.

what they, as well as the Pythagoreans and Platonists, called the great year, there should be an utter end put to the present state of things; and the souls of all men, and even of those of them which had become gods, demons, or heroes, were to be resumed into the universal soul, and thereby lose their individual existence."<sup>34</sup>

Watson confirms this testimony thus: "Another notion equally extensive and equally destructive of the original doctrine of the immortality of the human soul, and a state of future rewards and punishments, which sprung up in the Egyptian schools, and was from thence transmitted into Greece, India, and throughout all Asia, was that of a periodical destruction and renovation of all things."<sup>35</sup>

Then none among them could possibly believe in the immortality of the soul as a separate personality.

### **Eminent Men who Rejected the Soul's Immortality.**

On examination we find that most of the eminent orators and authors of antiquity have recorded themselves as unbelievers in the soul's immortality. Among these, Cicero stands prominent as a great orator and statesman. Though in some of his writings he argues for the immortality of the soul, yet after all he confesses that he did not really believe it. Of him Warburton says, "He professes his disbelief of a future state of rewards and punishments in the frankest and freest manner."<sup>36</sup>

Virgil, Horace, and Seneca were all disbelievers in the immortality of man.<sup>37</sup>

After showing that Cicero was full of doubts on the

<sup>34</sup> Leland's Revelation, Vol. I., Part 3, Chap. 5, p. 341.

<sup>35</sup> Theological Institutes, Vol. I., Part 1, p. 52.

<sup>36</sup> Divine Legation, Vol. II., Book 3, Sec. 3, p. 182.

<sup>37</sup> See Enfield, History of Philosophy, pp. 310-313.

subject, Dr. Horne says: "All which gave Seneca just occasion to say that 'immortality, however desirable, was rather *promised* than *proved* by these great men.' While the followers of these great philosophers were thus perplexed with doubts, others of the heathen entertained the most gloomy notions,—either imagining that they should be removed from one body to another, and be perpetual wanderers; or contemplating the grave as their eternal habitation, and sadly complaining that the sun and stars could rise again, but that man, when his day was set, must lie down in darkness, and sleep a perpetual sleep."<sup>38</sup>

No wonder Paul said that the heathen had no hope; for it was really true.

So, then, the belief of the ancients was against the immortality of the soul.

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<sup>38</sup>Horne's Introduction, Vol. I., p. 18.



## CHAPTER IV.

### Modern Nations who do not Believe in the Immortality of the Soul.

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#### Belief of the Hindoos.

**T**O-DAY the doctrine of the soul's immortality is not universally nor even generally believed, though it has been industriously propagated for over two thousand years, from the time of the school of Plato down to that of the modern theological seminaries. Nearly the whole of the Asiatic nations reject it, and hold to the total annihilation of all souls! That this is not merely our assertion will be seen from the following testimonies, all from men who hold to the immortality of the soul. Mr. Watson's testimony will not be questioned. Hear him:—

“With us, this [the soul's immortality] is a matter of general belief; *but not so with the generality of either ancient or modern pagans.* The same darkness which obscured the glory of God, proportionately diminished the glory of man,—his true and proper immortality. The very ancient notion of an absorption of souls back again into the divine Essence was with the ancients what we know it to be now in the metaphysical system of the Hindoos, a denial of *individual* immortality; nor have the demonstrations of reason done anything to convince the other grand division of metaphysical pagans into which modern heathenism is divided, the followers of Buddha *who believe in the total*

*annihilation of both men and gods after a series of ages,—a point of faith held probably by the majority of the present race of mankind.*"<sup>1</sup>

This is valuable testimony, especially coming from one who is such good authority. This alone gives a majority at the present day against the doctrine of the soul's immortality.

Mr. Davy says: "The religion of Buddha is more widely extended than any other religion. It appears to be the religion of the whole of Tartary, China, Japan, and their dependencies, and of all the countries between China and Brahmapootra. . . . They appear to be materialists in the strictest sense of the term, and to have no notion of pure spirit or mind. . . . Ordinary death is merely a change of form, and this change is almost infinite, bounded only by annihilation, which they esteem the acme of happiness."<sup>2</sup>

Then a majority of the race are *materialists*, instead of immortal-soulists!

Our next witness is that candid author, Henry Howe. He writes: "Boodhism, the religion of Burmah, has the greatest number of disciples of any on the globe, among whom are half of the people of China, Laos, Cochin China, and Ceylon, all of Cambodia, Siam, Burmah, Thibit, Tartary, and Loo-Choo; and a great part of Japan, and most of the islands of the Southern seas."<sup>3</sup>

"Existence and sorrow are declared to be necessary concomitants: and therefore 'the chief end of man' is to finish this eternal round of changes and be annihilated. The great doctrines of this faith are five; viz, 1. The eternal existence of the universe and all things; 2. Metempsychosis; 3. Nicban, or annihilation, etc."<sup>4</sup>

Of this religion, Alger says: "It is the basis and motive of the most extensive disbelief of individual immortality the world has known."<sup>5</sup> Kœpen, in his

<sup>1</sup>Theological Institutes, Vol. I., Part I, Chap. 4, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Travels of Celebrated Travelers, p. 596.

<sup>4</sup>Idem., pp. 597, 598.

<sup>5</sup>Future Life, Part 5, Chap. 8, p. 615.

work on the "Religion of Buddha," says: "*Buddhism is the gospel of annihilation.*"<sup>6</sup>

In the *Methodist* of April 16, 1870, Bishop Thompson published a sermon, in which he says: "As to the existing systems of India, China, and Japan, Hindooism, Confucianism, and Buddhism are all, as every intelligent man knows, decaying and ready to perish, without satisfying the wants of mankind. They hinder human development, and must be swept from the earth by human progress. Nor need we lament; nay, we should rejoice in the prospect, for they offer no salvation to man in this life, but by the extinction of all interests in this life,—its duties, responsibilities, and possibilities,—and no salvation beyond the grave *but annihilation, the blowing out of the soul as the blowing out of a candle.*"

Then the bishop understood them to teach the annihilation of the soul after death.

This is the faith held by the majority of the human race to-day. Is this the doctrine of the immortality of the soul? It is just the opposite. Do not our orthodox friends know these facts? How, then, can they have the face to claim a universal belief in their notion of the soul's immortality—when all the facts are the other way?

### Belief of the Chinese.

The Chinese, a very numerous people, do not believe the doctrine of the soul's immortality. They are materialists in the broadest sense. Confucius was their great teacher and lawgiver. For thousands of years his doctrines have been implicitly received by at least one-fourth of the race.<sup>7</sup> He taught nothing about the future state.<sup>8</sup> He did not claim to know anything beyond this life.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Idem.*, Part 2, Chap. 6, pp. 111-127.

<sup>7</sup> *New American Cyclopedia*, art. Confucius.

<sup>8</sup> *Howe's Travels of Celebrated Travelers*, p. 200.

<sup>9</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica*, art. Confucius.

Says Horne, "Religion as a system of divine worship, as piety toward God, and as holding forth future rewards and punishments, can hardly be said to exist among the Chinese."<sup>10</sup> Dr. Morrison says that the learned sect among the Chinese are "entirely silent respecting the immortality of the soul."<sup>11</sup>

Says John Leland, "It is observed by the celebrated Mons. de Montesquieu 'that the religion of Confucius denies the immortality of the soul;'"<sup>12</sup> and he indorses the statement. He cites several eminent men who had spent a long time in China, and who declare that the Chinese have no idea of the immortality of the soul.<sup>13</sup> He says that "Confucius being asked by some of his disciples what angels or spirits are, answered that they are *air*. *And this is the notion that the Chinese have of the soul. They look upon it to be a material thing, though highly rarified, and that then the soul separated from the body, both of them lose the individual being they had before, and nothing remains but the substance of heaven and earth, which had before concurred to the composition of man.*"<sup>14</sup>

The religion of the Japanese is the same as that of the Chinese. Of them Mr. Seward says, "The Japanese, under the influence of Confucius, have become a nation of doubters."<sup>15</sup>

The New American Cyclopedia says of China: "Its population may be estimated approximately at 500,000,000. . . . Indifference to religious matters is a prominent national trait of character. They have not even a general term corresponding to the term religion. *Kiao*, the word that comes nearest to it, means only doctrine or creed. *The belief in the immortality of the soul has never taken firm root among them.*"<sup>16</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Introduction, Chap. 1, p. 21.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted by Prof. Hudson, in *Future Life*, Chap. 8, p. 266.

<sup>12</sup> Leland's *Revelation*, Vol. II., Part 3, Chap. 3, p. 297.

<sup>13</sup> See *Idem.*, pp. 297, 300.

<sup>15</sup> Seward's *Travels*, p. 102.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 300.

<sup>16</sup> *Art. China.*

Here, then, is a whole great nation, comprising one-fourth of the entire human race, who have not the slightest idea of the immortality of the soul, nor did they ever have. Our readers must begin to see how groundless have been the assertions of our orthodox opponents upon this subject.

### Other Asiatic Nations.

Of these the following may be mentioned as holding no ideas of the immortality of the soul:—

*The Santals.* A learned author says, "Of a future life of blessedness the Santal has no idea. . . . After death all is a blank."<sup>17</sup>

"*The Siamese* hold annihilation to be the greatest reward of virtue."<sup>18</sup>

### Polynesian Races.

Mr. Ellis, who spent several years among the Polynesians, and particularly inquired into their doctrine of the soul, says of them:—

"We afterward endeavored to learn from them something respecting their opinion of a state of existence after death; but all they said upon the subject was so contradictory and mixed with fiction that it could not be discovered whether they had any definite idea of the nature or even the existence of such a state. Some said that all the souls of the departed went to the *Po*, place of night, and were annihilated or eaten by the gods there."<sup>19</sup>

"*The Fijian* gods eat the souls of those who are destroyed by men. The gods roast the souls. Some souls are killed by men." "Especially bachelors are liable to be seized and killed by smashing against a

<sup>17</sup> Spencer's Descriptive Sociology, No. 5, table 36, p. 37

<sup>18</sup> McClintock and Strong's Cyclopedia, art. Annihilation.

<sup>19</sup> Polynesian Researches, Vol. IV., Chap. 14, p. 2,667.

stone by one of the gods. The spirit is liable to be thus smashed, annihilated."<sup>20</sup> "The belief in a future state is universal in Fiji; but their superstitious notions often border upon transmigration, and sometimes teach an eventual annihilation."<sup>21</sup> Poor believers in the immortality of the soul are these!

*The Tahitians* have "vague ideas of death. . . . Some spirits are eaten by the gods, others deified; no belief in future punishments."<sup>22</sup>

"*The Land Dyaks* have not any decided notions of the immortality of the soul."<sup>23</sup>

Of the Tasmanians our author says, "The more western portion of the aborigines had no idea of a future existence. They were like the kangaroo."<sup>24</sup>

*The Fuegians.* A traveler among them says, "I never witnessed or heard of an act of a decidedly religious nature, neither could I satisfy myself of their having any idea of the immortality of the soul."<sup>25</sup>

*The Andamans.* "The Andaman Islanders 'manifest no notions of a Supreme Being, or of a future existence.'<sup>26</sup>

"*The Veddass* have no idea of a future state of rewards and punishments."<sup>27</sup>

*The Tongans.* "The Tonga Islanders think that the lower classes of men have no souls."<sup>28</sup>

This is about the way with the most of these barbarous nations. They are often claimed as full believers in the immortality of the soul, while the real fact is they have only the most confused ideas even of a future life of any kind.

<sup>20</sup> Descriptive Sociology, No. 3, p. 33.

<sup>22</sup> Idem., table 10.

<sup>24</sup> Bonwic's Daily Life of Tasmania, p. 182.

<sup>25</sup> Voyages of the Adventure and Beagle, Vol. II., p. 179.

<sup>26</sup> Transactions of the Ethnological Society, new series, Vol. II., p. 35.

<sup>27</sup> Idem., Vol. II., p. 300.

<sup>21</sup> Idem., p. 37.

<sup>23</sup> Lows Sarawak, p. 263.

<sup>28</sup> Martin's Tonga Islands, Vol. I., p. 55, note.

### African Races.

The Damaras, one author says, "have no expectation of a future state."<sup>29</sup> The reader will see that there is no countenance for the immortal-soul doctrine here.

Mr. Moffat, speaking of the Bechuanas, says, "Man's immortality was never heard of among that people."<sup>30</sup> The East Africans have "no notion of a soul, or spirit."<sup>31</sup>

"The Bulloms and Timmanus have no fixed opinion respecting a future state; for, though they speak of future rewards and punishments, their ideas on this head are vague and fluctuating. They do not believe that the spirits of their deceased friends return to visit their former abodes, nor have they any word in their language to express a spirit, or apparition."<sup>32</sup>

The faith of the inland negroes is shown by the following:—

"The negresses of Matiamba throw the corpses of their husbands into the water, in order that along with the body they may drown the soul, by which they would otherwise be troubled."<sup>33</sup> "The Wanikas of East Africa 'have neither god, nor devil, nor heaven, nor hell, nor soul, nor idol.'<sup>34</sup>

Of the people of Madagascar, Mr. Ellis says:—

"Still more vague and indefinite are the ideas they entertain respecting the human soul and its future existence. They have no knowledge of the doctrine of the soul as a separate, immaterial, immortal principle in man, nor has their language any word to express such an idea. They speak of the *saina*, but mean by this the intellectual powers. . . . The next question is, What becomes of the *saina*, or mind,

<sup>29</sup> Galton, p. 189.

<sup>31</sup> Idem., table 23.

<sup>33</sup> Bastian Mensch, Vol. III., p. 378.

<sup>30</sup> Spencer's Descriptive Sociology, No. 4, p. 29.

<sup>32</sup> Winterbottom, Vol. I., p. 226.

<sup>34</sup> Descriptive Sociology, No. 4, p. 30.

when a person dies? to which the Malagasy replies, It is a part of the body. But does it return to dust with the body in the grave? No; the body returns to dust and the *saina* becomes *levona*, i. e., vanished, invisible. And the *aina*, or life, becomes *rivota*,—air, or wind, not retaining its individuality; but absorbed and lost in mere *aura*—a mere breeze—a breath in the general mass of air floating around.”<sup>35</sup>

### Tribes of the Western Continent.

As we have seen, the Chibchas of Central America expect a future life through a resurrection.<sup>36</sup> The Peruvians hold the same doctrine.<sup>37</sup> “With respect to the soul, the barbarous Otomies, as they tell us, believed that it died together with the body.”<sup>38</sup>

The inhabitants of Guatemala “were persuaded that to die by any other than a natural death was to forfeit all hope of life hereafter; and therefore left the bodies of the slain to the beasts and vultures.”<sup>39</sup> They had no idea of the immortality of the soul; for they believed that some utterly perish, and that those who do obtain a future life gain it by a resurrection of the body.

The people of Nicaragua being asked what about the future state replied, “We only know that infants who die before they have tasted maize, or are weaned, will be raised again, and return to their fathers’ house; and their fathers will recognize and provide for them. Old people who die will not return nor be raised again.” Being asked where Indians go when they die, they replied that they go beneath the earth, where “they are buried; and all is over.”<sup>40</sup> A few just and brave warriors are exceptions, as they ascend, to live somewhere else.

<sup>35</sup> History of Madagascar, by Rev. Wm. Ellis, Vol. I., Chap. 14, pp. 392, 393.

<sup>36</sup> Descriptive Sociology, No. 2, table.

<sup>37</sup> Idem., p. 45.

<sup>38</sup> History of Mexico, by Clavigero, Book 6, Chap. 1.

<sup>39</sup> The Myths of the New World, by D. G. Brinton, p. 246.

<sup>40</sup> Nicaragua, by E. G. Squire, Vol. II., pp. 357, 358.

### The Esquimaux of Alaska.

Some important facts with regard to these tribes are stated in the following quotation. Mr. Dall has traveled among them extensively, and hence is well prepared to state their belief. He says: "Many Indians, in fact all the Tinneh that I have conversed with who have not been taught by the English or Russian missionaries, do not believe in the immortality of man. Of those who have a dim notion of the kind, none have any idea whatever of a future reward and punishment, of any Supreme Deity or power, of good and evil in a moral sense, or of anything which can be called a religion. Assertions to the contrary proceed from the ignorance or poetic license of the author, or from intercourse with the tribes that have derived their ideas from the missionaries." <sup>41</sup>

Yes; many of the assertions so confidently made concerning the faith of different barbarous tribes and nations in the immortality of the soul, proceed, as Mr. Dall remarks, from the ignorance or poetic license of the author, or from intercourse with those who have been taught by missionaries. No such doctrine was held among them when first found. Thus upon a little inquiry, we find that there are scores of barbarous tribes who have never dreamed that the soul is immortal.

### The Indians.

I know it is often asserted that the different Indian tribes of America all believe the soul immortal; but I have looked in vain for the proof. They have some vague ideas of a future life, but their ideas are all very gross and material indeed. They expect to be

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<sup>41</sup> Alaska and its Resources, by Wm. H. Dall, Director of the Scientific Corps of the Late W. U. Telegraph Expedition.

in the next world much as they are here,—to take their dog, and knife, and arrows with them, and use them there the same as here. This is far from indicating a belief in an immortal, immaterial soul. The least hint that they have any idea of a hereafter has been taken as positive proof that they believe the soul immortal. But this is an unwarranted assumption. There are no facts to sustain it.

### Christians.

From the days of the apostles to the present time, there have been more or less Christians who have rejected the dogma of the natural immortality of man. Of late their numbers are rapidly increasing. They are found in large numbers both in Europe and America. With a very few exceptions, the whole body of Adventists are of this faith; so also are thousands in other churches. They believe the Bible implicitly, and believe in future rewards and punishments, and eternal life for the saints; but they do not believe in the immortality of the soul nor in the conscious state of the dead. They hope for a future life through the resurrection.

Another class must be counted out, as non-believers in man's immortality. We have traveled from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from Minnesota to Alabama, and preached the doctrine of the mortality of man. Wherever we go, we find a large class of persons who say that they were never satisfied about the immortality of the soul, and never could really believe it. We find these persons both in the churches and out of them; yet they are commonly counted as believers in that dogma. Again, there are many thousands of intelligent skeptics who do not believe the soul immortal.

### Summary.

We confidently believe that the facts we have presented fully explode the oft-repeated argument that the immortality of the soul has been universally believed. Facts are against it. We have shown that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul was first taught by the Egyptians; that there is no trace of it in the early history of ancient nations; that it was denied by most men in the time of Socrates; that the masses did not believe it in the time of Polybius; that the contrary of the soul's immortality was the prevailing opinion in the time of Cicero; that this disbelief was full as extensive in the first century; that nearly all the great schools of philosophy openly denied it; that even those who professed to believe it held it only on the principle of emanation and re-absorption, which virtually annihilates all individuality; that none of the ancients could possibly believe it, as they all held to a great periodical destruction of all things; that the Arabs were ignorant of the doctrine; that the Jews did not believe it; that the Hindoos and Buddhists, comprising fully one-third of the human race, implicitly hold to the annihilation of all men; that the Chinese do not believe it; that many of the Mohammedans believe in the sleep of the dead; that many of the natives of Asia, of Polynesia, of Africa, and of the Western Continent have no such doctrine among them; that it is not proved that the native Indians believe it; that there are many Christians who deny it; and that, finally, there are thousands of others who have no faith in this doctrine. These facts show that only a small portion of the race have ever believed in the immortality of the soul.

## CHAPTER V.

### The Earliest Hope of a Future Life Was through a Reliving of the Body.

F the reader supposes that the first ideas which the ancients had of the soul were the same as those popular among us now, he needs to be undeceived. The idea that after the body dies, the soul, as an immortal, immaterial, conscious, and active personality, goes immediately to Heaven or hell, was not arrived at immediately, but grew up gradually out of the imagination, the poetry, and the speculations of many ages. It is interesting to trace its gradual development.

The first idea that the ancients conceived of the soul, or spirit, as existing separately from the body after death, was that of a *shadow*, or *shade*, resembling the body in shape, but larger. This shade was supposed to be a very thin, misty, aerial, material substance. At first the shades of all, both good and bad, were said to be gathered together under ground in *hades*, or *sheol*. They were not permitted to visit the upper world among the living. They were said to be in a dreamy, sleeping condition. Gradually, by poetic imagination, they were invested with more life and intelligence, and were assigned employments in *hades* like those they had led on earth. Then a few were said to come up from their dreary abode, and appear to the living. They represented *hades* to be a damp, chilly, dismal place. They sighed to return to earth. The scene gradually changed, and they

were invested with still more activity, power, and intelligence, and placed in a region of greater light, till a few privileged ones were raised to dwell on the surface of the earth, then higher in the air, and at last to Heaven. They then began to be invested with mighty power as demons, demi-gods, and gods, and were supposed to rule over the living. At last, after long ages, all the good were supposed to go to Heaven at death.

They had similar ideas with regard to the punishment of the wicked in *hades*. At first only a very few were punished, then certain crimes in all, and at length all the wicked were punished there at death. But this change in the minds of the people was very slow, and many ages passed before it was effected. Many testimonies could be presented on these points; but I can offer only a few here. The first conception of these ideas is thus stated by Alger:—

“The origin of many notions touching a future state found in literature, is to be traced to those rambling thoughts and poetic reveries with which even the most philosophical minds, in certain moods, indulged themselves.” “Two general sources have now been described of the barbarian conceptions in relation to a future state. First, the natural operation of an earnest recollection of the dead; sympathy, regret, and reverence for them, leading the thoughts and heart to grope after them, to brood over the possibilities of their fate, and to express themselves in rites and emblems. Secondly, the mythological or arbitrary creations of the imagination, when it is set strongly at work, as it must be by the solemn phenomena associated by death. But beyond these two comprehensive statements, there is, directly related to the matter and worthy of separate illustration, a curious action of the mind, which has been very extensively experienced, and fertile of results. It is a peculiar example of the unconscious imputation of objective existence to mental ideas. With the death of

the body, the man does not cease to live in the remembrance, imagination, and heart of his surviving friends. By an unphilosophical confusion, this internal image is credited as an external existence. The dead pass from their customary haunts in our society to the imperishable domain of ideas." "Fancy and reason, thus set to work, speedily construct a thousand theories filled with details. Desire fathers thought, and then thought woos belief."<sup>1</sup>

This was the real origin of the notion that the soul lives after the body dies—imagination and desire.

Dr. Knapp, in accounting for this doctrine among the ancients, says: "They often had dreams, in which the dead appeared to them, speaking and acting; and in this way they found their wishes, and the traditions they had received from their fathers, confirmed anew."<sup>2</sup>

Even now, wishes, dreams, and death-bed scenes, are the best proof which many have for the immortality of the soul.

### Homer's Iliad.

Turning to Homer, the oldest of the heathen poets, who wrote about nine hundred years before Christ, we find that the ideas then entertained of death were that it was a *sleep*; and of *hades*, or the state of the dead, that it was a dark, gloomy, cold place under ground, where the mere powerless shadows of the dead existed in a half-unconscious state. Read a few quotations:—

"Silent they *slept* and heard of wars no more."

"And death in lasting *slumber* seals his eyes."

"The soul, indignant, seeks the *realms of night*."

"Oppress'd, had sunk to death's eternal *shade*."

"Add one more ghost to Pluto's *gloomy* reign."

<sup>1</sup> Future Life, Part 2, Chap. 1, p. 81; and Part 1, Chap. 3, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> Christian Theology, p. 519.

"Thy hector, wrapt in everlasting *sleep*,  
Shall neither hear thee sigh, nor see thee weep."

"And seeks the cave of *Death's half-brother, Sleep.*"<sup>3</sup>

Such expressions are frequent all through the Iliad. Homer always describes *hades* as a dreary, gloomy place, thus:—

"When to grim Pluto's gloomy gates he went."

"Go, guide thy darksome steps to Pluto's dreary hall."

"By thy black waves, tremendous Styx! that flow  
Through the drear realms of gliding ghosts below."<sup>4</sup>

The souls there are described as feeble, shadowy, and voiceless.

"Then the wan shades and feeble ghosts implore."

"To all the phantom nations of the dead."<sup>5</sup>

Finally, Homer, in his Odyssey, relates the descent of Ulysses into *hades*, and his interview with the souls of the dead. We give a few quotations:—

"Now the wan shades we hail,  
When lo! appeared along the dusky coasts,  
Thin, airy shoals of visionary ghosts."

Of the soul of his mother he says:—

"Now a thin form is all Anticlea was.  
Still in the dark abodes of death I stood,  
When near Anticlea, moved and drank the blood.  
Straight all the mother in her soul awakes,  
And owning her Ulysses, thus she speaks:  
Comest thou, my son, alive to realms beneath,  
The dolesome realms of darkness and of death?  
Comest thou alive from pure ethereal day?  
Dire is the region, dismal is the way."<sup>6</sup>

"Thrice in my arms I strove her shade to bind,  
Thrice through my arms she slipp'd like empty wind."

Ulysses complaining of this, his mother replies:—

<sup>3</sup>Pope's Homer's Iliad, pp. 58, 85, 91, 101, 123, 259, 306.

<sup>4</sup>Pope's Homer's Iliad, pp. 151, 265, 269.

<sup>5</sup>Pope's Homer's Odyssey, p. 601.

<sup>6</sup>Idem., pp. 605, 606, 608, 609.

' All, all are such when life the body leaves;  
 No more the substance of the man remains,  
 While the impassive soul reluctant flies,  
 Like a vain dream, to these infernal skies.  
 But from the dark dominion speed thy way,  
 And climb the steep ascent to upper day;  
 To thy chaste bride the wondrous story tell,  
 The woes, the horrors, and the laws of hell.' <sup>7</sup>

Of the great king, now dead, he says:—

"His substance vanish'd, and his strength decay'd;  
 Now all Atrides is an empty shade." <sup>8</sup>

The soul of the mighty Achilles says:—

"Talk not of ruling in this dolorous gloom,  
 Nor think vain words (he cried) can ease my doom.  
 Rather, I'd choose laboriously to bear  
 A weight of woes, and breathe the vital air;  
 A slave to some poor hind that toils for bread,  
 Than reign the sceptered monarch of the dead." <sup>9</sup>

He would rather be a slave and live on earth than be a king in the land of spirits! How different, how exactly the reverse, of the modern ideas of the spirit land!

We cannot fail to observe that the ancients, instead of having a clear and well-defined doctrine of the immortality of the soul and the conscious state of the dead, gradually developed these ideas, not from an early and clear tradition, but from the causes already given, and from others yet to be named. This is an important fact in our investigation, and it should be well weighed.

### Influence of the Poets.

The influence of the poets and poetry aided greatly in the development of early conceptions concerning the state of the dead. The poets have always had a great influence in shaping the ideas and traditions of

<sup>7</sup>Idem., p. 609.

<sup>8</sup>Idem., p. 614.

<sup>9</sup>Idem., p. 616.

rude nations. No subject ever furnished a better theme for poetic fiction and imagination than that of the place and condition of men after death; and in none has greater liberty of fancy been taken than in this. Whoever wishes proof of this statement may look into the pages of Homer, Virgil, Dante, etc. These poets have given loose reins to their warm imaginations, to revel in the most horrid scenes. Their productions have been eagerly listened to by the people, and the effect has been marked and lasting. These poets were the ones who first taught the ancient heathen their religious tenets.

Thus writes Herodotus: "For I am of opinion that Hesoid and Homer [poets] lived four hundred years before my time, and not more, and these were they who framed a theogony for the Greeks, and gave names to the gods, and assigned to them honors and arts, and declared their several forms."<sup>10</sup>

History abundantly shows that the fancy of poets has done more than anything else to build up this visionary doctrine of a hell and heaven of departed ghosts. Says Enfield: "Every poet enlarged and molded the ancient fables according to the fertility or luxuriancy of his own fancy; so that they were not only increased from time to time without limit, but in many particulars so materially altered that their original features could scarcely be perceived."<sup>11</sup> Says another: "It is a common saying that the license of the poets caused greater injury to the ancient theology than all other things put together."<sup>12</sup>

### Only Fables.

That the popular descriptions of hell were mere fables of poets, designed to scare the common people into obedience, was freely confessed by all writers.

<sup>10</sup> Herod., Euterpe 2, 53, p. 116.

<sup>11</sup> History of Philosophy, p. 63.

<sup>12</sup> Cadworth's Intellectual System, Vol. I., p. 619, note.

That great historian and geographer, Strabo, thus gives the reason why the torments of hell were invented by the lawgivers. He also shows the influence poets have had in the matter. He writes thus:—

“The great mass of women and common people cannot be induced by mere force of reason to devote themselves to piety, virtue, and honesty. Superstition must therefore be employed, and even this is insufficient without the aid of the marvelous and the terrible. For what are the thunderbolts, the ægis, the trident, the torches, the dragons, the barbed thyrses, the arms of the gods, and all the paraphernalia of antique theogony but *fables employed by the founders of States as bug-bears to frighten timorous minds? Such was mythology.*”<sup>13</sup> Yes, indeed, such it was, a mass of frightful fables and bug-bears to scare the people into submission.

Of the ancient Brahmins, this writer says, “They invent fables also after the manner of Plato, on the immortality of the soul, and on the punishment in *hades*, and other things of this kind.”<sup>14</sup> What Plato and others said about the immortality of the soul, punishments in *hades*, etc., were understood to be only fables. Another eminent Greek historian, Polybius, B. c. 203, bears a similar testimony thus: “Since the multitude is ever fickle, full of lawless desires, irrational passion, and violence, there is no way to keep them in order but by fear, and terror of the invisible world, on which account our ancestors seem to me to have acted judiciously, when they contrived to bring into the popular belief these notions of the gods, and of the infernal regions.”<sup>15</sup>

Gibbon, the historian, says: “The description of the infernal regions had been abandoned to the fancy of painters and poets, who peopled them with so many phantoms and monsters who dispensed their

<sup>13</sup> Strabo, Book 1, Chap. 2, Sec. 8, p. 30.

<sup>14</sup> Idem., Vol. III., Book 15, Chap. 1, Sec. 59.

<sup>15</sup> Book 6, p. 56.

rewards and punishments with so little equity that a solemn truth, the most congenial to the human heart, was oppressed and disgraced by the absurd mixture of the wildest fictions. The doctrine of a future state was scarcely considered among the devout polytheists of Greece and Rome as a fundamental article of faith."<sup>16</sup>

### Priests and Lawgivers.

Another cause, and perhaps the chief one, which aided in developing and supporting a belief in this doctrine, was the interest and authority of priests and lawgivers. Commonly these two offices were united in one person. Of course, the more importance the priest could attach to the soul, and to rewards and punishments after death, the greater influence he would have with the people, and the more readily would they support him. Hence it was for the interest of the priests to build up this doctrine at every opportunity, and history shows that from the Egyptians to the Roman Catholic priests they have not been slack in doing this. So also the magistrate found that to threaten the people with the wrath of the gods and future torments for disobedience to his laws, greatly aided him in controlling them, and in keeping them under. "Hence also," says Dr. Horne, "the most celebrated legislators of antiquity, Zoroaster, Minos, Pythagoras, Solon, Lycurgus, Numa, etc., all thought it necessary to profess some intercourse with Heaven in order to give the greater sanction to their laws and institutions, notwithstanding many of them were armed with secular power. Hence he also united his interest with the priests in helping forward this doctrine."<sup>17</sup> Volumes might be and have been written showing that this was the case.

The very learned bishop Warburton, in his "Di-

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<sup>16</sup>Decline and Fall, Vol. I., p. 529.

<sup>17</sup>Introduction, Vol. I., p. 16.

vine Legation of Moses Demonstrated," has abundantly proved by copious quotations from ancient writers that what was said about the infernal regions, elysium, etc., was all invented by the priests and law-givers to frighten the people, and keep them in subjection.

Mr. Alger thus sums up the causes which operated to establish the heathen nations in these doctrines: "Finally," says he, "by the combined power, first of natural conscience affirming a future distinction between the good and the bad; secondly, of imperfect conceptions of God, as a passionate avenger; thirdly, of the licentious fancies of poets drawing awful imaginative pictures of future woe; fourthly, of the cruel spirit and ambitious plans of selfish priest-hoods; and fifthly, of the harsh and relentless theories of conforming metaphysicians,—the doctrine of hell as a located place of manifold terrific physical tortures, drawing in vast majorities of the human race, became established in the ruling creeds, and enthroned as an orthodox dogma."<sup>18</sup>

### **Egypt the Mother of the Doctrine.**

That such a doctrine is now largely believed is well known. That it is not taught in the Bible has been fully shown many times; hence it did not originate there. Then where was its birth? All evidence, both ancient and modern, points to Egypt as the mother of this doctrine. Here are a few testimonies. The first is from the historian Herodotus, than whom there could be no higher authority on this question. He was a Greek, born B. C. 484, and is regarded as the father of profane history.<sup>19</sup> He traveled in Egypt and many other countries, and carefully studied the customs and doctrines of those ancient nations; hence

<sup>18</sup> Doctrine of a Future Life, pp. 39, 512.

<sup>19</sup> Classical Dictionary, art. Herodotus.

he was well qualified to speak the truth on these points. He says, "*The Egyptians were also the first who asserted the doctrine that the soul of man is immortal.*"<sup>20</sup>

Bunsen, in his learned and elaborate work on Egypt, says: "The Egyptians were the first who taught the doctrine of the immortality of the soul,—a fact mentioned by all Greek writers from Herodotus to Aristotle, and one brilliantly confirmed by the monuments."<sup>21</sup>

This declaration from such high authorities should be well considered by all lovers of truth. Bishop Warburton confirms these testimonies thus: "The Egyptians, as we are assured by the concurrent testimony of antiquity, were among the first who taught that the soul survived the body, and was immortal."<sup>22</sup>

Ralph Cudworth, D. D., is probably the highest authority we could quote on this subject. Mosheim says of him that he had all the ancient authors by heart. In his immortal work, "*The True Intellectual System of the Universe,*" he says of the Egyptians, "They were the first assertors of the immortality of souls, their pre-existence, and transmigration."<sup>23</sup> Again: "The immortality, pre-existence, and transmigration of souls, which doctrine was unquestionably derived from the Egyptians."<sup>24</sup>

Here, then, is the fountain-head from whence the doctrine of the immortality of the soul first flowed. Its origin is heathen, not divine; Egyptian, not Biblical. He that denies this assertion must do it with all the evidence from history against him.

<sup>20</sup> Herodotus, Euterpe II., Sec., 123.

<sup>21</sup> Egypt's Place in Universal History, Vol. IV., p. 639.

<sup>22</sup> Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated, Vol. II., p. 239.

<sup>23</sup> Vol. I., p. 527.

<sup>24</sup> Vol. I., p. 553.

## The Life of the Soul Dependent upon the Preservation of the Body.

Generally, no error is born into the world fully grown and perfectly developed; but it has a gradual growth, and passes through different stages of development till it becomes a regular system. Some truth, either natural or revealed, is always taken as the foundation on which to build up a system of error. The counterfeit must at first be very nearly like the genuine, or it would not be received as all would detect the fraud; so we may expect to find this the case with the doctrine under consideration.

It is a doctrine relating to future life. Let us look a moment at the doctrine of a future as revealed in the word of God. The Lord told man in the beginning that if he sinned he should surely die. (Gen. 2: 17.) When man had sinned, God said to him, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Gen. 3: 19. Christ came into the world, died, went into the grave, and rose again, that man might have a resurrection from the dead. (Rom. 14: 9; 1 Cor. 15.) A future life could only be had by a resurrection. For this resurrection all the ancient worthies, from Abel to Paul, looked with earnest anticipation. (Heb. 11: 4-13, 32-40; Phil. 3: 10, 11.) This resurrection, the angel in the bush taught Moses. (Luke 20: 37.) Job, and David, and in short all the ancient people of God, rested all their hopes upon it. (Job 19: 25-27; Ps. 17: 15.) This was the first and true doctrine of a future life as revealed by God to man.

Now it is an undeniable fact that the first theory which finally led to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul was that the soul would live as long as the body was preserved. If the body perished, then the soul was destroyed too. If the body could be preserved, it would be resurrected, and live again some time in the distant future. They thought the soul

would live in the body again; hence the immense expense and untiring pains to embalm the dead body so that it should not decay. It is a well-known fact that the ancient Egyptians, and after them many other nations, embalmed the dead. This they did at great expense, and so effectually that many bodies are preserved in quite a perfect condition to the present day. Their object was to preserve the body so that it would live again. On this point all the best authors agree, as witness the following:—

Calmet, in his Dictionary of the Bible, article "To Embalm," says: "The ancient Egyptians, and the Hebrews in imitation of them, embalmed the bodies of the dead. . . . The art of physic was by the Egyptians ascribed to Isis, and in particular the remedy which procured immortality, which in my opinion, was no other than that of embalming bodies, and rendering them incorruptible."

Bunsen, in his elaborate work on Egypt, bears the decisive testimony: "The real meaning of the celebrated passage in Herodotus (II. 123) about the reasons why the Egyptians bestowed so much care on the preservation of the body, and as it were, on preventing it from passing away, must have been this: *The belief in a resurrection of the body.* . . . This doctrine we may now read in every page of the sacred books. Thence the popular notion in Egypt that unless its old human envelope was preserved, the soul would be subject to disturbances and hindrances in performing its destined course." *The soul was immortal; but its happiness, if not the possibility of its continuing to live, depended on the preservation of the body.* The destruction of the body, consequently involved the destruction of the soul. We assuredly owe the stupendous fabric of the pyramids to a superstitious fear of the destruction of the body, rather than to mere vanity or love of display on the part of the builders. . . . This inability, combined with the artistic impulses of the Egyptians, led to the colossal

preservatories which arose out of a superstitious adherence to the notion of the value of the body, and which clung with a rigid grip to the materialistic principle."<sup>25</sup>

Several facts worthy of attention are stated in the above testimonies:—

1. "The belief in a resurrection of the body" was what led the Egyptians to embalm the dead.

2. The belief that the soul would return to the body, and thus begin a new life as man. This shows that they connected the idea of a future life inseparably with the life of the body.

3. It was "a popular notion in Egypt that unless the old human envelope was preserved," the soul would not be happy. Here, again, the soul depended upon the body.

4. The preservation of the body from destruction was connected with the doctrine of immortality, there being no immortality without the preservation and reliving of the body. "*The soul was immortal; but its happiness, if not the possibility of its continuing to live, depended on the preservation of the body. The destruction of the body, consequently, involved the destruction of the soul.*" The soul was immortal only as connected with an immortal body! This is so near the scriptural idea of immortality that we may easily recognize its origin. We have reason to thank God that in those early ages we can find so clear an idea still retained of the divine doctrine of a future life only by the resurrection of the body.

5. These writers say that the pyramids looked to the same object,—a preservation of the dead.

6. The old Egyptians were materialists.

Here, then, we have the object of embalming, the object of the pyramids, and the first idea of the immortality of the soul as taught by the Egyptians,—quite different from the present doctrine of the soul's immortality.

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<sup>25</sup> Egypt's Place in Universal History, Vol. IV., pp. 641, 642, 651, 652.

## CHAPTER VI.

### The Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul Originated in Egypt and was Carried into Greece by the Grecian Philosophers.

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**T**HE evidence is clear and abundant that the Greeks obtained their first notions of the soul's immortality from the Egyptians, though, as we shall soon see, they altered this doctrine and added to it. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul, as we have seen, was a leading notion in the Egyptian religion. The Greeks received this with the rest, but at a later date than most other parts of their system. Says Herodotus: "The Egyptians also were the first who asserted the doctrine that the soul of man is immortal. . . . Some of the Greeks have adopted this opinion, some earlier, others later, as if it were their own."<sup>1</sup>

This is very plain testimony as to where the Greeks obtained this doctrine; also that it was not known among them till learned from Egypt; and that even then all did not at once receive it. Pherecydes, who lived about six hundred years before Christ, was the first who taught the Greeks the notion. He received his learning and doctrine from the Egyptians. Josephus, in his book "Against Apion," says: "But then for those that first introduced philosophy [among the Greeks], and the consideration of things celestial and

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<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, Euterpe II. 123, p. 144.

divine among them, such as Pherecydes the Syrian, and Pythagoras, and Thales, all with one consent agree that they learned what they knew of the Egyptians and Chaldeans, and wrote but little. And these are the things which are supposed to be the oldest of all among the Greeks. And they have much ado to believe that the writings ascribed to those men are genuine."<sup>2</sup>

The reader will notice that the teachings of Pherecydes and Thales are among the *oldest things* taught the Greeks, and that they hardly knew whether to believe them or not. This was only six hundred years before Christ. Moses had legislated for Israel about one thousand years before that, and even David and Solomon had slept with their fathers for about four hundred years when this philosopher first taught the Greeks about the soul's immortality. So this doctrine was not very ancient among them. Enfield says: "Another tenet which is by the universal consent of the ancients ascribed to Pherecydes is that of the immortality of the soul, for which he was, perhaps, indebted to the Egyptians. Cicero says that he was the first philosopher in whose writings this doctrine appeared."<sup>3</sup>

Thus history points out the very first man who wrote in favor of this heathen dogma. Pherecydes not only borrowed the doctrine of the immortality and transmigration of souls from the Egyptians, and taught it to the Greeks, but he added to it a refinement of his own, which was unknown till he first broached it; this was the idea that the soul is a part of God.

Mr. Warburton has argued this point at some length, and shown that this doctrine was of *Grecian*, and not of Egyptian, origin, and that Pherecydes and his contemporary, Thales, were the inventors of it. He says, "The Greeks having thus given the soul one

<sup>2</sup> Book I., Sec. 2.

<sup>3</sup> History of Philosophy, p. 210.

of the attributes of the Divinity, another Egyptian doctrine soon taught them to make a perfect God of it."<sup>4</sup>

Here we find the date of another important step in the history of this doctrine. All agree that the Greek philosophers much improved the doctrines which they learned from Egypt. This was one of the first of these improvements.

### Pythagoras.

The next great name in antiquity that appears in the history of this doctrine, is Pythagoras. He was a Greek, born about B. C. 550; the exact date is not certain. He was a disciple of Pherecydes. He passed twenty-two years in Egypt, and used great diligence in learning the doctrines of the priests. After traveling through many cities of Greece, he finally went to Crotona, in *Magna Græcia*, where he established a flourishing school, which was attended by hundreds.<sup>5</sup> The school, or sect, thus founded by him, was called the *Italic* or *Pythagoric* sect.

Of his visit to Egypt, and the result, Warburton says: "The result of all was, and it is worth our observation, that from this time the Greek sophists (now called philosophers) began to cultivate the belief of a future state of rewards and punishments."<sup>6</sup>

Yes, these observations are important. 1. Pythagoras went into Egypt. 2. There he and Plato learned the doctrines of the priests. 3. The result was, that from that time the Greek philosophers began to cultivate this belief. Then they had not cultivated that belief before, much less had the people. There is an abundance of evidence to show that he is correct in these statements.

We will now briefly inquire into Pythagoras' doc-

<sup>4</sup> Divine Legation, Vol. II., Book III., Sec. 4. p. 240.

<sup>5</sup> Enfield's History, p. 212.

<sup>6</sup> Divine Legation, Vol. II., pp. 108, 109.

trine concerning man and the soul. He seems to have made some advancement upon the doctrine of his master, Pherecydes. He taught that God was the great fountain, or the universal mind, from whence emanated the minds, or souls, of all intelligent beings; that the soul existed before it animated this body; that it will transmigrate through different bodies till it returns to God, its original source, and is reabsorbed into his essence. Like all before him, he still held the soul to be material. With regard to his idea of God, Enfield says, "He does not seem to have had the idea of a pure spirit."

Enfield has thoroughly discussed the whole subject, so I glean the following facts from him: 1. We learn that Pythagoras retained all the advance steps which his master, Pherecydes, had made on the ancient faith. 2. He added much of his own theorizing. 3. He introduced a subtile mode of philosophizing, which confused the mind more than it enlightened it. He used many subtile divisions and distinctions, which were unknown before. He was the first one who assumed the name of philosopher. 4. He began to decry "*gross matter*" as corrupt, and far removed from God. 5. Yet he still held God, demons, and souls to be material; but they were of subtile, ethereal substance.<sup>7</sup>

### Anaxagoras.

The discovery that mind is entirely independent of matter was reserved for another philosopher, born about fifty years later than Pythagoras. This was Anaxagoras, one of the successors of Pythagoras in the Ionic school. Of this fact Enfield testifies thus:—

"Anaxagoras affirmed that a pure mind, perfectly free from all material concretions, governs the universe. From these and other concurrent testimonies,

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<sup>7</sup>History of Philosophy, p. 223.

it clearly appears that Anaxagoras was the first among the Greeks who *conceived of mind as detached from matter*, and as acting upon it with intelligence and design in the formation of the universe."<sup>8</sup>

These facts are worthy of our notice. They show the gradual tendency among the ancients to condemn matter, separate the mind from all dependence upon it, and finally to arrive at the conclusion that it is purely spiritual and immaterial. But it required ages of philosophizing to arrive at this conclusion. Anaxagoras broached his opinion, as above stated, about 450 B. C. Even he did not arrive at the notion that the soul of man is purely spiritual and immaterial. This was reserved for another great philosopher, as we shall soon see. These things show what thorough materialists all the ancients were, and how long it took to philosophize them out of it. It was not till common sense and sober reason were laid aside for "vain philosophy" and subtile sophistry, that they arrived at this sublime conclusion!

### Plato.

The greatest name that appears in the history of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is that of PLATO. He was a Greek, was born B. C. 428, and was one of the greatest philosophers of antiquity. "The influence of this sublime autocrat in the realms of intellect, has transcended calculation. However coldly his thoughts may have been regarded by his contemporary countrymen, they soon obtained cosmopolitan audience, and surviving the ravages of time and ignorance, overleaping the bars of rival schools and sects, appreciated and diffused by the loftiest spirits of succeeding ages, closely blended with their own speculations by many Christian theologians, have held an almost unparalleled dominion

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<sup>8</sup>Idem., p. 87.

over the minds of millions of men for more than fifty generations."<sup>9</sup>

Those who believe the soul immortal, now quote his views on that subject with great satisfaction. So much did he do for that doctrine, that he is often called the father of it. Mr. Anthon expresses the sentiment which has led so many Christians to put Plato almost on a level with the Bible when he says: "Whoever studies Plato is treading on holy ground. So heathens always felt it; so even Christians confessed."<sup>10</sup>

The reason why Plato is thus honored by believers in the immortality of the soul is because he was the first of the ancient philosophers who distinctly taught the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. That it was not very plainly taught before, we have already seen. It needed the genius of a Plato to invent arguments to prove the soul immortal; and Christians, in their defense of this doctrine, have only been able to take up and repeat his arguments. This fact Dr. Knapp thus honestly confesses: "In the varied web of proof [of the immortality of the soul] in our modern philosophical schools, the chief threads, and, as it were, the entire material, are of Grecian origin." "The followers of Socrates, however, did the most for this doctrine, and especially Plato."<sup>11</sup> Enfield says, "Even to the present day Plato has many followers; his writings still give a tincture to the speculations and language of philosophy and theology."<sup>12</sup>

This is true; hence we shall be interested to learn about Plato and his doctrine of the soul. At the age of twenty Plato became the disciple of Socrates. At the end of eight years, Socrates dying, he left Greece in search of wisdom. "He first visited that part of Italy called *Magna Græcia*, where a celebrated school of philosophy had been established by Pythagoras,

<sup>9</sup> Doctrine of a Future Life, p. 185.

<sup>11</sup> Christian Theology, pp. 521, 522.

<sup>10</sup> Classical Dictionary, art. Plato.

<sup>12</sup> History of Philosophy, p. 115.

and was instructed in all the mysteries of the Pythagorean system, and subtilties of which he afterward too freely blended with the simple doctrine of Socrates." <sup>13</sup>

Thus at an early period we find Plato a disciple of the Pythagoreans, and freely receiving their doctrines, the chief of which was the immortality of the soul. Then he traveled into Egypt. Of this event Enfield says, "Wherever he came he obtained information from the Egyptian priests." <sup>14</sup> "Whilst studious youth were crowding to Athens from every quarter in search of Plato for their master, that philosopher was wandering along the banks of the Nile, or the plains of a barbarous country, himself a disciple of the old men of Egypt." <sup>15</sup>

Returning to Greece, laden with all the theories of Socrates, Pythagoras, and the Egyptian priests concerning the nature of the soul, he proceeded to remodel and refine their doctrine according to his own fancy, and he brought it much nearer the present view on that subject than it had before been. Mosheim says, "Plato falsely attributed to Socrates what he had either learned from the Pythagoreans, or had himself feigned, in order to obtain for it greater currency." <sup>16</sup> What Plato represents Socrates as saying in the *Phædo* about the immortality of the soul, is only Plato's own words and ideas put into the mouth of Socrates; hence these sayings afford no proof that Socrates ever held or taught that doctrine.

Says Enfield "When he [Plato] was twenty years old he became a stated disciple of Socrates, and remained with him in that relation eight years. During this period he frequently displeased the followers of Socrates, and sometimes gave Socrates himself occasion of complaint, by mixing foreign tenets with those of his master, and grafting upon the Socratic

<sup>13</sup> *Idem.*, p. 116.

<sup>15</sup> Valerius Maximus, Book 8, Chap. 7.

<sup>16</sup> Cudworth's *Intellectual System*, Vol. I., p. 264, note.

<sup>14</sup> *History of Philosophy*, p. 116.

system opinions which were taken from some other stock."<sup>17</sup>

"It is remarkable," says Leland, "that though there were several sects of philosophers which professed to derive their origin from Socrates, scarcely any of them taught the immortality of the soul as the doctrine of their schools, except Plato and his disciples, and many even of these treated it as absolutely uncertain."<sup>18</sup>

### Plato's Doctrine.

Having found the fountain whence Plato drew his doctrines, we will now briefly examine his theory of the soul. We find him agreeing with his master, Pythagoras, in the following particulars: 1. The pre-existence of the soul; 2. That it was an emanation from God; 3. That it was immortal; 4. That it transmigrated through different bodies; 5. That it would finally be reabsorbed into Deity. We shall also find that he further improved and spiritualized this doctrine.

1. Plato made the soul more ethereal than his predecessors had considered it, though he still held it to be material.

2. He made the soul the real man.

3. He made the body a prison, a real hindrance to the soul.

4. Death was simply the freeing of the soul from gross matter, that it might act with more freedom.

5. Plato made the transmigration of the soul a *moral* doctrine instead of one of necessity, as it had been held before.

Enfield thus describes Plato's doctrine of God and matter: "Plato supposes two eternal and independent causes of all things: one, that by which all things

<sup>17</sup> History of Philosophy, p. 116.

<sup>18</sup> Necessity of Revelation, Vol. II., p. 139.

were made, which is God; the other, that *from* which all things are made, which is matter,"<sup>19</sup>

Plato held that God did not create matter, but simply molded it. He taught that baneful doctrine that *matter is the source and origin of all evil.*

Says a learned author: "It was also a doctrine of Plato that there is in matter a necessary, but blind and refractory, force; and that hence arises a propensity in matter to disorder and deformity, which is the cause of all the imperfections which appear in the works of God, and the origin of evil."<sup>20</sup> This is the cause of the mixture of good and evil which is found in the material world. The effect of this doctrine is to degrade matter and exalt mind, or the soul.

"Still further he taught," says the historian, "that the body is a prison, from which the soul must be released before it *can* arrive at the knowledge of those things which are real and immutable."<sup>21</sup> In answer to the question how they should bury him, Plato makes Socrates say, "Just as you please, if only you can catch me." And do not "say at my interment that Socrates is laid out, or is carried out, or is buried."<sup>22</sup> How many Christian funeral sermons have been modeled after this old heathen philosophizing!

One fact is worthy of special attention; viz., that *Plato places his doctrine of the human soul at the head of his philosophy.* Thus testifies Enfield: "Plato refers to the head of the philosophy of nature his doctrine concerning the human soul,—a doctrine which he treats obscurely on the ground of his assumed hypothesis concerning spiritual emanations from the divine Nature. He appears to have taught that the soul of man is derived by emanation from God; but that this emanation was not immediate, but through

<sup>19</sup> History of Philosophy, p. 129.

<sup>21</sup> Idem., p. 136.

<sup>20</sup> Idem., p. 130.

<sup>22</sup> Phædo, Bohm's Library, pp. 124, 125.

the intervention of the soul of the world, which was itself debased by some material admixture, and consequently, that the human soul, receding further from the first intelligence, is inferior in perfection to the soul of the world. . . . Plato held that the soul was a spiritual emanation from God; that the source of all evil is in matter; that the body is a prison for the soul; that by contemplation the soul may return to God, etc. Lastly, Plato teaches, in express terms, the doctrine of the immortality of the rational soul; but he has rested the proof of this doctrine upon arguments drawn from the more fanciful parts of his system."<sup>23</sup>

Plato tried to prove the immortality of the soul by its spirituality, though by this he did not mean pure immortality, as is now taught. This was the first trace of that idea which modern Christian philosophy has carried on. This shows the origin of that doctrine. *Plato was its legitimate father.*

Plato held that the soul was a part of God. Thus writes Bishop Warburton: "Plato, without any softening, frequently calls the soul God, and a part of God."<sup>24</sup> This is one of his strongest proofs of the soul's immortality. As a part of God it will be re-absorbed into him either at death or as soon as it is sufficiently purified by transmigration. With Plato, the soul was immortal only as a part of God, into whom it would finally be re-absorbed, and lose all personal existence.

### History of The Platonic School.

We will now briefly notice the history and influence of Plato's teachings and followers. After finishing his travels, Plato returned to Greece, where he established a philosophical school, in which he taught his theory of the human soul, etc. This school was

<sup>23</sup>History of Philosophy, p. 135.

<sup>24</sup>Divine Legation, Vol. II., p. 220.

largely attended, and became very famous and influential. Contemporary with the sect which Plato established, there were several other schools of philosophy, as the Stoics, Epicureans, Peripatetics, etc.; but as none of them taught the immortality of the soul, we are not now interested in them.

It was through Plato and his disciples that this doctrine came into the church; hence we are interested in their history. Enfield says: "The school of Plato long continued famous, but passed through several changes, on account of which it was successively distinguished into the *Old*, the *Middle*, and the *New Academy*. The Old Academy consisted of those followers of Plato who taught the doctrine of their master without mixture or corruption."<sup>25</sup>

The Old Academy continued till about three hundred years before Christ. Then, under the teaching of Arcesilaus, it passed into the Middle Academy. It differed from the Old in asserting that "everything is uncertain to human understanding, and consequently, that all confident assertions are unreasonable." This school tended strongly to skepticism. It continued less than one hundred years, and met with much opposition. The New Academy succeeded it.

Carneades, born B. C. 214, was the first teacher of the New Academy. Its doctrines came back nearer to those of Plato. It allowed that a strong probability of truth might be attained by sufficient evidence. This school continued about one hundred years.

"The last preceptor of the Platonic school in Greece was Antiochus of Ascalon. . . . He resigned the academic chair B. C. 80. After his time, the professors of the academic philosophy were dispersed by the tumults of war, and the school itself was transferred to Rome."<sup>26</sup>

Platonism, having found its way to Rome, soon made its way into the Roman Church, as may be easily shown.

<sup>25</sup> History of Philosophy, p. 137.

<sup>26</sup> Idem. pp. 142-146.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *The Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul Received into the Christian Church through the Alexandrian School.*

**R**OME was founded about seven hundred years before Christ; but for centuries the Romans were a barbarous, warlike people, taking little interest in theology or speculative philosophy. Enfield says it was not till the year 156 B. C. that philosophy began to be studied at Rome. It was then introduced by Grecian philosophers. At first it met with strong opposition from the leading men of the nation; but when Rome conquered Greece, and the two nations began to mingle, it was but a short time before the Grecian religion and philosophy were transplanted to Rome. Here they began to flourish with new life. "Hence," says the historian, "Greece, which had submitted to the arms, in her turn subdued the understandings of the Romans; and contrary to that which in these cases commonly happens, the conquerors adopted the opinions and manners of the conquered."<sup>1</sup>

That the Romans received their religion mostly from Greece, is attested by all writers who treat of the subject. "The religion of the Romans," says a learned author, "appears to have been that of Greece, — a mixture of Syrian and Egyptian fables. The principal gods of both people were the same."<sup>2</sup> "The

<sup>1</sup> Enfield's History of Philosophy, p. 296.

<sup>2</sup> Elements of Mythology, p. 244.

religious system of the Romans," says Mr. Fisk, "gives clear evidence of its Grecian descent, being in scarcely any part of it a native growth, but borrowed chiefly from the Greek colonies in Italy."<sup>3</sup> Dr. Good says, "The philosophers of Rome present us with nothing new; for they merely followed the dogmas of those of Greece."<sup>4</sup>

Very soon every Grecian sect of philosophy had its patrons among the Romans. The Epicurean, the Stoic, the Pyrrhonic, and other schools, which openly denied the soul's immortality, had numerous followers. But Platonism also was embraced by others. Among the most noted of these was Cicero, who was born B. C. 106. He was a great admirer of Plato, and said and wrote much to prove the immortality of the soul. He did for that doctrine among the Romans what Plato had done for it among the Greeks. Yet even he confessed that he felt sure of the soul's immortality only while he was arguing for it; in his hours of sober reflection he doubted it. Nevertheless, a goodly number adopted this view, at least in theory.

### The Alexandrian School.

About this time a singular school was started at Alexandria in Egypt, then a part of the Roman empire. It was called the Eclectic or New Platonic School. The origin of it was this: Certain philosophers, seeing the endless disputes and contradictions among the many different sects of philosophy and religion, formed the plan of gleaning from all whatever was good and consonant to reason, and rejecting the rest. Platonism was the basis of this school, and the doctrine of the immortality of the soul held a conspicuous place in it. It was through this school, further improved in the second century by Ammonius Saccas,

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<sup>3</sup>Classical Antiquity, p. 86.

<sup>4</sup>Book of Nature, p. 380.

a Platonic Christian, that this doctrine came into the church; hence we are interested in its history. It is not certain just when it started; but probably not far from the time of the birth of Christ. So says Dr. Mosheim, Enfield, and the *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*.<sup>5</sup>

Referring the reader to the above authors for a full history of this school, I will only select a few facts bearing directly on my subject. "Upon the foundation of the Platonic Philosophy," says Enfield, "with an abundance of heterogeneous materials collected from every other sect, was erected an irregular, cumbersome and useless fabric called the Eclectic School." One Potamon, a Platonist, is supposed to have been its founder.<sup>6</sup> Says the *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, "They held Plato in the highest esteem, but did not scruple to join with his doctrine whatever they thought conformable to reason in the tenets of other philosophers."<sup>7</sup> "Potamon endeavored to reconcile the precepts of Plato with those of other masters."<sup>8</sup>

The Christian religion, too, which had now found its way to Alexandria, became incidentally the occasion of encouraging and promoting this coalition of opinions; for when the heathen philosophers perceived that this new establishment, supported by the splendor of its miracles and the purity of its doctrines, was daily gaining credit even in the school of Alexandria; and saw that, like the rising sun, it was likely soon to eclipse every inferior light; despairing of being able either to refute its claims by argument, or to stem its progress by authority, they determined to oppose it by every effort of ingenuity and artifice. In order to support the declining credit of their own schools, they incorporated Christian ideas and princi-

<sup>5</sup> Mosheim's Commentaries, Vol. I., p. 38; Enfield's History of Philosophy, p. 343; *Encyclopedia Religious Knowledge*, art. Eclectics.

<sup>6</sup> Mosheim's Commentary, Vol. I., p. 33.

<sup>7</sup> Article Eclectics.

<sup>8</sup> Enfield's History of Philosophy, p. 327.

ples into their new system. Several fathers of the Christian church themselves, such as Pantaenus, Clemens, Alexandrinus, and the author of the work called the Shepherd of Hermas, by studying philosophy in the Alexandrian school, injudiciously favored the views of their opponents, and from their sacred magazine contributed their share toward that confused mass of opinions, Egyptian, Oriental, Pythagoric, Platonic, and Christian, which, about the close of the second century, rose up into the Eclectic System."<sup>9</sup>

Alas that the church of Christ should have left the simple truth of the Holy Bible to learn wisdom and doctrine from the "vain philosophy" of heathenism! But such was the sad fact. From this time we find innumerable errors mixing in with the pure truth of the Bible. This Eclectic School was started about one hundred years after the death of the last apostle, toward the close of the second century.

That the main object of this school was to reconcile and unite Christianity and heathen philosophy, particularly Platonic philosophy, is abundantly proved by the historians treating upon the subject. The learned Dr. Mosheim thus speaks of this school: "This [Eclectic] mode of philosophizing was changed near the close of the [second] century, when Ammonius Saccas, with great applause, opened a school at Alexandria, and laid the foundation for that sect which is called the New Platonic. This man was born and educated a Christian, and perhaps made pretensions to Christianity all his life. Being possessed of great fecundity of genius, as well as eloquence, he undertook to bring all systems of philosophy and religion into harmony; or, in other words, to teach a philosophy by which all philosophers, and the men of all religions, the Christian not excepted, might unite together and have fellowship." "The

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<sup>9</sup> Enfield's History of Philosophy, p. 326.

grand object of Ammonius, to bring all sects and religions into harmony, required him to do much violence to the sentiments and opinions of all parties, —philosophers, priests, and Christians; and particularly, by means of allegorical interpretations, to remove very many impediments out of his way.”<sup>10</sup>

Of this scheme Enfield says: “By combining into one system all the important tenets, both theological and philosophical, which were at that time received, either in the pagan or the Christian school, they hoped to confirm the heathen in their attachment to their old superstitions, and to reconcile the Christians to paganism.”

“In the infancy of the Alexandrian school, not a few among the professors of Christianity suffered themselves to be so far deluded by the pretensions of this sect as to imagine that a coalition might, with great advantage, be formed between its system and that of Christianity; and this union seemed the more desirable as several philosophers of this sect became converts to the Christian faith. But the consequence was, that pagan ideas and opinions were by degrees mixed with the pure and simple doctrine of the gospel; the fanatical philosophy of Ammonius corrupted the pure religion of Christ; and his church became a field of contention, and a nursery of error.”<sup>11</sup>

The effect of this was soon manifest. Mosheim says: “Hence it came to pass that the greater part of these Platonists, upon comparing the Christian religion with the system of Ammonius, were led to imagine that nothing could be more easy than a transition from the one to the other, and, to the great detriment of the Christian cause, were induced to embrace Christianity without feeling it necessary to abandon scarcely any of their former principles.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ecclesiastical History, Vol. I., pp. 111–113.

<sup>11</sup> History of Philosophy, p. 344.

<sup>12</sup> Commentaries, Vol. I., Cent. 2., Sec. 32, p. 366.

To us at this day it seems incredible that such a scheme should ever have been formed, or that any Christians would have listened to it a moment. But when we remember that the apostles had been dead one hundred years, that the church had already degenerated to an alarming degree, that nearly all the Christian converts had themselves been pagans, that they brought into the church with them more or less attachment for their former pagan notions, and that their nearest friends and relatives were still pagans, it is not so remarkable that they were induced to look favorably upon such an effort. But it was the most fatal step the church ever took; it opened the doors for a flood of error to pour into the pure stream of gospel truth, and, alas! they have never been wholly separated since.

### **Plato's Doctrine of the Soul Adopted by this School.**

That Plato's doctrine of the immortality of the soul was adopted by this New Platonic school as the corner-stone of its system, is plainly declared on all hands. It will be remembered, as we have shown, that Plato refers to the head of the philosophy of nature his doctrine concerning the human soul. This was the corner-stone of his system, wherein it differed from all other systems of philosophy. The following testimonies are from that eminent historian, Mosheim, and show that Plato's doctrine of the soul was received by the Alexandrian school:—

“They assumed therefore the name of Eclectics. But although these philosophers were really the partisans of no sect, it appears from a variety of testimonies that they much preferred Plato, and embraced most of his dogmas concerning God, the human soul, and the universe.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Ecclesiastical History, Vol. I., Cent. 2, Part 2, Chap. 1, p. 59.

These testimonies are plain and decisive. The consequences to Christian doctrine and practice we shall soon see. The same author, in another critical history, says, "Those who originated this species of philosophy took their leading principles from the system of Plato; considering almost everything which he advanced respecting the Deity, the soul, the world, and the demons as indisputable axioms."<sup>14</sup>

"Every one who laid claim to the character of a wise man, was strictly enjoined by him [Ammonius Saccas] to assert the liberty of his divine and immortal part, by extricating it, as it were, from all connection with the body. . . . In fine, to shrink from no exertion that might tend to free the immortal spirit from all corporeal influence."<sup>15</sup>

Again: "And that he might the more readily procure for this part of his system an acceptance with the world, he endeavored, as far as possible, by means of strained interpretations, or rather perversions, to enlist on his side the tenets of the Christians respecting the Deity, the human soul, the world," etc.<sup>16</sup> "The restoration or resurrection of the dead was so interpreted as to accommodate it to the tenets of the Grecian sages."<sup>17</sup>

Ammonius probably died about A. D. 243. "The school of Ammonius was continued, and the Eclectic system completed by the most celebrated of his disciples, Plotinus, the chief of the Alexandrian Platonists, from whom the school afterward took its name."<sup>18</sup> He was born A. D. 204. On account of his great abilities, the school became very famous, and was successful in the accomplishment of its object, as we shall see. Plotinus implicitly received Plato's doctrine of the immortality of the soul. The following, from Enfield, will illustrate this: "It was an-

<sup>14</sup> History of Christ in the First Three Centuries, Vol. I., p. 38.

<sup>15</sup> Idem., pp. 357, 358.

<sup>16</sup> Idem., p. 362.

<sup>17</sup> Idem., p. 275, note.

<sup>18</sup> History of Philosophy, p. 828.

other proof of the fanatical spirit of Plotinus that, though well skilled in the medical art, he had such a contempt for the body that he could never be prevailed upon to make use of any means to cure . . . . or alleviate his pain. He had learned from Pythagoras and Plato that the soul is sent into the body for the punishment of its former sins, and must, in this prison, pass through a severe servitude before it can be sufficiently purified to return to the divine fountain from which it flowed. . . . When he found his end approaching, he said to Eustochius, 'The divine principle within me is now hastening to unite itself with that divine Being which animates the universe;' *herein expressing a leading principle of his philosophy*, that the human soul is an emanation from the divine nature, and will return to the source whence it proceeded."<sup>19</sup> This shows what a prominent place Plato's doctrine of the human soul held in this system.

Plotinus died A. D. 270. The succession of the Platonic, or Eclectic, school in Alexandria terminated in Damascius, a native of Syria.

It would seem that very little penetration is needed to discern in this the original of the modern theological doctrine of the immortality of the soul, going to Heaven at death, etc. With this school, the resurrection of the body was either of little importance or denied entirely. This would naturally follow from their view of the impurity of matter. These facts I think sufficient to give a clear idea of the doctrines of this celebrated school concerning man, both soul and body.

### Great Popularity of the Eclectic School.

We will briefly notice how popular and extensive this school became. All agree that it acquired a

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<sup>19</sup> *Idem.*, p. 330.

wonderful degree of eminence, and soon extended itself over most of the Roman empire and eclipsed the glory of all other sects. To this effect writes Mosheim: "The school of Ammonius, the origin and dogmas of which have been already stated, *gradually cast all others into the background*. From Egypt it spread in a short time over nearly the whole Roman empire, and drew after it almost all persons inclined to attend to metaphysical studies."<sup>20</sup>

"It is almost incredible what a number of pupils, in a short time, issued from the school of this man [Ammonius]. But among them no one is more celebrated than Porphyry, a Syrian, who spread over Sicily and many other countries the system of his master, enlarged with new discoveries and sedulously polished. At Alexandria, almost no other philosophy was publicly taught from the time of Ammonius down to the sixth century."<sup>21</sup>

The first step which was taken toward apostasy was attending the school and cultivating a taste for its philosophy.

The reason why that heathen doctrine spread so widely and so rapidly in the church, is shown by the following from the same eminent historian: "Many from the different sects of philosophers, *especially from the Platonists*, and also from among the rhetoricians, embraced Christianity; and they were honored for their erudition and talents by being made bishops and presbyters."<sup>22</sup> The learned Platonic Christians, being now made teachers and ministers in the various churches, soon disseminated their Platonic doctrine of the soul everywhere throughout the Christian church.

And the same author says: "In fact, there are but few points of Christian theology which the teachers who were inflamed with this eager desire to produce

<sup>20</sup> Ecclesiastical History, Vol. I., p. 161; Commentary, Vol. II., p. 163.

<sup>21</sup> Ecclesiastical History, Vol. I., Cent. 3, Chap. 1, pp. 161, 162.

<sup>22</sup> Mosheim's Commentaries, Vol. II., Cent. 3, Sec. 26, p. 140.

a union between Christianity and philosophy left untouched." <sup>23</sup>

Another historian bears this testimony: "Very soon after the rise of Christianity, many persons who had been educated in the schools of the philosophers becoming converts to the Christian faith, the doctrines of the Grecian sects, and especially of Platonism, were interwoven with the simple truths of pure religion. As the Eclectic philosophy spread, heathen and Christian doctrines were still more intimately blended, till at last both were almost entirely lost in the thick clouds of ignorance and barbarism which covered the earth." <sup>24</sup> Of the Eclectic school he says: "The muddy waters sent forth from this polluted spring were spread through the most celebrated seats of learning, and were even permitted, as we shall afterward see, to mingle with the pure stream of Christian doctrine." <sup>25</sup> Once more, of the teachers of the church, he says: "Through several centuries they partook of the spirit of the Alexandrian school, and the *Eclectic method of philosophizing Platonized Christianity*." <sup>26</sup>

Though this is astonishing beyond measure, yet we readily see how it was accomplished. All the sects of heathen philosophers, except the Platonic, denied any future life to man; but Plato strongly contended for a future state of rewards and punishments. This naturally led the Christians to regard the Platonists as friends and allies upon this great question of the fact of a future life, though they differed as to how it was to be obtained. Christians rested their hope upon the resurrection of the dead as promised in the Bible. At this the heathen philosophers mocked as being unreasonable and unphilosophical, as they cared nothing for what the Bible

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<sup>23</sup> Idem., Vol. I., Cent. 2, Sec. 34, p. 373.

<sup>24</sup> Enfield's History of Philosophy, p. 8.

<sup>25</sup> Idem., Book 3, Chap. 2, Sec. 4, p. 331.

<sup>26</sup> Idem., Book 6, Chap. 2, p. 453.

said. See their answer to Paul at Athens in Acts 17. Now the Platonists came in with their philosophical argument to meet their antagonists, and to prove a future life by means of the soul's immortality. In this way reason and philosophy could be made to support the hope of the simple-minded Christians, which before rested solely upon the promise of the Scriptures. The promise of relief and help, and of having a more philosophical faith, was a very flattering one. As Eve listened to, and was beguiled by, the serpent, so they listened to these philosophers, were flattered with their praises, accepted their help, adopted their notions, and finally united with them.

Reader, here is the origin of the present orthodox doctrine of immortal souls, disembodied spirits, ghosts, eternal hell, etc. Thus the learned commentator on Cudworth's Intellectual System says: "The Platonic philosophy, indeed, which was approved by the ancient Christians, has been abandoned, and another substituted in its place; but the dogmas and conclusions derived from it have been retained by most men in all their pristine integrity; and any one conversant with the ancient philosophy, might write a long and copious commentary upon *the relics of the Platonic philosophy among Christians*. Thus happens it with mortals. The primary and fundamental doctrines of a sect are very often repudiated by those who preside over communities; while they either are unwilling to interfere with the consequences and institutions that proceed from them, owing to their ignorance of their origin, or are unable to do so, because the people are not easily prevailed upon to abandon inveterate customs. In the course of time, many opinions and rites are held sacred, which those who are addicted to them would hold in far different estimation if they were thoroughly aware of their origin."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Cudworth's Intellectual System, Vol. III., p. 265, note.

Yes; the immortal-soul theory is a relic of Platonic philosophy which thousands would quickly drop did they know its origin.

### Platonism Opposed.

But was all this heathen philosophy and pagan doctrine received into the church without opposition? No, indeed. Many, nay, all of the more pious men warmly opposed it, for they foresaw its effects. Mosheim thus records the controversy: "The rise, however, of this taste for philosophical speculation, and the ascendancy which they perceived it gradually acquiring in the minds of so many of their teachers, became a source of the most poignant regret to all such as continued steadfastly attached to that ancient and simple species of piety which had been delivered down by the apostles and their disciples, inasmuch as they saw reason to fear that the cause of celestial truth might be thereby materially injured, as in reality proved to be the case, and that divine wisdom would not long retain either its proper value or dignity in the estimation of mankind. In consequence of this, the Christian church became divided into two parties, which opposed each other with the utmost warmth. . . . The issue of this dispute, which lasted for a considerable while, at length was, that victory declared itself in favor of the patrons of philosophy, and that those teachers came to be most respected, who, in unfolding the doctrines of religion, called in the aid of philosophical principles and precepts."<sup>28</sup> This was the very thing against which Paul had warned the church: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy." Col. 2: 8. The better class of Christians remembered this, and were opposed to receiving this heathen philosophy into the church.

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<sup>28</sup> Commentaries, Vol. I., Cent. 2, Sec. 21, pp. 343, 344.

In his "Ecclesiastical History," Mosheim, after naming the class who were in favor of introducing Platonism into the church, adds: "*But a great majority thought otherwise.*"<sup>29</sup> "But gradually the friends of philosophy and literature acquired the ascendancy. To this issue Origen contributed very much; for, having early imbibed the principles of the *new Platonism*, he inauspiciously applied them to theology, and earnestly recommended them to the numerous youth who attended on his instructions. And the greater the influence of this man, which quickly spread over the *whole Christian world*, the more readily was his method of explaining the sacred doctrine propagated."<sup>30</sup> Hence, in a short time, Bible truth and those who advocated it were put down and held in contempt. Says our author: "There were various persons of this sort in the fourth century, who were disgusted with the progress of superstition and of errors respecting the true nature of religion, and who opposed the general current; but the only fruit of their labor was, that *they were branded with infamy.*"<sup>31</sup> Rome came in and condemned them as heretics, and thus silenced all opposition.

### Allegorical Interpretation of the Scriptures Adopted.

How could these Platonic doctrines be harmonized with the Bible? How could the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, conscious state of the dead, etc., be reconciled with the opposite doctrine everywhere taught in the Scriptures? This was, indeed, a serious difficulty; but the genius of these Platonizing teachers devised a mode of harmonizing the two. It was this: They assumed that all the Bible was to be

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<sup>29</sup> Vol. I., Book I, Part 2, Chap. 1, p. 115.

<sup>30</sup> Idem., p. 162.

<sup>31</sup> Idem., p. 274.

understood, not literally, or according to its plain, obvious meaning, *but allegorically*, or as *metaphors* under which the truth was concealed. By this method, of course, they could make it teach any doctrine they pleased! Clement and Origen, especially the latter, were the chief movers in this work.

So plainly and fully has the learned Mosheim, in his Ecclesiastical History, treated this part of my subject, that I have only to quote him. He says: "One of the earliest evils that flowed from this immoderate attachment to philosophy, was the violence to which it gave rise in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. For, whereas the Christians had, from a very early period, imbibed the notion that under the words, laws and facts, recorded in the sacred Volume, there is a latent sense concealed—an opinion which they appear to have derived from the Jews—no sooner did this passion for philosophizing take possession of their minds, than they began, with wonderful subtilty, to press the Scriptures into their service in support of all such principles and maxims as appeared to them consonant to reason; and at the same time most wretchedly to pervert and twist every part of those divine Oracles which opposed itself to their philosophical tenets or notions." Of Clement he says: "Whatever, therefore, appears to him just and consonant to reason in the maxims or tenets of the philosophers, he is sure to discover laid down somewhere in the books of the Old Testament; and this leads him, not unfrequently to *strain* and *distort*, in a most extraordinary manner, the words of Moses and the other sacred writers, in order to make them, apparently, speak one and the same language with Plato and the rest of the philosophers of Greece."<sup>82</sup>

He also says they tried to make the Bible doctrine of the resurrection fit their immortal-soul theory.

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<sup>82</sup> Ecclesiastical History, Vol. I., Cent. 2, Sec. 33, p. 363, and note 2.

"The restoration, or resurrection of the dead, was so interpreted as to accommodate it to the tenets of the Grecian sages."<sup>33</sup>

Origen, who lived in the close of the second and the first half of the third century, was a disciple of Clement, and also for a long time sat under the teaching of Ammonius. These teachers he followed, and carried their Platonic doctrines still further, especially with respect to the immortality of the soul.

The following quotations from Mosheim will clearly show all this: "Origen's new method of explaining and illustrating religious truths by means of philosophy, required also a new method of expounding the Sacred Scriptures; for, meeting with many things in the Scriptures repugnant to the decisions of his philosophy, he deemed it necessary to devise some method of removing this disagreement. And as it would add confirmation to his opinions if he could make it appear that they were supported by the authority of the Scripture, some plausible way was to be devised which should make his speculations appear to be taught in the holy Oracles."<sup>34</sup> Hence, "perceiving that many of the facts and declarations of the Bible conflicted with the principles of his philosophy, he felt the necessity of resorting to some means of escaping their force; and he could find none more easy and effectual than this assumption: Whatever in the sacred books conflicts with my philosophy must not be taken literally, but must be converted into allegory. Safely posted behind this rule, he could easily resist whatever the Scriptures might oppose to his opinions."<sup>35</sup>

Was the Platonic, or Ammonian, doctrine of the *soul* among those errors which he wished to make the Bible uphold? Yes; hear our historian on this point: "The foundation of all his faults was, that he

<sup>33</sup>Commentaries, Vol. I., Cent. 2, Sec. 34, p. 373, note 1.

<sup>34</sup>Idem., Vol. II., p. 165.

<sup>35</sup>Idem., p. 170.

fully believed nothing to be more true and certain than what the philosophy he received from Ammonius taught him respecting God, the world, SOULS, demons, etc.; and therefore he, in a measure, *recast* and *remodeled* the doctrines of Christ after the pattern of that philosophy."<sup>36</sup> Here we have the doctrine of Christ recast and remodeled, and the Bible distorted, to make them fit the heathen doctrine of the soul, and other errors. Our author continues: "He could not discover in the sacred books all that he considered true, so long as he adhered to the literal sense; but allow him to abandon the literal sense, and to search for recondite meanings, and those books would contain Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, and the whole tribe of philosophers. And thus nearly all those who would model Christianity according to their own fancy, or their favorite system of philosophy, have run into this mode of interpreting Scripture."<sup>37</sup> Behold here the origin of the figurative interpretation of the Bible! It was invented expressly to harmonize that book with Plato's doctrine of the soul.

So thoroughly was Origen possessed with Plato's doctrine of the immortal soul, that, though he professed to be a Christian and to believe the Bible, yet, says Hagenback, in his "History of Christian Doctrine," "Origen teaches that a belief in the doctrine of the resurrection of the body is not absolutely essential to the profession of Christianity, *provided the immortality of the soul be maintained.*"<sup>38</sup>

This is but the natural fruit of that doctrine. If the soul is immortal and lives without the body, what is the use of a resurrection?

The influence and authority of Origen extended far and wide, so much so that Mosheim says: "It would therefore be no mistake to say, that, as Constantine the Great imparted a new form to the civil

<sup>36</sup> *Idem.*, p. 159, note 8.

<sup>37</sup> *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. I., Cent. 3, Part 2, p. 181.

<sup>38</sup> *Idem.*, Vol. II., p. 404.

state, so this Egyptian imparted a new form to the theology of Christians. . . . Origen introduced the Academy almost entirely into the church." <sup>39</sup> Thus we have traced the history of the old heathen dogma of the immortal soul from Egypt, through all its developments, till it was received into the church. As we have seen, the last move was not accomplished without much opposition from the old-fashioned Christians, and a terrible distortion of the Scriptures on the part of its Platonic advocates. Platonism continued to obscure more and more the light of the Gospel, till it deepened into the midnight of the Dark Ages.

Of the fifth century the same author remarks: "*As no one in those times objected to Christians retaining the opinions of their pagan ancestors respecting the soul, heroes, demons, temples, and the like, and then transferring them into their devotions; and as no one proposed utterly to abolish the ancient pagan institutions, but only to alter them somewhat and purify them,—it was unavoidable that the religion and worship of Christians should in this way become corrupted.*" <sup>40</sup>

Will the reader mark well the fact here recorded, that the pagan converts were allowed to retain and bring into the Christian worship the opinions of their pagan ancestors respecting the soul? When were those pagan opinions ever cast out of the church?—Never; they are cherished to this day, and the man who now undertakes to reject them is branded as opposing the Bible! Alas, how hard it is to uproot an error when it has once been allowed to grow among the tender plants of truth!

But I need not pursue this painful subject further. The evidence is overwhelming that Christianity, in the third century and onward, was grossly corrupted

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<sup>39</sup> Commentary, Vol. II., Cent. 3, Sec. 27, p. 145, note.

<sup>40</sup> Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, Vol. I., pp. 342, 343.

by Platonic philosophy; and that here was where Plato's doctrine of the soul found its way into the church. I will close with the following candid confession from an able orthodox writer: "We would express our conviction that the idea of the immortality of the soul has no source in the gospel; that it comes, on the contrary, *from the Platonists*; and that it was just when the coming of Christ was denied in the church, or at least began to be lost sight of, *that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul came in to replace that of the resurrection*. This was about the time of Origen."<sup>41</sup>

Inspired men foresaw and forewarned the church of this apostasy. To the elders of the Ephesian church, Paul said: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them."<sup>42</sup> This apostasy from the truth was to begin, then, even in the days of the apostles, and was to arise among their own disciples. To the Thessalonians, Paul wrote: "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work."<sup>43</sup> Even while the apostles were alive had this delusion begun. Paul warned his brethren not to be deceived by any man, but to "prove all things," and "hold fast that which is good."<sup>44</sup> Yet men now think that the teachings of any professed Christian who lived as early as that, or even two hundred years later, are about as good as the Bible, and not to be questioned. Hence, notwithstanding Paul's warning, many have been deceived. Some were so far deceived by vain philosophy, even in a large and flourishing church which had long enjoyed the watchcare of the apostle, as to deny the resurrection. Hence Paul's inquiry of the Corinthians, "How say some among you that there

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<sup>41</sup> Darby's Hopes of the Church.

<sup>43</sup> 2 Thess. 2:7.

<sup>42</sup> Acts 20: 29, 30.

<sup>44</sup> 1 Thess. 5:21.

is no resurrection of the dead?"<sup>45</sup> As we have seen, all the authority of the apostles was not able to crush this false doctrine: so of other heresies. Of these early corruptions, Mr. Dowling, in his "History of Romanism," thus remarks: "There is scarcely anything which strikes the mind of the careful student of ancient ecclesiastical history with greater surprise than the comparatively early period at which many of the corruptions of Christianity which are embodied in the Romish system took their rise."

Robinson, author of the "History of Baptism," thus writes: "Toward the latter end of the second century, most of the churches assumed a new form, the first simplicity disappeared; and insensibly, as the old disciples retired to their graves, their children, along with new converts, both Jews and Gentiles, came forward and new-modeled the cause."<sup>46</sup> Yes; and this new-modeling was done to make it fit their old pagan doctrines. Archibald Bower, in his valuable "History of the Popes," has clearly demonstrated that Catholicism is only paganism with another name. This he repeatedly declares and proves. He says that the Christians of Rome, in the fifth century, who had come over from heathenism, "were yet but half Christians, and had only grafted the Christian religion on the old stock of pagan superstition."<sup>47</sup>

Of the influence of heathen converts upon Christianity, Mr. Bower says: "For those rites and ceremonies, however heathenish, instead of ever being given up by them, were by degrees adopted by the Christian inhabitants of the countries where the newcomers settled. And thus the half Christians, for they were no better, remained half Christians, while the true Christians became half pagans. Thus we may well account for the many errors and corrup-

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<sup>45</sup> 1 Cor. 15 : 12.

<sup>47</sup> Vol. I., p. 236, Gelasius.

<sup>46</sup> Ecclesiastical Researches, Chap. 6.

tions that overspread and disfigured the whole face of the church, after the irruption and conversion of the barbarous nations that broke into the empire in the fourth and fifth centuries. Their usages were first connived at, and afterward adopted by the church."<sup>48</sup>

Can any one wonder that pagan doctrines came into the church and supplanted the doctrines of Christ?

In these facts all Protestants are agreed. They show clearly how terribly Christianity had become corrupted with heathen doctrines before the rise of the Reformation. But Protestants who came out from the papal church at the time of the Reformation did not rid themselves of every false doctrine received by their fathers from the pagans. It was too much to expect that they would cast off all their errors, and adopt all the truth. Hence there has been need of a continual reformation ever since, by such men as Wesley, Whitefield, and others. Very many Romish errors were retained, if I mistake not, by the reformers.

With regard to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and eternal misery, most of the Protestant churches have retained nearly all the tenets received by the Catholics from the pagans. With a few modifications, the orthodox Protestants still hold the same as the papists in their belief respecting the immortality of the soul. Hence, in proving the heathen origin of this doctrine among the Roman Catholics, we have shown its origin among all Christians.

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<sup>48</sup> *Idem.*, p. 416.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### Evil Effects of the Platonic Philosophy.

S soon as Plato's doctrine of the soul's immortality was accepted by the church, its baleful fruits began to appear in the wildest forms of fanaticism. The body was held in the greatest contempt, and everything was done to weaken and emaciate it, that the immortal spirit, the spark of divinity within, might be exalted. A great crop of hermits, monks, anchorites, and the like, was the first evil resulting from this teaching. Says the historian: "This new species of philosophy . . . produced that gloomy set of men called mystics, whose system, if divested of its Platonic notions respecting *the origin and nature of the soul, will be a lifeless and senseless corpse*. It laid a foundation, too, for that indolent mode of life which was afterward adopted by many, and particularly by numerous tribes of *monks*."<sup>1</sup>

Enfield, in his "History of Philosophy," shows the same thing at some length. He says: "Another principal cause of the corruption of the Christian doctrine of morality was, that it was very early tinged with the enthusiastic spirit of the Alexandrian philosophy. . . . This corruption chiefly discovered itself in a peculiar species of fanaticism, consisting in a certain mystical notion of perfection which originated from a principle common to Platonists, Orientalists, and Gnostics: that the soul of man is imprisoned and debased in its corporeal habitation, and in

<sup>1</sup> Mosheim Ecclesiastical History, Vol. I., Cent. 2, Part 2, p. 115.

proportion as it becomes disengaged from the incumbrance, and purged from the dregs, of matter, it is prepared for its return to the divine nature."<sup>2</sup>

Then he relates how this led them to retire into deserts and afflict their bodies, in order to purify the soul. "For it is well known," again writes Mosheim, "that the true and genuine mystics adopted, as the very basis and groundwork of their discipline, those principles respecting the Deity, the world, *the soul*, and *the nature of man*, which the Christians had borrowed from the Egyptian and modern Platonic philosophy. . . . Hither, also, may we refer the origin of monks, hermits, and cenobites, whose rules and institutions are uniformly grounded upon the principle of delivering THE IMMORTAL SPIRIT from the oppression under which it groans in being connected with the body, of purifying it from the corruptions of sense, and of rendering it fit to be admitted into the presence of the Deity in the realms of everlasting light and life."<sup>3</sup>

Again, when Christians adopted the philosophical doctrines respecting the nature of the soul, and of bodies, when Ascetics adopted the belief that every endeavor was to be used to set free the divine spark that lay imprisoned within the body, . . . it was but natural for them to renounce the society of men, and devote themselves to a life of seclusion and solitude. Hence originated monasteries, abbeys, hermits, and anchorites. Can any one fail to see here from whence the Christians obtained the doctrine of an immortal spirit in man? The monks and hermits spoken of, were the most wild, fanatical, and miserable set of men that have ever disgraced humanity. They left the society of men, went into the mountains and deserts, lived on grass like beasts, stood on the tops of pillars for years, emaciated their bodies in all possible ways,—by hunger, thirst, nakedness, and

<sup>2</sup> Page 453.

<sup>3</sup> Commentary, Vol. I. Cent. 2, Sec. 35, pp. 380, 381.

filthiness. They wore their clothes till they literally rotted off, and acted like wild beasts.

Human invention was exhausted in self-inflicted torments. The Indian faquir was rivaled in the variety of distorted postures and of agonizing exercises. Some lived in clefts and caves; some in huts into which the light of day could not penetrate; some hung huge weights to their arms, necks, or loins; some confined themselves in cages; some, on the tops of mountains, exposed to the sun and weather. The most celebrated hermit, at length, for life condemned himself to stand in a fiery climate, on the narrow top of a pillar.

For further description of these miserable fanatics, see Gibbon, Bower, or any history of the church. All this was done to weaken and wear out the *sinful body*, and free *the immortal soul* within!

### Celibacy.

The *celibacy* of the Romish priests, which has been such a scandal to Christianity, also grew out of the same idea. The most lewd and shameful practices sprang from this fanatical heathen notion that the immortal soul was everything and the material body nothing.

Such was the fruit which naturally grew out of this Platonic doctrine of the pure, immortal spirit within the prison of a corrupt material body. All this was but a repetition of what the same doctrine had previously produced among the pagans. Porphyry assures us that the "ancient Pythagoreans were distinguished for their attachment to this mode of life."<sup>4</sup> Indeed, large numbers of the heathen Platonists had retired into deserts and solitary places, and there lived just as these hermits did after them. The latter only copied the former.

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<sup>4</sup> Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, p. 100, note 2.

### Worship of Saints and Relics.

The worship of saints and their relics was another appalling evil which immediately sprung up from the belief in the doctrine that death is only the freeing of the real man, the immortal soul, from its prison; that saints after the death of the body are more active and powerful than they were before; and that they have free access to Heaven and to the presence of God.

These martyrs, hermits, and noted saints, who had gained a great reputation for sanctity by their austere lives, were supposed to go directly to Heaven and have great favor and influence with the Lord. As these were their own relatives, special friends, and brethren, it was a natural thought that they would intercede with God for their friends on earth, who were still in the flesh. What is more reasonable than that a sainted mother should plead for her children who were still exposed to peril, or that a faithful pastor should pray for his beloved flock now left on earth without his aid? Hence, offerings at the tombs of these dead saints began to be made. Immediately miracles were said to be wrought in answer to these, and this encouraged the pious thought. Next, churches were built in honor of these saints, and dedicated to them. Here their bones were sacredly deposited and rich offerings made to them, which went to the clergy. Now miracles and answers to these petitions became frequent.

The great question was settled; the dead were alive, and had power with God. It was better to pray to these than directly to God himself, or even to Christ, as they were more like us, and would sympathize with us more readily. Hence, patron saints rapidly multiplied, till every town and almost every household had its special saint to whom all prayers were offered. God and Christ were left out, and the

Virgin Mary, St. Peter, and a host of dead men, took their places. Images to these saints were erected everywhere, and their votaries bowed before them in supplication. Behold paganism re-established through the devil's lie of the soul's immortality!

### Purgatory Introduced.

Another of the most baneful doctrines of the Roman church with which the world was ever cursed, grew directly out of the Platonic theory of the soul's immortality; viz., the popish doctrine of purgatory. The case is thus stated by Dr. Knapp in his excellent book on "Christian Theology:" "The foundation for the doctrine of purgatory is found even in the second and third centuries. Its origin may be traced back to the Pythagorean or Platonic philosophy. Souls, according to Plato, are a part of the divine nature, which, however, are confined in the body as in a prison. Now, even after the soul of man is disembodied, there still cleaves to it much sin and impurity acquired from its contact with the body; and this impurity is regarded by Plato as a natural *sickness*. It cannot, therefore, immediately on leaving the body, return again to its original source. With some the disorder is *incurable*, and these are the lost, who at once go to *Tartarus*; with others it is curable, and these are purged and purified in Hades. . . . This with many other Platonic doctrines and fables, was early transferred to Christianity."<sup>5</sup>

The cunning priests soon saw in this an opportunity to benefit themselves. So they diligently inculcated it as an undoubted fact, supported by the word of God, that while a few of the most holy went directly to Heaven at death, the large majority of Christians had to pass through purgatory, in order

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<sup>5</sup>Sec. 150, p. 526.

to be cleansed from sins committed since conversion or baptism. But their sufferings there could be shortened and greatly lessened by the prayers of saints on earth and in Heaven, especially by masses and prayers of the priest. But for every mass, so much money must be paid; for every prayer of the priest, so much more. If it was the case of a very wicked person, it would take a great deal of praying, and hence a great deal of money. But if only money enough were given, the hardest case could be freed from purgatory. Specially had the Pope power to let them out; hence the notorious plan of indulgences. For such and such considerations, the pope would pardon out offenders of different kinds.

So the poor and the rich came with their money to buy their suffering friends out of purgatory. What untold millions have flowed into the popish coffers through this pagan lie! It was this wicked imposition on the credulity of the people that stirred the soul of Luther, and started the Reformation.

What was the foundation of all these terrible deceptions? It was the assumption that the dead are not really dead; that the soul can live separate from the body, and is immortal. Had they believed the Lord, that the dead are asleep and know nothing,<sup>6</sup> it would have shielded them from all this delusion.

### Restorationists and Universalists.

It is also noticeable that a large number of those in the Christian church who first began to believe and teach the Platonic notion of the immortality of the soul, with it also taught the restoration, or universal salvation of all souls. This fact is so well known that I do not stop to give the proof here. If any wish the evidence in full, they can read it in the "Ancient History of Universalism," by Hosea Ballou;

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<sup>6</sup> Eccl. 9:5, 6.

or in "Debt and Grace," by C. F. Hudson; or in "Scriptural Doctrine of Future Retribution," by Edward Beecher.

This view was held by Origen, A. D. 230; Gregory Thaumaturgus, A. D. 243; Pierius and Theognostus, A. D. 282; Methodius, A. D. 290; Pamphilus, A. D. 294; Eusebius, A. D. 320; Titus, A. D. 362; Didymus, A. D. 370; Jerome, A. D. 380; Gregory Nyssen, A. D. 371; Diodorus, A. D. 378; Theodore, A. D. 394; Maximus, A. D. 662; and Nicholas, A. D. 1096. All these, and probably others, held to restorationism.

Origen went so far as to hold that the devil himself would finally be saved. Others held to the same. Indeed, restorationism and Universalism appear to have been the popular faith during the labors of Origen in the third century, and for some time after. Universalists admit that they can find but few traces of their doctrine in the church till the close of the second century.<sup>7</sup> The fact is, there is no trace of it until the Platonic doctrine of the soul was introduced.

That Origen, who was thoroughly in love with Platonism, and who, as all agree, did more than all others to corrupt the simple doctrines of the gospel by introducing Platonic philosophy, was the man who introduced the doctrine of universalism into the church, is confessed even by Hosea Ballou. He says, "It appears that Origen *introduced* the doctrine of universalism and that of the pre-existence of souls together."<sup>8</sup> He then quotes Origen as saying of the doctrines he was introducing, "Indeed, they are advanced by us with much hesitation, and more in the way of investigation and for the sake of discussing them, than as pronouncing them certain and indisputable."<sup>9</sup>

Here, in the beginning of the third century, was the origin of universalism in the Christian church.

<sup>7</sup> Preface to Ancient History of Universalism, p. 19.

<sup>8</sup> Ancient History of Universalism, p. 86.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

This doctrine came in naturally with that of the immortality of the soul; but finally the doctrine of an eternal hell and endless suffering crowded it out, and it was condemned as heretical.

### **The Heathen Hell Magnified.**

Finally, the most horrid of all the results of receiving Plato's dogma of man's natural immortality was, that with it also came the heathen theory of the torments of the damned in Tartarus, or hell. Had even this view been left as the old pagans taught it, it would not have been so fearfully horrid. But getting the idea from thence, the Romish priests, aided by the ignorance and superstition of the people, added greatly to the doctrine, increased its dimensions, and intensified all its infernal horrors. The number of those who went there was vastly larger than the number of those sent there by the pagans. They only doomed some of the worst cases; but now all out of the church must go there, together with heretics and apostates from the church. Plato's hell only lasted till the periodical renovation of all things, as we have seen. This was a very long time, yet it was only a drop in the ocean compared to an actual eternity. But the Romanists made it eternal, sure, without hope of end. All the strong words the language knew, all the illustrations ingenuity could invent, were exhausted to convey the idea of its unending duration.

Plato had described hell as a place of great suffering; but now these sufferings were multiplied and intensified a hundred-fold. With Plato, hell was only a speculative idea, which affected nobody; but with the Romanists it was an ever-present, almost visible reality. The first thing the prattling child learned was to fear hell. The mother talked of it, the father warned of it, the teacher described it,

and the priest threatened it. "Never," says Michelet, "can we know in what terrors the Middle Age lived. There was all abroad a living fear of men, fear of the State, fear of the church, fear of God, fear of the devil, fear of hell, fear of death. Preaching consisted very much in the invitation, 'Submit to the guidance of the church while you live,' enforced by the threat, 'or you shall go to hell when you die.'"

Ghosts and specters walked on every hand, and lurked in every dark corner. The devil, with his cloven feet, long tail, horns, and breathing fire, was often seen. He made special contracts with desperate men to serve him for so long for certain worldly prosperity. Souls from purgatory frequently appeared, and told of their awful sufferings and who were there with them. They warned their surviving friends to believe the church and obey the priests. Now and then the door of hell was opened, and certain persons saw the smoke and the flames, and heard the cries and moans of the damned. Hell was no myth, no merely symbolical place, not simply a guilty conscience. No; hell was a dread reality, a real place, a lake of burning, literal fire. The belching of a volcano was the vomit of uneasy hell. If a man wishes to get a correct idea of the popular feeling touching hell in the Middle Ages, let him read the "Divine Commedia" of Dante. The transactions of hell were thought of and spoken of as familiarly as we now speak of the business of a neighboring city from which come the cars and the papers daily!



## CHAPTER IX.

### *The Testimony of the Apostolic Fathers.*

**W**E now come in the history of our subject to inquire into the faith and teachings of those who in the Christian church were the immediate successors of the apostles. In the Apocryphal New Testament we have the writings of the "Apostolic Fathers."

Says Archbishop Wake, these epistles are a full and perfect collection of "all the genuine writings that remain to us of the apostolic fathers, and carry on the antiquity of the church from the time of the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament to about a hundred and fifty years after Christ. Except the Holy Scriptures, there is nothing remaining of the truly genuine Christian antiquity more early. They contain all that can with any certainty be depended upon of the most primitive fathers."<sup>1</sup>

It is not claimed that these writings are all genuine and reliable; for it is generally agreed that they are not. Some of them, no doubt, were written by the men whose names they bear, and at a very early date; and all of them were probably written sometime during the first two centuries. They simply show the faith of the writers at that time. As they are all the Christian writings that have come down to us from the time immediately following that of the apostles, they are important. We now inquire what

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<sup>1</sup> Preface to Archbishop Wake's *Apostolic Fathers*, p. 15.  
[120]

they taught upon the subject in hand. Do we find them all teaching the immortality of the soul, the conscious state of the dead, endless torment, etc.? If so, this fact should have some weight with us. But if, on the other hand, we find them all harmonizing with the Bible in teaching the mortality of man, the sleep of the dead, and the destruction of the wicked, then we shall have further evidence that we have understood the inspired writers correctly upon this subject.

Let us examine these writings, and see if as late as one hundred and fifty years after Christ the immortality of the soul, or eternal misery, was taught by any of the Christians.

### Barnabas, A. D. 71.

The first writer is Barnabas, A. D. 71. We will lay before the reader every passage of his that relates to our subject. He says, "There are, therefore, three things ordained by the Lord,—the hope of life, the beginning and the completion of it."<sup>2</sup>

*Life*, then, was what they hoped for. He teaches that the wicked will perish. "A man will justly perish, if, having the knowledge of the way of truth, he shall nevertheless not refrain himself from the way of darkness."<sup>3</sup> Again: "Because ye shall all wax old as a garment, the moth shall eat you up."<sup>4</sup> Of Jesus he says, "They that put their trust in him, shall live forever."<sup>5</sup> He says that those who are wicked are "adjudged to death."<sup>6</sup> And the wicked "are as the dust which the wind scattereth away from the face of the earth." "Thou shalt not cleave to those that walk in the way of death." "The mouth is the snare of death."<sup>7</sup> "But the way of darkness is crooked and full of cursing; for it is the

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<sup>2</sup>Chap. 1:7.

<sup>5</sup>Chap. 7:7.

<sup>3</sup>Chap. 4:6.

<sup>6</sup>Chap. 9:6.

<sup>4</sup>Chap. 5:1.

<sup>7</sup>Chap. 14:6, 17.

way of eternal death, with punishment, in which they that walk meet those things that destroy their own souls." Here he says eternal *death*, not eternal *misery*. "But he that chooses the other part shall be destroyed, together with his works. For this cause there shall be both a resurrection and a retribution." "For the day is at hand in which all things shall be destroyed, together with the wicked one. The Lord is near, and his reward is with him."<sup>8</sup>

This is a good witness, showing the faith of the church at that time. He represents that the wicked shall *die, perish, be destroyed, be blown away as dust, and eaten by a moth*; that souls will be destroyed; and he speaks of the sleep of the dead, the coming of the Lord, the resurrection, and retribution thereafter. But, on the other hand, he does not, in all his writings, so much as once hint that man has an immortal soul. He never intimates anything about an endless hell. Dr. Beecher admits that Barnabas, perhaps, taught the annihilation of the wicked. He remarks, "What he says may be understood of the annihilation of the wicked."<sup>9</sup>

### Clement, A. D. 91-100.

The next writer is Clement, A. D. 91-100, in his two letters to the Corinthians. He was a disciple of Peter, and bishop of Rome. He exhorts us to lay "aside all vanity, and contention, and envy which leads unto *death*."<sup>10</sup> Simple death is the doom of the sinner, according to Clement. Again: "The transgressors shall perish from off the face of it [the earth]."

He attaches great importance to the resurrection. "Let us consider, beloved, how the Lord does continually show us that there shall be a future resur-

<sup>8</sup> Chap. 15 : 1, 8, 10.  
<sup>10</sup> 1 Cor. 5 : 1.

<sup>9</sup> Doctrine of Scriptural Retribution, p. 231.

rection."<sup>11</sup> Once more: "And again, Job says, Thou shalt raise up this flesh of mine, that has suffered all these things."<sup>12</sup> He teaches that the time of reward is at the second advent. "Let us, therefore, strive with all earnestness, that we may be found in the number of those that wait for him."<sup>13</sup>

He represents immortality as a gift from God. "How blessed and wonderful, beloved, are the gifts of God. Life in immortality!"<sup>14</sup> And again he says to the same effect, "By him would God have us to taste the knowledge of immortality."<sup>15</sup> It is through Jesus, then, that we obtain immortality. He represents man as mortal, made of the dust. "But what can a mortal man do? Or what strength is there in him that is made out of the dust?"<sup>16</sup>

Of the punishment of the wicked, he says, "They, therefore, who do anything which is not agreeable to his will, are punished with death."<sup>17</sup> In his second letter to the Corinthians, he says, "What think ye, then, that he shall suffer, who does anything that is not fitting in the combat of immortality?"<sup>18</sup> He places himself squarely against universalism; or any hope of repentance in the future world. "For after we shall have departed out of this world, we shall no longer be able either to confess our sins or repent in the other."<sup>19</sup> He teaches that when the wicked are once destroyed, it will be forever. There will be no restoration from it. For he says, "Nothing shall deliver us from eternal punishment if we shall disobey his commands."<sup>20</sup>

The wicked are destroyed. This is their punishment. And as they never come to life again, their punishment is eternal. Thus in the writings of Clement we find nothing of the immortality of the soul, nothing of purgatory, nothing of deathless spirits,

<sup>11</sup> 1 Cor. 11 : 16.

<sup>14</sup> Verses 1, 2.

<sup>17</sup> Verse 21.

<sup>20</sup> Chap. 3 : 8.

<sup>12</sup> Chap. 12 : 9.

<sup>15</sup> Verse 18.

<sup>18</sup> 2 Cor. 3 : 12.

<sup>13</sup> Chap. 17 : 6.

<sup>16</sup> Chap. 18 : 2.

<sup>19</sup> Verse 16.

nothing of going to Heaven at death, nothing of eternal torment, or anything like this. Clement teaches that immortality is a gift of God, to be obtained through the resurrection, and that the wicked are utterly to perish in the second death. He exhorts us to "lay hold on eternal life." And again: "Keep your bodies pure, and your seal without spot, that ye may receive eternal life."<sup>21</sup>

### Hermas, A. D. 100.

The next in order of time is Hermas, who wrote about A. D. 100. He is supposed to have been a companion of Paul.<sup>22</sup> He has spoken very clearly on the subject in hand. He very plainly teaches the utter destruction of the sinner. "For the remembrance of evil worketh death."<sup>23</sup> Again: "Happy are all they that do righteousness. They shall not be consumed forever."<sup>24</sup> He represents the dead as being asleep. Of certain ones he says they "are those which are fallen asleep, and have suffered for the sake of the Lord's name."<sup>25</sup>

The second book of Hermas is called his "Commands." In that he says, "Thou shalt live to God, if thou shalt keep this commandment."<sup>26</sup> Again: "By so doing, thou mayest attain unto life."<sup>27</sup> And again: "They who do such things, follow the way of death."<sup>28</sup> Of the way of evil he says, "It is rugged and full of thorns, and leads to destruction."<sup>29</sup> He represents that there is no life out of the Lord. Thus: "Whosoever shall fear him, and keep his commandments, their life is with the Lord; but they who keep them not, neither is life in them."<sup>30</sup>

Of sin he says, "It is very horrible and wild; and by its wildness consumes men. And especially if a

<sup>21</sup> 2 Cor. 3:7, 18.

<sup>24</sup> Verse 28.

<sup>27</sup> Idem., 3:9.

<sup>30</sup> Idem., 7:6.

<sup>22</sup> Rom. 16:14.

<sup>23</sup> Vision, 3:54.

<sup>28</sup> Idem., 4:2.

<sup>23</sup> Vision, 2:23.

<sup>26</sup> Commands, 1:5.

<sup>29</sup> Idem., 6:4.

servant of God shall chance to fall into it, except he be very wise, he is ruined by it; for it destroys those who have not the garment of a good desire, and are engaged in the affairs of this present world, and delivers them unto death."<sup>31</sup> Again he says that the wicked "shall die forever."<sup>32</sup> That is, there is no resurrection from that death. His death is eternal. Again he says, God "is able to save and to destroy you."<sup>33</sup>

The third book of Hermas is called his "Similitudes." In this he deals largely in illustrations. After showing how certain dry trees were cast into the fire, and utterly burned up, he says that these represent the wicked. "For the other kind of men, namely, the wicked, like trees which thou sawest dry, shall as such be found dry and without fruit in that other world; and like dry wood shall be burned."<sup>34</sup> Here their utter destruction is plainly taught. Again he says, "If thou shalt defile the Holy Spirit, thou shalt not live."<sup>35</sup> Again: "This kind of men are ordained unto death."<sup>36</sup> Sinners "shall bring death upon themselves."<sup>37</sup> Once more: "They render themselves liable to death."<sup>38</sup> "But for those who repent not, death is prepared."<sup>39</sup> "They shall purchase death unto themselves."<sup>40</sup> "If they shall not repent, they shall die."<sup>41</sup> Again: "These have utterly lost life."<sup>42</sup> The following testimony is very plain: "For before a man receives the name of the Son of God, he is ordained unto death; but when he receives that seal, he is freed from death, and assigned unto life."<sup>43</sup> Of the wicked he says: "These are condemned to death."<sup>44</sup> This statement he repeats a large number of times, so many that we do not try to quote them all.

<sup>31</sup> Idem., 12 : 2.

<sup>34</sup> Similitudes, 4 : 4.

<sup>37</sup> Verse 44.

<sup>40</sup> Verse 64.

<sup>43</sup> Sim. 9 : 152.

<sup>32</sup> Verse 6.

<sup>35</sup> Idem., 5 : 59.

<sup>38</sup> Verse 38.

<sup>41</sup> Verse 67.

<sup>44</sup> Verse 179.

<sup>33</sup> Verse 33.

<sup>36</sup> Idem., 6 : 13.

<sup>39</sup> Sim. 8 : 55.

<sup>42</sup> Verse 68.

This is the whole testimony of Hermas upon the nature of man. He sets before the people life and death. In all his writings, life is held out as the reward of obedience, and death as the punishment everywhere threatened. He gives no hint of consciousness between death and the resurrection. He says nothing of going to Heaven or hell at death. He says nothing of eternal torment. As to the immortality of the soul, the deathless spirit, and the like, he is totally silent. Hermas, then, plainly believed in the mortality of man, the sleep of the dead, and the destruction of the wicked.

### Ignatius, A. D. 107.

Ignatius was bishop of Antioch about A. D. 107, and is the next of the apostolic Fathers. There are several epistles ascribed to him.

EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.—In this epistle he says the Lord suffered “that he might breathe the breath of immortality unto his church.”<sup>45</sup> Evidently, then, immortality comes alone through Christ. Hence he says again: “Why do we suffer ourselves foolishly to perish, not considering the gift which the Lord has truly sent to us?”<sup>46</sup> Then he says: “Forasmuch as he designed to abolish death.”<sup>47</sup> And again in the same strain, speaking of the Lord’s supper, he says: “Which is the medicine of immortality, our antidote, that we should not die, but live forever in Christ Jesus.”<sup>48</sup>

These testimonies are very plain. Death is the portion of the sinner; immortality comes through Christ. With the New Testament, he says that the sinner “shall depart into unquenchable fire.”<sup>49</sup> They will be burned up in a fire that cannot be extinguished.

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<sup>45</sup> Chap. 4:4.

<sup>48</sup> Verse 16.

<sup>46</sup> Verse 6.

<sup>49</sup> Verse 3.

<sup>47</sup> Verse 14.

**EPISTLE TO THE MAGNESIANS.**—In this epistle he says: "Seeing, then, all things have an end, there are these two indifferently set before us, death and life."<sup>50</sup> Here he is in harmony with the whole Bible, as we have shown. He says that when the sinner is rewarded according to his deeds, he will cease to exist. "For should he have dealt with us according to our works, we had not now had a being."<sup>51</sup>

**EPISTLE TO THE TRALLIANS.**—Of Christ he says, "Who died for us, that so believing in his death, ye might escape death."<sup>52</sup> Again: "I refrain myself, lest I should perish in my boasting."<sup>53</sup>

**EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.**—He here rests all upon the resurrection. Speaking of his martyrdom he says: "For it is good for me to set from the world, unto God, that I may rise again unto him."<sup>54</sup>

There is no reference to this subject in his epistle to the Philadelphians, nor in that to the Smyrnæans.

**EPISTLE TO POLYCARP.**—In this epistle he says, "Be sober, as the combatant of God; the crown proposed to thee is immortality and eternal life."<sup>55</sup> He plainly teaches the sleep of the dead and the destruction of the wicked, thus: "Labor with one another; contend together, run together, suffer together, sleep together, and rise together, as the stewards, and assessors, and ministers of God."<sup>56</sup> He thus exhorts these ministers to suffer together in their warfare, to sleep together in death, and to rise together in the resurrection.

This is the whole of Ignatius's testimony. Like all the others, he is utterly silent with regard to the immortality of the soul, or anything looking in that direction. Of the writings of this Father, Dr. Beecher says: "In some cases the idea of annihilation is suggested."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Chap. 2 : 1.<sup>53</sup> Verse 12.<sup>56</sup> Chap. 2 : 13.<sup>51</sup> Chap. 3 : 7.<sup>54</sup> Chap. 1 : 8.<sup>57</sup> Scriptural Retribution, p. 283.<sup>52</sup> Chap. 1 : 5.<sup>55</sup> Chap. 1 : 12.

### Polycarp, A. D. 166.

The last of the apostolic Fathers is Polycarp, who wrote about A. D. 166. We have his letter to the Philippians. He plainly teaches the resurrection of the dead. "But he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also raise up us in like manner."<sup>58</sup> Again: "And whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts, and says there shall neither be any resurrection nor judgment, he is the first-born of Satan."<sup>59</sup> Again: "Charity delivereth from death."<sup>60</sup>

This venerable Father, who had been a companion of the apostle John, suffered martyrdom A. D. 169. His prayer at the stake, as given by Eusebius, shows what his faith was. He says, "I bless thee that thou hast thought me worthy of the present day and hour, to have a share in the number of the martyrs and in the cup of Christ, *unto the resurrection of eternal life, BOTH OF THE SOUL AND BODY*, in the incorruptible felicity of the Holy Spirit."<sup>61</sup> Polycarp hoped for eternal life through the resurrection of both soul and body.

Thus we have the teachings of all the apostolic Fathers, reaching down to the middle of the second century. Reader, on which side is their testimony? They are totally silent about the immortal soul, endless hell, eternal torment, deathless spirit, or any such terms. On the contrary, they all along hold out immortality as a thing to be sought for, and to be gained only in Christ and at the resurrection. The dead are said to be asleep. They constantly affirm that the wicked shall die, perish, be consumed, destroyed, burned, blown away, etc. So we are safe in saying that to their time the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and eternal torment, had not found its way into the church of Christ.

<sup>58</sup> Chap. 1:8.

<sup>59</sup> Chap. 3:2.

<sup>60</sup> Chap. 3:11.

<sup>61</sup> Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, Book 4, Chap. 15, p. 148.

## CHAPTER X.

### *The Testimony of the Early Fathers.*



WE must now introduce a different class of witnesses,—*the Early Fathers*. We cannot place as much reliance upon them as upon the apostolic Fathers, as they began about this time to be more or less corrupted by heathen notions; yet many of them still held to the old landmarks for a long time.

#### **Justin Martyr, A. D. 164.**

Justin Martyr, about A. D. 164, comes first after the apostolic Fathers. He was a heathen philosopher, and after his conversion to Christianity, he still retained some of his old heathen notions.<sup>1</sup> He was a learned man, and wrote much. We will quote enough to show his faith upon this question.

1. He earnestly contended for the literal resurrection of the dead, and tried to meet all objections to it. "They who maintain the wrong opinion say that there is no resurrection of the flesh."<sup>2</sup> This doctrine he then refutes.

2. The doctrine of the second advent of Christ is prominent in all his writings.

3. He did not believe that the souls of men went to Heaven at death. He says: "If you have fallen in with some who are called Christians, but who do not

<sup>1</sup> Enfield's History of Philosophy, Book 6, Chap. 3, pp. 454-7.

<sup>2</sup> On the Resurrection, Chap. 2. I quote from Justin's works as published in the "Ante-Nicene Christian Library," Vol. II.

admit this [the resurrection], and venture to blaspheme the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; who say there is no resurrection of the dead, and that their souls, when they die, are taken to Heaven, do not imagine that they are Christians." <sup>3</sup> Here we have it plainly stated that it was heresy in that age to teach that men's souls went to Heaven at death. Yet this is the very thing that the so-called orthodox denominations now generally teach, and the great mass of the common people among them never suspect but that this was always the faith of the church. But history shows it to be quite the contrary, as witness what Justin says above.

4. He refutes the heretical doctrine, just then being introduced, *that the soul alone is the man*, and can act without the body. He says: "What is man but the reasonable animal, composed of body and soul? Is the soul, by itself, man? No; but the soul of man. Would the body be called man? No; but it is called the body of man. If, then, neither of these is by itself man, but that which is made up of the two together is called man, and God has called man to life and resurrection, he has called, not a part, but the whole, which is the soul and body."<sup>4</sup> Again: "How, then, did he raise the dead? Their souls or their bodies? *Manifestly both.*"<sup>5</sup> Once more: "For as in the case of a yoke of oxen, if one or the other is loosed from the yoke neither of them can plow alone; so neither can soul or body alone effect anything if they be unyoked from their communion."<sup>6</sup> Can this be misunderstood? The soul without the body can do nothing; it remains inactive till the body is raised again.

5. He denies the immortality of the soul. Thus: "For he ordained that if he [Adam] kept this [God's command], he should partake of immortal existence;

<sup>3</sup> Dialogue with Trypho, Chap. 80.  
<sup>4</sup> Id., Chap. 9.

<sup>4</sup> On the Resurrection, Chap. 8.  
<sup>6</sup> Id., Chap. 8.

but if he transgressed it, the contrary should be his lot. Man, having been thus made, and immediately looking toward transgression, naturally became subject to corruption."<sup>7</sup> Hear him state the subject: "Now that the soul partakes of life, since God wills it to live, thus, then, it will not even partake [of life] when God does not will it to live. For to live is not its attribute, as it is God's; but as a man does not live always, and the soul is not forever conjoined with the body, since, whenever this harmony must be broken up, the soul leaves the body, and the man exists no longer; even so, whenever the soul must cease to exist, the spirit of life is removed from it, and there is no more soul, but it goes back to the place from whence it was taken."<sup>8</sup>

This is so clear that the most bigoted must yield the point and admit that Justin did not believe the soul could live separate from the body.

6. Justin teaches the utter extinction of the wicked. "Wherefore," says he, "God delays causing the confusion and destruction of the whole world, by which the wicked angels, and demons, and men *shall cease to exist*, because of the seed of the Christians, who know that they are the cause of preservation in nature."<sup>9</sup> The wicked *will cease to exist*. This is unequivocal, and cannot be misunderstood. He did not believe in eternal misery. Again: "Thus, some which have appeared worthy of God, never die; but others are punished so long as God *wills them to exist* and to be punished."<sup>10</sup>

Much more to the same end might be given from him, but it is not needed. Justin frequently says that the wicked shall suffer "everlasting punishment," "eternal punishment," "in eternal fire," etc.,<sup>11</sup> yet he positively declares that they shall cease to ex-

<sup>7</sup> Fragments, No. 11.

<sup>9</sup> Second Apology, Chap. 7.

<sup>11</sup> First Apology, Chaps. 8, 12, 28, 45, 52, etc.

<sup>8</sup> Dialogue with Trypho, Chap. 6.

<sup>10</sup> Dialogue with Trypho, Chap. 5.

ist. So here we have a good example of the limited use of those terms. They are often so used by all the Greeks. Dr. Kitto says that Justin Martyr "held that punishments, at least *sensible* ones, would sometime cease."<sup>12</sup> Prof. Bush says he held to the sleep of the soul.<sup>13</sup> Hagenbach, in his "History of Doctrines," says Justin believed the soul to be mortal, and to perish with the body; that immortality was a reward to be acquired.<sup>14</sup> Ballou says he held to annihilation. Thus: "In another place, however, he states his opinion upon this last point more particularly, and represents that the wicked will be, eventually, annihilated."<sup>15</sup> Of the faith of this Father, Dr. Edward Beecher says, "That Justin did hold and teach the final annihilation of the wicked, the most eminent scholars concede. In the number of such, Mr. Hudson appeals to Grotius, Huet, Röpler, and Dupin, Dœderlein, Münscher, Munter, Daniel, Hase, Stork, Kerns, Otto, Ritter, J. B. Smith, Bloomfield, Gieseler."<sup>16</sup> Gieseler, the church historian, says, "Justin appears to regard it as possible that the souls of the ungodly will be at some time wholly annihilated." Sec. 45.

Another historian says of him: "Justin did not believe in endless torment, but in the final annihilation of the wicked."<sup>17</sup>

### Tatian, A. D. 172, the Disciple of Justin Martyr.<sup>18</sup>

Tatian, who was the disciple of Justin, seems to have believed about the same as Justin concerning the soul. He plainly denies that it is immortal, thus:

<sup>12</sup> Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature, art. Soul.

<sup>13</sup> Bush on the Resurrection, pp. 203, 254.

<sup>14</sup> Vol. I., pp. 162-164, art. Immortality.

<sup>15</sup> Ancient History of Universalism, p. 53.

<sup>16</sup> Doctrine of Scriptural Retribution, pp. 211, 212.

<sup>17</sup> Origin and History of the Doctrine of Endless Punishment, p. 195.

<sup>18</sup> Horne's Introduction, Vol. I., Chap. 2, Sec. 2, p. 43.

"The soul is not in itself immortal, O Greeks, but mortal. Yet it is possible for it not to die. If, indeed, it knows not the truth, it dies, and is dissolved with the body, but rises again at the last end of the world, with the body, receiving death by punishment in immortality. But, again, if it acquires the knowledge of God, it dies not, although for a time it be dissolved."<sup>19</sup> We must then set down Tatian as another believer in the mortality of man and the sleep of the dead.

"He denies," says Dupin, "the immortality of souls, affirming that they die, and that they shall hereafter rise again with their respective bodies."<sup>20</sup> Dr. Adam Clarke says he believes "that the soul cannot be immortal without union with the Holy Spirit; but, partaking of the nature of flesh while living without God, dies with the body."<sup>21</sup>

Another historian speaking of the writings of Tatian, says: "He represents that such souls as have not the truth, or knowledge of God, die with the body, and with it rise to judgment at the end of the world, when they are to undergo 'a death in immortality,' by which he perhaps means annihilation. To the sinful demons he assigns the same final doom."<sup>22</sup>

There is a remarkable passage in this author's writings showing what several scholars have suggested, viz., that many of the early Fathers used the term "immortality of the soul" very loosely, only meaning by it that there will be a future life for man. Thus Tatian, reasoning with a Greek, says, You say "that the soul alone is endowed with immortality, but I say that the body also is endowed with it."<sup>23</sup> Does Tatian mean to say that the flesh is now im-

<sup>19</sup> Address to the Greeks, Chap. 13, Vol. III. of the Ante-Nicene Christian Library.

<sup>20</sup> History Ecclesiastical Writers, Vol. I., p. 69.

<sup>21</sup> Sacred Literature, Vol. I., p. 102.

<sup>22</sup> Ancient History of Universalism, p. 60.

<sup>23</sup> Tatian's Address to the Greeks, Chap. 25, p. 31. Ante-Nicene Christian Library, Vol. III.

mortal? Certainly not. He simply means that the flesh will be raised up, and live in the future, which the Greeks denied. In this sense we find the term "immortality of the soul" used among some of the early Christian Fathers.

Tatian plainly teaches the sleep of the dead. Thus he says: "For just as, not existing before I was born, I knew not who I was, and only existed in the potentiality of fleshly matter, but being born after a former state of nothingness, I have obtained through my birth a certainty of my existence, in the same way, having been born, and through death existing no longer, and seen no longer, I shall exist again, just as before I was not, but was afterward born."<sup>24</sup>

This language cannot be mistaken. He teaches that in death there is no more knowledge than there was before a man was born.

### Athenagoras, A. D. 180.

Of this Christian Father, Horne says, He "is the most polished and elegant author of Christian antiquity."<sup>25</sup> The following passages show that he held to the sleep of the dead: "And let no one think it strange that we call by the name of life a continuance of being which is interrupted by death and corruption. . . . I suppose some call sleep the brother of death, not as deriving their origin from the same ancestors and fathers, but because those who are dead, and those who sleep, are subject to similar states, as regards, at least, the *stillness and absence of all sense* of the present or the past, or, rather, of existence itself and their own life."<sup>26</sup> Hence, he naturally hangs all hope of a future life on the resurrection. Of man, he says: "The cause of his creation is

<sup>24</sup> Tatian's Address to the Greeks, Chap. 6, pp. 10, 11. Ante-Nicene Christian Library, Vol. III.

<sup>25</sup> Introduction, Vol. I., p. 43.

<sup>26</sup> On the Resurrection of the Dead, Chap. 16.

a pledge of his continuance forever, and this continuance is a pledge of the resurrection, *without which man could not continue.*"<sup>27</sup> Again: "But it is impossible for him to continue unless he rise again; for, if no resurrection were to take place, the nature of men, as men, would not continue."<sup>28</sup>

Athenagoras, then, still held the Bible doctrine of the sleep of the dead, and also taught, as Paul did, that if there is no resurrection, there can be no future life.<sup>29</sup>

### Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, A. D. 181.

Theophilus takes this position: "For man had been made a middle nature, neither wholly mortal, nor altogether immortal, but capable of either."<sup>30</sup> Again: "But some will say to us, Was man made by nature mortal? Certainly not. Was he, then, immortal? Neither do we affirm this. But one will say, Was he, then, nothing? Not even this hits the mark. He was by nature neither mortal nor immortal; for if He had made him immortal from the beginning, He would have made him God. Again, if He had made him mortal, God would seem to be the cause of his death. Neither, then, immortal nor yet mortal did He make him, but, as we have said above, capable of both; so that if he should incline to the things of immortality, keeping the commandments of God, he should receive, as a reward from Him, immortality, and should become God; but if, on the other hand, he should turn to the things of death, disobeying God, he should himself be the cause of death to himself."<sup>31</sup>

I commend the above to the careful attention of the reader, both as showing the faith of the church at that time, and as a very reasonable doctrine.

<sup>27</sup> Id., Chap. 13.

<sup>28</sup> Id., Chap. 15.

<sup>29</sup> See 1 Cor. 15:32.

<sup>30</sup> To Antoliceus, Book 2, Chap. 24, Ante-Nicene Christian Library, Vol. III,

<sup>31</sup> Id., Chap. 27.

What could be more reasonable than this, that God made Adam of a middle nature, capable of gaining immortality or of losing life? This is just what the Bible itself represents. See Genesis, second and third chapters. This we know was the faith of at least several of the prominent church Fathers.

The church at Antioch was raised up by the apostles, and here the disciples were first called Christians.<sup>32</sup> Theophilus was the sixth bishop of that church, which was one of the largest in all the world at that time. Besides this, says his editor, he "had a profound acquaintance with the inspired writings."<sup>33</sup> Hence, we may safely conclude that what he teaches from so high a station was the received orthodox doctrine of the church in that age. No one at that time censured him for thus teaching, so the doctrine of the immortality of the soul was not yet received by the church of God.

### **Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, A. D. 185.**

That the wicked will not always continue to exist, he states thus: "For life does not arise from us, nor from our own nature, but it is bestowed according to the grace of God. And, therefore, he who shall preserve the life bestowed upon him, and give thanks to Him who imparted it, shall receive, also, length of days forever and ever. But he who shall reject it, and prove himself ungrateful to his Maker, inasmuch as he has been created, and has not recognized Him who bestowed [the gift upon him], deprives himself of [the privilege of] continuance forever and ever."<sup>34</sup> Again he says: To those who "are full of hypocrisy, and covetousness, and all wickedness, has he assigned everlasting perdition by cutting them off from life."<sup>35</sup> He says that Christ revealed "God to men through

<sup>32</sup> Acts 11 : 22-26.

<sup>34</sup> Against Heresies, Book 2, Chap. 34.

<sup>33</sup> See Preface to his Works.

<sup>35</sup> Idem., Book 4, Chap. 11.

many dispensations, lest man, falling away from God altogether, should cease to exist." <sup>36</sup>

Of his faith Dupin says: "But he seems to have believed, as well as St. Justin, that they [souls] are immortal only through grace, and that those of the wicked shall cease to be, after they have been tormented for a long time." <sup>37</sup> The author of the *Ancient History of Universalism* confirms this statement of Irenæus's faith thus: "Here he appears to think they will be annihilated." <sup>38</sup>

Another historian says of the doctrine of Irenæus, "And yet he did not believe that they would be punished endlessly; for he undoubtedly adopted the doctrine of the final annihilation of the disobedient and unrighteous." <sup>39</sup>

In another place he argues that immortality is a gift of God through Jesus Christ. Thus he says: "The friendship of God imparts immortality to those who embrace it." <sup>40</sup> This plainly shows his faith that none will have immortality except those who are the friends of God. Once more he says to the same effect: "Men, therefore, shall see God; that they may live, being made immortal by that sight." <sup>41</sup>

Dr. Edward Beecher, in his late book on the doctrine of Scriptural Retribution, frankly confesses that Irenæus taught the annihilation of the wicked. Thus he says: "What, then, are the facts as to Irenæus? Since he has been canonized as a saint, and since he stood in such close connection with Polycarp and with John the apostle, there has been a very great reluctance to admit the real facts of the case. Mas-suetus has employed much sophistry in endeavoring to hide them. Nevertheless, as we shall clearly show hereafter, they are incontrovertibly these: That he taught a final restitution of all things to unity and

<sup>36</sup> *Idem.*, Book 4, Chap. 20. <sup>37</sup> *History*, p. 75. <sup>38</sup> P. 65, Second Edition.

<sup>39</sup> *Origin and History of the Doctrine of Endless Punishment*, p. 198.

<sup>40</sup> *Writings of Irenæus*, Book 3, Chap. 19, p. 416. *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, Vol. I.

<sup>41</sup> *Idem.*, p. 443.

order by the annihilation of all the finally impenitent. Expressed statements in his creed, and in a fragment referred to by Prof. Schaff, on universal restoration (History, Vol. I., p. 490), and in other parts of his great work against the Gnostics, prove this beyond all possibility of refutation. . . . He held that wicked men and devils would be consigned to the punishment of the world to come; and that this, at a time to be decided by the wisdom and justice of God, would result in their annihilation, and thus in the cleansing of the Universe from every form of sin."<sup>42</sup>

"It is therefore the more remarkable that the doctrine of future eternal punishment was not taught by any of this school so far as we know, nor the doctrine of universal restoration; but on the other hand, the doctrine of the final annihilation of the wicked was clearly taught by so eminent a man as Irenæus. Thus, in five out of six of the early theological schools we do not find the doctrine of eternal punishment."<sup>43</sup>

From these statements, it appears that Irenæus did not believe in the natural immortality of man, nor in the eternal conscious existence of the wicked. He was one of the most famous church Fathers, and bishop of a noted church. He was instructed by the venerable Polycarp, who had conversed with the apostle John; hence he was well acquainted with the doctrines of the apostles. The fact, then, that he taught the mortality of man and the annihilation of the wicked is an important item in this history.

### **Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, A. D. 196.**

Polycrates bears this interesting testimony: "In Asia, great lights have *fallen asleep*, which shall rise again in *the day of our Lord's appearing*, in which he will come with glory from Heaven, and will raise up all the saints; Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who

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<sup>42</sup> Pages 163, 164.

<sup>43</sup> Pages 194, 195.

*sleeps* in Hierapolis, and his two aged virgin daughters; . . . moreover, the blessed Papirius, and Melito, the eunuch, whose walk and conversation were together under the influence of the Holy Spirit, who now rests at Sarais, awaiting the episcopate from Heaven, *when he shall rise from the dead.*"<sup>44</sup> Here we have this ancient bishop of a church which Paul had planted and Timothy watered, and where John died, bearing a good witness to the faith of the church in that age in the sleep of the dead, the advent of Christ, and the resurrection. These saints were not in Heaven, but asleep, waiting for Christ.

### The Lucianists.

Buck, in his "Theological Dictionary," mentions a sect, about this time, called the Lucianists, who denied the immortality of the soul. Of their leader he says, "He denied the immortality of the soul, asserting it to be material."<sup>45</sup>

In all stages of the history of the church we find witnesses for God's truth on this subject.

### The Hermogenians.

Neander, in his "History of the Christian Religion," mentions the Hermogenians, who denied the immortality of the soul. Of their leader he says: "At all events, Hermogenes denied the natural immortality of the soul, and regarded immortality only as a consequence of the new divine life imparted by Christ; hence he considers believers only to be immortal. All evil, evil spirits, and men who have not become partakers of the divine life, were finally to be resolved into the matter from whence they originally

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<sup>44</sup> Eusebius, Book 5, Chap. 2.

<sup>45</sup> Art. Lucianists.

sprang.”<sup>46</sup> Here we have still another evidence that this doctrine always had adherents in the Christian church.

### The Arabians, A. D. 244-249.

As we have shown in another chapter, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul began quite largely to be received by professed Christians in the first half of the third century. The primitive Scriptural doctrine of the mortality of man and the sleep of the dead, was now quite largely abandoned. Yet here and there we find, as late as this, those who had not yet apostatized from the Bible faith, though they were so few as to be counted heretics. Thus of the Arabians, A. D. 244-249, Eusebius writes:—

“But about this time, also, other men sprung up in Arabia as the propagators of false opinions. These asserted that the human soul, as long as the present state of the world existed, perished at death and died with the body, but that it would be raised again with the body at the time of the resurrection. And as a considerable council was held on account of this, Origen, being *again* requested, likewise *here* discussed the point in question with so much force that those who had been before led astray, completely changed their opinions.”<sup>47</sup>

1. They denied all consciousness of the dead till the resurrection. 2. Both soul and body were to live again at the resurrection. 3. The believers in this doctrine were so numerous as to require “a considerable council” to put them down; hence their number and influence must have been large. 4. “Origen, being *again* requested, likewise *here* discussed the point in question,” says Eusebius. This shows that Origen had, in other places and before this, been

<sup>46</sup> Vol. II., p. 618.

<sup>47</sup> Eusebius Ecclesiastical History, Book 6, Chap. 37, p. 253.

called upon to defend his doctrine of the immortality of the soul. We have seen that it was chiefly through his great influence that it came into the church. The learned Dr. Neander thus candidly states the facts in the above case: "We must, however," he says, "still mention that among the Christians of Arabia at that time, a party had caused a controversy, by maintaining that the soul died with the body, and that it would be raised again only at the general resurrection, at the same time with the body. *It was an old Jewish notion* that immortality was not founded upon the nature of the soul, but was a peculiar gift of divine grace; a representation which had been transferred from Judaism to Christianity, traces of which we find in the theory of the Gnostics about the nature of the Psychici, in the doctrine of Clementine, and in the opinions of Justin and Tatian. Perhaps, also, in this district, the position of which placed it in close connection with the Jews, it was no new doctrine, but the predominant one from ancient times; and perhaps the influence of Origen (in whose system the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul necessarily obtained a place) *first* effected the change that this latter should obtain universal acceptance among the church teachers of that district; and that the small party, which still maintained the old opinion, should appear heretical, although the predominant opinion had previously really pronounced itself against it (the new opinion). Hence, we may understand how the convocation of a *great synod* was considered necessary in order to allay these controversies. When they were unable to agree, Origen was invited by the synod, and his influence prevailed upon the opposers of the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul, to acknowledge their error and renounce it."<sup>48</sup>

These admissions from such an eminent historian

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<sup>48</sup> Neander's Church History, Vol. I., Sec. 5, p. 444.

as Dr. Neander fully confirm all I have claimed on this question. It will be remembered that Neander was a converted Jew, and hence well qualified to state what was the original Jewish doctrine of immortality. The Arabians held to the old and ancient doctrine of the people of God, the sleep of the dead, and denied the immortality of the soul. It was not till the middle of the third century, and even then only by a mighty effort, that they were drawn from it. Dr. Good confirms Neander's statements, by saying that the Arabians never believed in the immortality of the soul.<sup>49</sup>

### Arnobius, A. D. 300.

This author, in his large work, "Against the Heathens," shows that he still holds to the old faith; for he says that the wicked will "be thrown into torrents of fire, amidst dark caverns and whirlpools, where they shall at length be annihilated, and vanish in perpetual extinction."<sup>50</sup> He held that man was of a middle nature, neither mortal nor immortal, but capable of either condition.<sup>51</sup>

Of Arnobius, Dupin remarks: "He takes occasion from thence to discourse of the nature of souls; he pretends that they are of a middle quality between a spirit and a body, that they are by nature mortal, but that God of his goodness immortalizes the souls of those who repose their confidence in him. He confutes Plato's notions concerning the soul's immortality, and its excellency, dignity, exile, or imprisonment in the body. He supposes that it is corporeal and *extraduce*; that man is but very little different from the beasts; that his soul is mortal by nature, but that it becomes immortal by the grace of God."<sup>52</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Book of Science, Series 3, Lecture 2, p. 372.

<sup>50</sup> Book 2, pp. 52, 53, quoted in Ancient History of Universalism, Chap. 6, p. 152.

<sup>51</sup> Book 2, Chaps. 35, 36.

<sup>52</sup> History of Ecclesiastical Writers, Vol. I., p. 147.

Thus Arnobius writes: "Wherefore, we should not be deceived or deluded with vain hopes, by that which a new class of men, elated with an extravagant opinion of themselves, tell us that souls are immortal, next in rank of dignity to the Supreme God, derived from him as Creator and Father, divine, wise, inspired with knowledge, and free from stain of gross matter."<sup>53</sup>

Here is a square condemnation of the whole doctrine of the soul's immortality as now taught. Arnobius condemns it as an extravagant opinion of man's nature. He says it was then being introduced by a new class of men, which shows that it was not the old doctrine of the church.

That he taught the annihilation of the wicked is admitted by that great scholar, Prof. Shedd. He says: "The annihilation of the wicked was taught by Arnobius."<sup>54</sup>

Thus we see the leading men in the church all through the first centuries denying the immortality of the soul, but teaching the annihilation of the wicked.

Dr. Beecher says of Arnobius, "We now come to Arnobius; but his case need not detain us long as to the historic fact; for it is denied by no one that he taught the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked."<sup>55</sup>

### The Fathers in General.

Of the early Fathers and their faith, Dr. Priestly, LL. D., F. R. S., says: "It was the opinion of most of the early Fathers that the world was to be destroyed by fire, and also that all men were to pass through this fire; that the good would be purified by it, and the wicked consumed." He further says:

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<sup>53</sup> Adv. Gentes, 1, 2, cc. 14, 15.

<sup>54</sup> The Doctrine of Scriptural Retribution, by Edward Beecher, p. 121.

<sup>55</sup> Idem., p. 216.

“The Gnostics are said to have maintained that the greatest part of mankind would be annihilated at the day of Judgment, which was probably the same thing that was meant by those who said that they would be consumed in the fire that was to destroy the world.”<sup>56</sup> “The ancient fathers only thought that when this world would be destroyed by fire, that fire would purify the good, and devour the wicked.”<sup>57</sup>

It was the faith of the early church, as this learned author says above, that the wicked will be destroyed by the fire that finally purifies the earth. This is the teaching of Peter.<sup>58</sup>

Thus we have traced the history of the doctrine of the immortality of man, the sleep of the dead, and the annihilation of the wicked from the days of the apostles down through the first, second, and third centuries, and even into the beginning of the fourth century. During these three centuries we have found many of the most noted Christian writers, fathers, and bishops of the church, holding these doctrines, and teaching them as the common faith of the church in those days. It is noticeable that the advocacy of these doctrines called forth no opposition or words of censure from any party, as being new or heretical. The effort of Origen against it is the first of the kind on record. No public disapproval of the doctrine is met with for several ages, though it was extensively held and taught, as we have seen. This shows that it was not regarded as heterodox in those days.

### **From the Third Century to the Reformation.**

From the close of the third and the beginning of the fourth century, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul seems to have become quite generally es-

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<sup>56</sup> Corruption of Christianity, Vol. I., pp. 411-413.

<sup>57</sup> Idem., p. 414.

<sup>58</sup> 2 Pet. 3.

established in the church as an orthodox dogma, though very many of the doctrines growing out of it were not at once seen and believed. Several learned historians say that Tertullian, A. D. 200–220, was the first Christian writer who expressly asserted the unending torments of the damned.<sup>59</sup> He was originally a pagan in belief, and by birth an African. He was of a fierce, fiery, rigid temper,—a fit man to father such a doctrine. He thus exults over the prospect of the pagans burning in hell: “How shall I admire, how laugh, how rejoice, how exult, when I behold so many proud monarchs, so many fancied gods, groaning in the lowest abyss of darkness; so many magistrates who persecuted the name of the Lord liquifying in fiercer fires than they ever kindled against the Christians; so many sage philosophers blushing in red-hot flames with their deluded scholars.”<sup>60</sup> After quoting this, Gibbon exclaims: “The humanity of the reader will permit me to draw a veil over the rest of this infernal description.”<sup>61</sup> But even this description has been surpassed in modern times by believers in the same awful doctrine.

Cyprian, the disciple and successor of Tertullian, zealously advocated the same doctrine. By their authority it obtained a firm foothold in the church. Of them an eminent historian says: “In order to ascertain the degree of authority which the zealous African [Tertullian] had acquired, it may be sufficient to allege the testimony of Cyprian, the doctor and guide of all the Western churches. As often as he applied himself to his daily study of the writings of Tertullian, he was accustomed to say, ‘Give me my master.’”<sup>62</sup>

Says Neander, “Indeed, in many respects Tertul-

<sup>59</sup> *Ancient History of Universalism*, Chap. 3, p. 80; *Origin and History of the Doctrine of Endless Punishment*, Chap. 6, p. 198; and Prof. Hudson, *Debt and Grace*, Chap. 8, p. 326.

<sup>60</sup> *Gibbon's Decline and Fall*, Vol. I., Chap. 15, p. 538. <sup>61</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

lian stands generally at the line of demarkation between the old and the new time of the Christian church." <sup>63</sup> This was certainly true with regard to the doctrine of the future punishment of the wicked, to which he gave an entirely new idea.

Augustine, A. D. 415, was the first writer who attempted to prove that the Greek word *αιωνιος*, *aionios*, everlasting, strictly signified endless, and hence to conclude that sinners would be eternally tormented! Says the historian: "Augustine who flourished about A. D. 400-430, was the first to argue that *aionios* signified endless."<sup>64</sup>

Dr. Edward Beecher says on this point: "It is also worthy of note that, although this [an African school] is a Latin school, yet it was in this that the argument, now so familiar, for eternal punishment, from the necessary meaning of the word *αιωνιος*, *aionios*, was first distinctly propounded by Augustine."<sup>65</sup> He then gives the occasion which called forth this argument from Augustine. This was as late as the year 413. Strange to say, Augustine, the author of this famous criticism on the Greek word *αιωνιος*, *aionios*, was almost wholly ignorant of the Greek, as he himself confessed! He says, "I am not so accustomed to the Greek language that I am at all competent to read and understand books on such subjects" (*De Trinitate*, iii., *Proem*); and again: "I have learned very little of the Greek language," (*Contra literas Petilianii*, I., ii., c. 38.)<sup>66</sup>

Thus, step by step, history points out the birth and growth of these heathen doctrines in the church of Christ.

From this time the fogs and mists of what deepened into the gloom of the Dark Ages began to settle down upon the church and the world. The light of Bible truth was almost wholly obscured. Errors and

<sup>63</sup> Church History, p. 110.

<sup>64</sup> Origin and History of Endless Punishment, p. 204.

<sup>65</sup> Doctrine of Scriptural Retribution, Chap. 28, p. 240.

<sup>66</sup> Idem., p. 251.

heathen doctrines grew luxuriantly. Hence, for several centuries after this we find but few traces of the Scriptural doctrine of man's nature and destiny. Here and there are historical references which show that there were some all along the ages who had more or less light upon the subject. But the church was now in the wilderness (Rev. 12:14), and God's servants were hidden away in the mountains, where they were seldom heard from.

Gregory the Great (a pope), in A. D. 590, in one of his books, says Dupin, "undertakes to treat of the state of the soul after death, and to refute the opinion of some, who, without separating from the church, doubted whether the soul lived after its separation from the body." By this we may suppose that numerous believers, in standing in the Christian church, held to the doctrine of the unconscious state of the dead. No names are given, and we are not told that the believers of this sort wrote books in defense of their views.<sup>67</sup>

John, of Damascus, who died about A. D. 750, refers to a sect that flourished in his day, called the Thnetopsychites, "who," says Dupin, "believe men's souls to be like the beasts, and that they die with them."<sup>68</sup> The name of these believers is one given by John himself, and it is not stated that they formed a sect.

Maimonides, a very learned Jewish doctor, A. D. 1131-1202, taught that the wicked would finally be cut off from life eternal, and suffer excision, or annihilation of being. This extermination of being is regarded as the greatest of all punishments. He denied the immortality of the soul, though he held that the righteous would live forever. Some of the other Jewish doctors believed in the eternity of hell torments; but Prof. Hudson asserts that this view was never "an accepted Jewish doctrine." The Mishna makes no mention of the soul's immortality, nor of

<sup>67</sup> See Dupin, Vol. I., p. 581.

<sup>68</sup> Idem., Vol. II., p. 37.

eternal pain; on the contrary, the soul, body, and spirit of evil men were finally to be totally destroyed.<sup>69</sup>

Averroes, a famous Arabian philosopher in A. D. 1160, "rejected," says Ezra Abbot, in Alger's "Future Life," "the doctrine of individual immortality." Further than this, we do not know his views. He was persecuted for his belief. His views may have been the fruit of the seed sown very early in the days of the Arabian soul-sleepers, won over by the learning and subtlety of Origen.

Pope Boniface VIII., chosen to the papal see in 1294, appears to have questioned the soul's immortality. In June, 1302, at an assembly of prelates and nobility, in presence of the king of France, William Du Plessis and four French earls charged upon the pope "that he was an heretic; that he did not believe in the immortality of the soul, nor in eternal life; and that he doubted the reality of our Lord's body in the eucharist."<sup>70</sup>

Pope Leo X. had, by the Lateran Council of 1513, declared the human soul immortal, and this belief to be an article of the Christian faith. All who rejected it were heretics.<sup>71</sup>

These references all along show that some persons were teaching views contrary to the doctrine of the soul's immortality, though no names are given.

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<sup>69</sup> Debt and Grace, pp. 335, 342.

<sup>70</sup> See Dupin, Vol. II., p. 492; also Bower, Vol. II., p. 53.

<sup>71</sup> For several of the above quotations, I am indebted to Eld. D. T. Taylor, in the appendix to the first edition of my work on the Immortality of the Soul.



## CHAPTER XI.

### *During the Reformation.*

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**T**HIS brings us to the time of the Reformation, when, once more, we find the doctrine of the soul's immortality, purgatory, eternal torment, conscious state of the dead, etc., called in question and rejected.

From a canon enacted in the Lateran Council, under Leo X., 1513, it appears that some persons were denying the immortality of man. Thus says the Council: "Whereas, in these our days, some have dared to assert, concerning the nature of the reasonable soul, that it is mortal, or one and the same in all men; and some, rather philosophizing declare this to be true, at least according to philosophy, we, with the approbation of the sacred council, do condemn and reprobate all those who assert that the intellectual soul is mortal."<sup>1</sup> This shows that the question was being discussed. We also see how ready Rome was to defend its pet child.

### **Luther.**

In 1520, Luther published forty-one propositions in favor of his position. In the twenty-seventh, he says thus: "I permit the pope to make articles of faith for himself and his faithful; such as, the bread and wine are transubstantiated in the sacrament; the essence of God neither generates nor is generated; the

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<sup>1</sup>Historical View of the Controversy Concerning an Intermediate State, by Archdeacon Blackburne, London, 1772, Chap. 2, p. 6.

soul is the substantial form of the body; the pope is the emperor of the world, and the king of Heaven, and God upon earth; *the soul is immortal*; with all those monstrous opinions to be found in the Roman dunghill of decretals."<sup>2</sup>

This indicates very plainly that the great reformer believed the immortality of the soul to be only a child of the pope. I think it can be shown that Luther did embrace the doctrine of the sleep of the dead. I will present some of the evidence for the reader's consideration:—

1. We see that Luther calls the doctrine of the soul's immortality a "monstrous opinion." 2. Cardinal Du Perron says: "Luther held that the soul died with the body, and that God would hereafter raise both the one and the other."<sup>3</sup> 3. A Lutheran minister denied this charge, and in refuting it, said: "The origin of this calumny is a letter he [Luther] wrote to Amsdorf in the year 1522, in which he appears much more inclined to believe that the souls of the just sleep to the day of Judgment, without knowing where they are. He does not pretend to say that they are dead in this interval, but only lie in a profound rest and sleep, in which opinion he followed many Fathers of the ancient church."<sup>4</sup>

We could ask no better confession than this to Luther's faith in the sleep of the soul. It also confesses that this was the faith of the ancient Fathers. 4. Another learned writer, speaking of the appearance of ghosts in 1534, says: "But after Luther's doctrine came to be understood, and had gained a little strength, this kind of specters by degrees vanished away. For Luther teaches from the Scriptures, that the souls of the dead are at rest, waiting for the final day of Judgment."<sup>5</sup> Here is another witness exactly

<sup>2</sup>Idem., Chap. 4, pp. 13, 14.

<sup>3</sup>Perroniana au Motte (Luther), quoted in Historical View, p. 344.

<sup>4</sup>Idem., p. 347; also Bayle's Dictionary, art. Luther.

<sup>5</sup>Sleidan Comment., L. 9, pp. 239-242, quoted in Historical View, Chap. 6, p. 23.

harmonizing with the others. 5. Dr. Priestly says: "The Helvetic convention condemns all those who believe the sleep of the soul, which shows that a considerable number must have maintained it. Luther himself was of this opinion, though whether he died in it, has been doubted."<sup>6</sup> 6. Dr. Alger says of Luther: "It is probable that the great reformer's opinion on this point was not always the same; for he says distinctly, 'The first man who died, when he awakes at the last day, will think he has been asleep but an hour.'"<sup>7</sup> 7. The papists accused Luther, and said that he taught thus: "We can now find out a better way to abolish purgatory, the mass, and the Roman pontiff, than by saying that the soul and body die together." Such was the opinion of this gentleman. And then, afterward, to confirm this doctrine, came out public theses, printed and disputed in Geneva, in the year 1558, wherein were these words: "All that is said concerning the immortality of the soul," said this proponent, "is nothing else but an invention of Anti-christ, to make his pot boil."<sup>8</sup> 8. Luther's comment on Eccl. 9 : 10 plainly shows that he believed in the sleep of the dead. These are his words: "For in the grave is no work, etc.—*another condition*, because the dead know nothing. Therefore Solomon thinks that the dead are wholly asleep, and utterly unconscious. There the dead will rest, not *remembering the days or the years*; but when raised up they will seem to themselves to have slept scarcely a moment." Again, commenting on Gen. 25 : 8, he says: "So the spirit, after death, enters the abode of its rest, and, sleeping, is unconscious of its slumber; and yet God preserves the watchful spirit. God is able to raise up Elias and Moses, etc., and thus to ordain that they shall live. But in what way we

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<sup>6</sup> Corruptions of Christians, Vol. I., Lond., 1782, Sec. 3, p. 424.

<sup>7</sup> Doctrine of a Future Life, Part 4, Chap. 3, p. 431, Note.

<sup>8</sup> Bayle's Dictionary, art. Luther,

do not know. The likeness of corporeal sleep suffices, and that God declares the sleep to be quiet and repose."

We might quote other comments from him to the same effect; but these plainly show that he believed in the sleep of the dead. Put these facts and testimonies together, and it clearly appears that the great reformer believed in the mortality of the soul, and the unconscious state of the dead. He used this truth, too, against the Romish doctrines of purgatory and saint worship. Archdeacon Blackburne, of the Episcopal church, in the appendix to his "Historical View," has given many quotations from Luther upon this subject, to which the reader is referred, if he desires further proof.

Moreover, Blackburne, Priestly, and others are of opinion that Luther's doctrine would have been generally received by Protestants, had it not been for the opposition and authority of Calvin.

### Thousands Embrace the Faith.

Very many of the early reformers embraced the doctrine of the sleep of the dead, and defended it in books and arguments. This appears from what Calvin was stirred up to write against them, which he did at first in a very harsh, violent style, in a tract called "*Psychopannychia*." In the preface, he says: "Long ago, when certain pious persons invited, and even urged me, to publish something for the purpose of suppressing the extravagance of those who alike ignorantly and tumultuously maintain that the *soul dies or sleeps*, I could not be induced by all their urging, so averse did I feel to engage in that kind of dispute. At that time, indeed, I was not without excuse, partly because I hoped that that absurd dogma would soon vanish of its own accord, or at least be confined to a few triflers. . . . The result, however, has been different from what I hoped. These babblers have so *actively exerted* themselves, that they

have already drawn thousands into their insanity." "They are said to circulate their follies in a kind of tracts, which I have not happened to see." This is dated, Orleans, 1534.

From the above, we see that, 1. This doctrine had been advocated "long" before he wrote. 2. It was not confined to "a few triflers." 3. Its advocates "actively exerted themselves" in spreading the doctrine, by publishing books, etc. 4. It was gaining ground so fast that "thousands" had already received it. But it seems that Calvin himself did not yet realize how extensively it had spread, and that "some good men" had received it. Hence, his book gave much offense. So, in another edition of his book, dated Basil, 1536, he says: "On again reading this discussion, I observe that, in the heat of argument, some rather severe and harsh expressions have escaped me, which may perhaps give offense to delicate ears; and as I know that *there are some good men* into whose mind some parts of this dogma have been instilled, either from excessive credulity, or ignorance of Scriptures with which, at the time, they were not armed so as to be able to resist, I am unwilling to give them offense so far as they will allow me, since they are neither perverse nor malicious in their error." Says Dr. Priestly: "It was, however, the firm belief of so many of the reformers of that age, that had it not been for the authority of Calvin, who wrote expressly against it, the doctrine of an intermediate state would, in all probability, have been as effectually exploded as the doctrine of purgatory itself."<sup>9</sup>

Duke George, of Saxony, wrote to his brother Frederick, complaining that, in consequence of Luther's teachings, this doctrine was spreading among his people. Says Milner, in his "Church History:" "In a letter written with his own hand, he [George]

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<sup>9</sup> Corruptions of Christians, Vol. I., Sec. 3, p. 424.

complains heavily to this prince of the heretical transactions at Wittemberg and Zwickau, and of the remissness of his brother, the elector. The faithful clergy were insulted, and even pelted with stones, while those of the Lutheran sect married wives, and wrote books in defense of the marriages of the monks. There were even some who were destitute of all religion, and *denied the immortality of the soul*. All these evils, said he, proceed from the moral doctrines of the arch-heretic [Luther]; and gave him the more pain, since he had found the contagion spreading among his own subjects."<sup>10</sup> Here again we see the denial of the immortality of the soul spreading among the reformers, and it is, by all, ascribed to Luther. The same doctrine, also, was advocated by certain Protestants in Italy.<sup>11</sup>

### William Tyndale.

William Tyndale, the great English reformer and translator of the Bible, was a believer in the sleep of the dead. In 1530 he answered Sir Thomas More's Dialogue. More objected to Luther that he held "that all souls lie and sleep till doomsday." We would expect that, if this were not Luther's doctrine, Tyndale would have denied it. Instead of that, however, he proceeds to defend it, both as the doctrine of Luther and of the Bible, thus: "And ye, in putting them [departed souls] in Heaven, hell, and purgatory, destroy the arguments wherewith Christ and Paul prove the resurrection. What God doth with them, that shall we know when we come to them. The true faith putteth the resurrection, which we be warned to look for every hour. The heathen philosophers, denying *that*, did put, that the souls did ever live. And the pope joineth the spiritual doctrine of Christ, and the fleshly doctrine of philosophers

<sup>10</sup> Vol. II., p. 356.

<sup>11</sup> Bayle's Dictionary, art. Luther.

together, things so contrary that they cannot agree, any more than the spirit and the flesh do in a Christian man. And because the fleshly-minded pope consenteth unto heathen doctrines, therefore he corrupteth the Scripture to establish it." "If the souls be in Heaven, tell me why they be not in as good case as the angels be. And then, what cause is there of the resurrection?"<sup>12</sup>

This shows that Tyndale did not believe that souls go to Heaven at death, but that they sleep till the resurrection. He argues correctly that the opposite doctrine destroys the resurrection. He also agrees with Luther that the immortality of the soul was a popish doctrine borrowed from the heathen. Again, More says: "What shall he care how long he live in sin, that believeth Luther, that he shall after this life feel neither good nor evil in body nor soul, until the day of doom?" Tyndale answers: "Christ and his apostles taught no other, but warned to look for Christ's coming again every hour, which coming again, because ye believe will never be, therefore have ye feigned that other merchandise."<sup>13</sup> This plainly shows what was the doctrine of the first reformers upon this subject.

But all the ability and authority of Calvin were brought to bear against the doctrine of the mortality of the soul and sleep of the dead. He established a school of theology at Geneva, which became very famous, and attracted students from all parts of Europe; and the doctrine of immortality, as there taught, gradually came to be considered the orthodox doctrine of the various Protestant churches. Many things conspired to bring this around. The reformers were accused of overturning and denying all religion. Hence, many doctrines and practices of Rome, which they were at first inclined to reject, were finally re-

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<sup>12</sup>Tyndale's Works, published by Fox, 1573, p. 324.

<sup>13</sup>Idem., p. 327.

tained to avoid offense. In all but what they considered vital points, they took this compromising course. Melancthon, especially, was noted for this.

### Opposition in England.

“The honor of first condemning this tenet [the sleep of the soul] was reserved for our English reformers, who, in the fortieth of King Edward’s articles, composed in the year 1552, and published the year following, expressed themselves thus:—

“‘They who say that the souls of such as depart hence do sleep, being without all sense, feeling, and perceiving, until the day of Judgment, or affirm that the souls die with the bodies, and at the last day, shall be raised up with the same, do utterly dissent from the right belief declared unto us in the holy Scriptures.’”<sup>14</sup>

This shows that the doctrine had become sufficiently extended to claim the attention of that honorable body. In the year 1566, was published the second Helvetic confession, fabricated entirely upon the Calvinistic plan. A part of Article XV runs thus: “We hold that man consists of two, and those different, substances in one person: of an immortal soul, seeing that, being separated from the body, it neither sleeps nor dies; and of a mortal body which yet, at the last Judgment, shall be raised from the dead, that the whole man, from thenceforward, may remain to eternity, either in life or death. We condemn all who scoff at the immortality of the soul, or bring it into doubt by subtle disputations, or who say that the soul sleeps.”<sup>15</sup>

This shows that all previous efforts had failed to put down those who denied the immortality of the soul. Article XXVI of the same confession says:

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<sup>14</sup>Blackburne’s Historical View, Chap. 8, p. 34.    <sup>15</sup>Idem., Chap. 9, p. 37.

“We believe that the faithful migrate directly from their corporeal death to Christ. . . . We also believe that the wicked are directly precipitated into hell.” This is the first public avowal, by a Protestant church, of the belief that the saints go directly to Heaven at death. Thus, they directly contradicted Tyndale, Luther, the early Fathers, and the Bible.

### The Early Baptists.

Mosheim mentions the “General Baptists,” who flourished in England in the sixteenth century. In enumerating the articles of their faith, he says: “VI. They believed that the soul, between death and the resurrection at the last day, has neither pleasure nor pain, but is in a state of insensibility.” Of their number, he says that they “*are dispersed in great numbers over many provinces of England.*”<sup>16</sup> Here we have the whole of a large sect of the early Protestants believing in the sleep of the soul. And even in Scotland we find that there were believers in the sleep of the dead, who had made some stir there. In the year 1560, the Scotch drew up a confession of faith which was ratified by Parliament. Article XVII reads thus:—

“The elect departed are in peace, and rest from their labors, not that they sleep and come to a certain oblivion, as some fanatics do affirm.”<sup>17</sup> This shows that “soul sleepers” were well known in Scotland, as well as in England, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and throughout Christendom. Indeed, from that time forward until the present, an animated discussion upon the subject of the nature of the soul, condition of the dead, and the punishment of the wicked, has been carried forward in the church and out, among all the civilized nations. Every few

<sup>16</sup> Murdock's Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, Vol. III., Book 4, Cent. 16, p. 218.

<sup>17</sup> Blackburne's Historical View, p. 39.

years books by different authors, issued from different places and in different languages, advocating the sleep of the dead and the destruction of the wicked, both upon philosophical and Scriptural grounds, have been put forth. Many of these authors were learned men in high positions in the church and in the State. They spoke out boldly against the heathen doctrine of the immortality of man. These works, in turn, have called forth answers from the other side, advocating the immortality of the soul. Quite a complete list of these works, with a brief notice of their authors, may be found in a catalogue of works upon this subject, by Ezra Abbott, in an appendix to "Alger's Doctrine of a Future Life."

### The Socinians.

Another large sect of the early reformers, called the "Socinians," also denied the immortality of the soul, and held to the sleep of the dead and the annihilation of the wicked. Of the good character of this sect, Bayle says: "It is a matter of public notoriety that, in respect to morals, no sect has approached more nearly to the simplicity and strictness of the early Christians than the Socinians."<sup>18</sup> Mosheim says that they taught that "those who obey the voice of this divine teacher,—and all can obey it, if so disposed,—being clad in other bodies, shall hereafter forever inhabit the blessed abode where God resides; those who do otherwise, being consumed by exquisite torments, will at length sink into *entire annihilation*."<sup>19</sup> Alger, in his "History of the Doctrine of a Future Life," says of them: "The Socinian doctrine, relative to the future fate of man, . . . declared that the wicked, after suffering excruciating agonies,

<sup>18</sup> Quoted by Hudson, Debt and Grace, p. 350.

<sup>19</sup> Murdock's Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, Vol. III., Book 4, Cent. 16, p. 288. See also, Adam's View of all Religions, p. 259, art. Socinians.

would be annihilated. Respecting the second coming of Christ, a physical resurrection of the dead, and a day of Judgment, the Socinians believed with the other sects.<sup>20</sup> This sect originated in the time of the Reformation. Says Mosheim: "Few are unap-  
prised that the first originators of the Socinian scheme possessed fine talents and much erudition."<sup>21</sup>

They also held to the sleep of the dead. The Religious Encyclopedia thus states their faith upon this point: "Many of them also reject the spirituality and separate existence of the soul, believing that man is wholly material, and that our only prospect of immortality is from the Christian doctrine of a resurrection. Of course, the notion of an intermediate state of consciousness between death and the resurrection is rejected; for, as the whole man dies, so the whole man is to be called again to life at the appointed period of the resurrection, with the same association that he had while alive; the intermediate portion of time having been passed by him in a state of utter insensibility."<sup>22</sup>

This is the Bible doctrine, exactly and well stated. The New American Cyclopedic<sup>23</sup> gives the following facts in the rise and history of this denomination: "L. Socinus was an Italian theological writer of the noble house of the Sozzini, born 1525. He was highly educated, accomplished in the original languages of the Bible, an acute critic, and fearless in the pursuit of truth. He was also very wealthy." Of him Mosheim says: He was "a man of uncommon genius and learning; to which he added, as his very enemies were obliged to acknowledge, the luster of a virtuous life and unblemished manners."<sup>24</sup> He traveled over all Europe, and received the friendship of

<sup>20</sup> Part 4, Chap. 3, p. 428.

<sup>21</sup> Murdock's Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, Vol. III., Part 2, Chap. 4, p. 240. Also, Haywood's Book of All Religions, art. Socinians.

<sup>22</sup> Art. Socinianism.

<sup>23</sup> Art. Socinus.

<sup>24</sup> Ecclesiastical History, Book 4, Sec. 3, Chap. 4, p. 502.

Melancthon, Caloni, and other reformers. He died at Zurich, 1562.

His nephew, Faustus Socinus, born 1539, embraced the views of his uncle, and in 1577, at Basle, began publicly to proclaim them. Of course, he met with opposition. He went into Transylvania, and finally into Poland, where he married into a noble family. Here the ruling families embraced his views, and gave power, influence, and protection to his converts. Says Mosheim: "Under the auspicious protection of such a spirited and insinuating chief, the little flock, that had been hitherto destitute of strength, resolution, and courage, grew apace, and suddenly rose to a high degree of credit and influence. Its number was augmented by proselytes of all ranks and orders. Of these, some were distinguished by their nobility, others by their opulence, some by their address, and many by their learning and eloquence."<sup>25</sup> A university for theological training was founded at Cracow, and endowed by the owner of the city. From thence went out many learned missionaries to other parts of Europe. A strong foot-hold was obtained in Transylvania, where numerous churches were raised up. Many of these continue to this day, and are protected by law.

Unfortunately, the Socinians embraced extreme Unitarian views on the nature of Christ. This served largely to hinder the propagation of the Biblical truths which they held concerning the state of the dead and the nature of man.

### A Book.

In 1644, an excellent little work came out, having this title: "A Treatise, wherein it is Proved, both theologically and philosophically, that the Whole

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<sup>25</sup> *Idem.*, p. 508.

Man is a Compound wholly Mortal," etc. It was signed, R. O. It provoked considerable controversy. A second edition was printed at London, 1655.

### Locke.

In the last half of the seventeenth century flourished that great Christian philosopher, John Locke, of England. In religious principles he was a Puritan. He was one among the few intellectual giants of the world, a ripe scholar, a profound reasoner, a friend and companion of the most renowned men of his time, a voluminous writer, and a man of world-wide fame. Of him the New American Cyclopedia says: "Early imbued with a zeal for liberty and with the principles of a severe morality, his whole life was a warfare against the enemies of freedom in speculation, freedom in worship, and freedom from every unnecessary political restraint."<sup>26</sup>

This great man took a bold stand against the immortality of the soul, and its immateriality. He made a clear and forcible argument against these heathen fables, and against the conscious state of the dead, as any one may see in his excellent book, "The Reasonableness of Christianity." We quote only a few sentences.

Thus he says: "And by this fall, he [Adam] lost paradise, wherein were tranquility and the tree of life, that is, he lost bliss and immortality."<sup>27</sup> Again: "But an exclusion from paradise, and loss of immortality, is the portion of sinners."<sup>28</sup> Of the death threatened in Gen. 2:17, he says: "I must confess, by death here, I can understand nothing but a *ceasing to be* (that is, the losing of all actions of life and

<sup>26</sup> Art. Lock.

<sup>27</sup> Reasonableness of Christianity, Sec. 1, p. 3.

<sup>28</sup> Idem., p. 12.

sense).”<sup>29</sup> Again: “But it seems a strange way of understanding a law (which requires the plainest and directest words), that by *death* should be meant eternal life in misery.”<sup>30</sup> Again Mr. Locke says: “But when man was turned out [of paradise], he was exposed to the toil, anxiety, and frailties of this mortal life, which should end in *dust*, out of which he was made, and to which he should return, and then have no more life or sense than the dust had.”<sup>31</sup>

This was a heavy blow in the right place, and it had its effects.

### John Milton.

In the middle of the seventeenth century lived that eminent Christian poet, the great John Milton, author of “Paradise Lost.” Whoever has read that work must feel that, as a man, he was largely imbued with the Spirit of God. He wrote many other works besides this. In 1655-58 he wrote his “Treatise on Christian Doctrine.” In Chap. 12, Vol. I., he devotes a lengthy argument to proving the total unconsciousness of man from the time of death until the coming of Christ and the resurrection. He sustains his argument by sound reasoning and abundant quotations from the Scriptures. His works have had a wide circulation, as all know; and this treatise on the “State of the Dead” has enlightened many souls upon this subject. It has been republished in America, both in the East and in the West, and hundreds of thousands of copies have been sold. The reader will notice, as we proceed, that some of the greatest minds, the ripest scholars, and the most devoted Christians in the world have been believers in the sleep of the dead.

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<sup>29</sup> Idem., p. 5.

<sup>30</sup> Idem., p. 4.

<sup>31</sup> Idem., p. 6.

### Bishop Taylor.

Bishop Jeremy Taylor, of the Episcopal church, did not believe in the natural immortality of the soul, as may be seen by the following: "Whatsoever had a beginning can also have an ending, and it shall die, unless it be daily watered from the stream flowing from the fountain of life, and refreshed with the dew of Heaven; and therefore God had prepared a tree in paradise, to have supported Adam in his artificial immortality. Immortality was not in his nature."<sup>32</sup>

### Archbishop Tillotson.

In 1690, Archbishop Tillotson preached a famous sermon on the eternity of hell torments. This sermon created a great commotion in the theological world. He maintained that, though God has *threatened* impenitent sinners with eternal punishment, yet he keeps the right of punishing in his own hand, and may remit the penalty. This, as all saw, was virtually abandoning the doctrine of eternal torment. And it was so construed. Coming from so high a dignitary, it produced a great commotion among the advocates of an endless hell. He admitted that the doctrine of the "immortality of the soul was rather supposed, or taken for granted, than expressly revealed in the Bible."<sup>33</sup>

### Stosch.

On the continent, Frederick W. Stosch published, at Berlin and Amsterdam, in 1692, a work of 124 pages, which "maintains the materiality of the soul, and

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Hudson's Debt and Grace, p. 311.

<sup>33</sup> Sermons, Vol. XI., p. 4892.

denies the doctrine of endless punishment." The book was suppressed by the government, and was the cause of much trouble to the bold author.

### **Dr. Coward.**

In 1702, Dr. William Coward, London, published a book with this title: "Second Thoughts concerning Human Soul, demonstrating the Notion of Human Soul, as Believed to be a Spiritual, Immortal Substance United to the Human Body, to be a Plain Heathenish Invention." Of this able scholar and Christian, Alger says: "The famous Dr. Coward, and a few supporters, labored with much zeal, skill, and show of learning to prove the natural mortality of the soul."<sup>34</sup> In 1706, Coward published another book for the same purpose. These works stirred up furious attacks from the churchmen, and he was denounced as a heretic. Of these books Mr. Abbot says: They "were ordered by Parliament to be burnt by the common hangman. The result was the immediate publication of a second edition." Thus the truth of God has always fared. It has been persecuted and interdicted, but this has only caused it to spread the wider.

### **Lawyer Layton.**

In 1706, Henry Layton, a rich gentleman and a lawyer, came to the aid of Dr. Coward, and published a book entitled, "A Search after Souls," in which he answers, at full length, the arguments used to prove the soul immortal. His book, however, seems not to have had an extensive circulation. These books brought out numerous answers from the orthodox, and so gave the doctrine a wide circulation.

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<sup>34</sup> *Doctrine of a Future Life*, p. 430.

In the year 1703, Jonathan Edwards preached a sermon on the end of the wicked as contemplated by the righteous, in which he advocated the abominable doctrine that "the sight of hell torments will exalt the happiness of the saints forever." We are sorry to say that such blasphemous views have found other advocates in later times.

### **Pitts.**

In 1708, John Pitts, of London, issued an able work against the immortality of the soul, vindicating, from Scripture and reason, the sleep of the dead. He was a presbyter of the Church of England. In the same year, Mr. Pitts published another book advocating the same views.

### **The Learned Dodwell.**

In the same year, Henry Dodwell sent out another book, in which he brings forward testimony from the Scriptures and the Fathers against the immortality of man. This was answered, in the following year, by a Mr. Whiston on the opposite side.

In 1720, an anonymous writer in London published a book maintaining the mortality of the soul and the unconscious state of the dead. The frequency with which these books were published shows that there was much controversy upon the subject, and that this doctrine had able advocates in the learned world at that time.

### **Watts.**

Dr. Isaac Watts, 1733, the great church poet, whose hymns are sung throughout the world, taught the annihilation of infants who died without bap-

tism.<sup>35</sup> Says Buck, in his "Theological Dictionary," "The great Dr. Watts may be considered, in some measure, a destructionist; since it was his opinion that the children of ungodly parents, who die in infancy, are annihilated."<sup>36</sup> It further appears that he was strongly inclined to believe in the utter destruction of all the wicked. Hear him:—]

"Let us consider it [death] as it relates to the soul of man. The soul is an immaterial and thinking being; it has in itself no natural principles of dissolution; and, therefore, so far as we can judge, it must be immortal in its own nature. But who can say whether the word *death* might not be fairly construed to extend to the utter destruction of the life of the soul, as well as the body, if God, the righteous governor, should please to sicze the forfeiture. For man, by sin, has forfeited all that God had given him; that is, the life and existence of his soul, as well as his body. All is forfeited, by sin, into the hands of God; and why might not the threatening declare the right that ever a God of goodness had to resume all back again, and utterly destroy and annihilate his creatures forever? There is not one place of Scripture, that occurs to me, where the word *death*, as it was first threatened in the law of innocency, necessarily signifies a certain miserable immortality of the soul, either to Adam, the actual sinner, or to his posterity." This clearly shows the faith of this great man.

### Warburton.

Bishop William Warburton, in his "Divine Legation of Moses," London, 1738-41, styled the believers in everlasting misery, "the unmerciful doctors;" and seriously inquires, "Doth annihilation impeach that

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<sup>35</sup> Ruin and Recovery of Mankind, Ques. 16, Prin. 3.

<sup>36</sup> Art. Destructionists.

wisdom and goodness which God displayed when he brought the soul out of nothing?"

Thus we see that many of the most devout and learned writers in the church all along, if they have not openly advocated the annihilation of the wicked, have looked with favor upon that view.

J. N. Scott, a minister of London, in 1743, in two volumes of published sermons, maintained "the doctrine of the destruction of the wicked." On the other hand, in 1746, J. Böldicke, Berlin, issued a book in which he maintains the doctrine that "the torments of the damned sprung from pure benevolence in the Deity, because the happiness of the elect will be so heightened and intensified by the contemplation of their sufferings." Thus, while light upon this question was spreading all around, there were still found some in the midnight darkness of barbarism, uttering against God such blasphemies as this.

### Bishop Law.

In 1755, another bishop in England startled the Episcopal church with his views on the state of the dead. He advocated the sleep of the dead, taking the same views that John Milton had before him. Of his book the historian says:—

"Bishop Law's Appendix to his *Considerations on the Theory of Religion*, etc., made its first appearance in the year 1755. In this Appendix were examined, under several heads, all or most of the texts where the words *soul* or *spirit* occurred in the Scriptures, and the significations of them in the original languages explained from the several contexts to which they belonged. The cause of the *conscious intermediate state* was so shaken from its very foundations by the Scriptural testimonies brought together in this

Appendix, that numbers of its partisans ran in a hurry to lend a hand to support the tottering edifice."<sup>37</sup>

About this time William Kenrick, Dublin, put forth a book entitled, "The Grand Question Debated, or an Essay to Prove the Soul of Man is not, neither can it be, Immortal; the Whole Founded upon the Arguments of Locke, Newton, Pope, Burnet, Watts," etc.<sup>38</sup>

We simply refer to these books that the reader may see that the doctrine of the sleep of the dead and the mortality of the soul has had a history, and that it has had plenty of advocates all along. So many books upon this subject would never have been published had there not been a large demand for them; and there would have been no such demand for them unless there had been many believers in the doctrines thus defended.

In 1757, J. Robinson issued a book disproving the immortality of the soul.

In 1759, there was published in England, in three volumes, "Goadby's Bible." The editors of this work, in their notes, advocate eternal life only in Christ, and destruction for all the finally impenitent.

Samuel Bourn, of Norwich, England, in four volumes of sermons printed in 1760, argued the doctrine of the destruction, in the lake of fire, of all the incorrigibly wicked. He was a faithful and pious minister.<sup>39</sup>

In 1765, Mr. Blackburne, A. M., archdeacon of Cleveland, England, issued his well-known and valuable book, "An Historical View of the Controversy concerning an Intermediate State." In this he gives an account of the various works written on this question, from the Reformation till his own time. He reviewed and answered the main arguments advanced

<sup>37</sup> Historical View of the Controversy Concerning the Intermediate State, by Archdeacon Blackburne, 2d edition, pp. 200, 201.

<sup>38</sup> Abbot in Algier, No. 10.

<sup>39</sup> Sermons, Vol. I., pp. 371-415.

to sustain the immortality of the soul. He was a zealous and able advocate of the mortality of man, sleep of the dead, etc. In 1772, he published the second edition of his book, which has had a good circulation, and has given much help to the cause of truth.

### Joseph Priestly.

1777, Joseph Priestly, a very learned philosopher and divine, wrote two volumes, "Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit," in which he discussed the relation of matter and spirit, and maintained the sleep of the soul in death. Being a profound scholar and a vigorous writer, and his writings having an extensive circulation, his influence in favor of the sleep of the dead was widely felt. The following sketch of his life is epitomized from the American Encyclopedia:—

"He was born in England, in 1733, of Calvinistic parents. He learned Hebrew in his holidays, and with little instruction made good progress in the Chaldaic, Syriac, Arabic, French, Italian, and German. From his youth, he was naturally religious. He was a great student all his life. He was minister first to a congregation in Suffolk, next in Cheshire, and in 1761 he was chosen professor of *belles lettres* in Warrington Academy. He was an intimate friend of Dr. Franklin, by whose advice he wrote the history of electrical discoveries, which had a wide circulation. In 1768, he was a pastor of a large church in Leeds. He received the title of LL. D. from the University of Edinburg. In 1772, he received a medal from the Royal Society for his philosophical discoveries. His name as a man of science was now honored throughout Europe. He traveled upon the continent, and was introduced to the most celebrated scholars of the age. In 1780, he was pastor of the congregation in

Birmingham. He wrote extensively in favor of the American Revolution. In 1794, he settled in America, where he became the intimate friend of John Adams and other prominent men. He was remarkable for his soundness of reason, for patience and zeal in public life, and for kindness in domestic relations. He was one of the first scholars and philosophers of his age. His writings embrace many volumes, which are still published and read extensively.

Thus the reader will see that the doctrine we advocate has been supported by many of the ripest scholars and greatest philosophers of the Christian age.

In 1772, at Leipzig, J. E. Walter published a book in German, maintaining the destruction of the wicked.

In 1789, at Newcastle, Edward Homes wrote a book to "prove the materiality of the soul, by reason and Scripture."

George Clark, London, 1792, in a book of 284 pages, gave a "Vindication of the honor of God, in a Scriptural Refutation of the Doctrine of Endless Misery and Universalism."

John Marsom, in 1794, in two volumes issued at London, vigorously refuted the restorationism of Dr. Chauncy, and maintained the destruction of the lost, who would never receive immortality, but utterly die. A second edition of his works was called for, and issued.

This doctrine had found many believers and able advocates in America before this time, though it had not attracted so much attention as in England and on the continent. In 1795, an anonymous author published a book of 141 pages, in New York, under the title of "Observations," in which he advocated the sleep of the dead.

## CHAPTER XII.

### *Extent of the Doctrine of the Mortality of the Soul at the Present Time.*

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**C**OMING down to the present century, we find Bishop Timothy Kendrick, in two volumes of sermons issued at London, 1805, devoting sermons two, three, and four to proving that the soul of man dies with the body, and is restored to life at the resurrection and the second advent of the Lord. This was a bold effort for a bishop of the Episcopal church, but the reader will observe that several other bishops and high dignitaries of the church have publicly taught that doctrine. But perhaps no man has dealt a heavier blow against the immortality of the soul than the eminent and learned Dr. Whately, archbishop of Dublin. His popularity as a scholar, and his high position as an ecclesiastical dignitary, have secured to his writings both attention and a wide circulation. His work entitled, "A View of the Scripture Revelations Concerning a Future State," evidently made many converts to his faith; for it was soon followed by many other books from different ministers in England, advocating the same views.

In 1805, Robert Forsyth, of Edinburg, in a work on Moral Science, advocated no future immortality and endless life, except for the good alone, who render themselves worthy of it.

A "Member of the Church of England," in 1817, in a work of 240 pages, printed in London, entitled, "Eternal Punishment proved to be not Suffering, but

Privation; and Immortality dependent on Spiritual Regeneration," etc., set forth the better view of man's nature, and the destiny of evil.

In 1834, Dr. John Thomas advocated, in this country, in a journal called "The Apostolic Advocate," the above doctrines, and that neither Adam nor his posterity possessed immortal souls. Immortality was our Lord's gift, and evil souls would die.

The next year these views were presented in a volume entitled, "Christ our Life," published anonymously by a clergyman of the church of Ireland, at Dublin; author unknown.

Rev. Reginald Courtenay, D. D., a rector of the church of England, in a London volume of 438 pages, ably written and set forth in 1843, maintained the sleep of the soul, and argued against its natural immortality. A second edition came out in 1857.

This brings us to a time in the history of this controversy in England when these views began to spread rapidly through all parts of the kingdom. Several books in each year have been issued, advocating in some way the mortality of man, the sleep of the dead, and the annihilation of the wicked. Tracts, pamphlets, volumes, and other publications have been many. We could not even name the different authors who have accepted these views. Mention may be made of a few of the more prominent ones.

Rev. H. H. Dobney, an able Baptist minister of England, first published his "Scripture Doctrine of Future Punishment," in 1844. A second edition was struck off in the United States in 1856. He maintained the mortality of man, his sleep in death, and the destruction of the wicked.

About the same time, Edward White, Congregational minister at Hereford, England, put forth a volume in defense of the same doctrine, entitled, "Life in Christ."

Ministers in Edinburgh, and in Bristol, and in Plymouth, have spoken out boldly and well in defense of the unpopular doctrine of the mortality of man, sleep of the dead, and destruction of the wicked. J. Pantton Ham has done good execution this way. A distinguished advocate of this doctrine has appeared in the Right Honorable Sir James Stephen, Prof. of History, Cambridge, England. Advocates of this doctrine are now springing up all over Great Britain. One paper, *The Rainbow*, published by Wm. Leask, D. D., 34 Sundringham Road, Kingsland, London, and another, *The Bible Echo*, Hankow Villa, Birkbeck Road, Leyton Stone, E. London, advocate this long-neglected truth. Also, in Scotland, *The Messenger*, published by W. M. Strang, Glasgow, does the same.

In a late article, the English correspondent of *The Presbyterian*, Philadelphia, Pa., says: "There is, and has been for some time, a good deal of discussion among a limited number of both churchmen and non-conformists on the awful question of everlasting punishment, and it is gradually revealing opinions and arguments which are sure to do much mischief. It has come to pass that the church of England and the Congregational body have men of mark who hold that the wicked and impenitent will not be consigned to endless torment; but will be utterly extinguished and literally destroyed." He then names several ministers who hold these views. Says *The Advance*, a Methodist paper, "The doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked is receiving increased attention in Great Britain and in America."

An editorial in *The Christian World* (Congregationalist), London, England, 1868, says:—

"The many books and pamphlets that have been published of late upon the subject of the future punishment of the wicked confirm the conviction, to which we gave expression a few months ago, that a

great number of the most devout and thoughtful persons in our churches are deeply exercised regarding it, and are anxiously desirous of ascertaining the real teaching of the Holy Scripture thereupon. . . . It is not a little startling to find the extent to which this opinion is spreading in our evangelical churches. Several well-known ministers, whose orthodoxy on other points is as firmly fixed as ever, have ventured to brave the opposition, sure to arise, by writing boldly and earnestly in support of this new reading of the many declarations of the new Testament, to the effect that life and immortality come only by accepting the gospel of Christ. These names include a Baptist, the Rev. William Miall; Congregationalist, the Rev. E. White, Rev. Dr. Leask, and many others; and it is stated that one of the rising leaders of this section of non-conformists is about to issue a book on the same side, that will certainly arouse the attention of the whole church to which he belongs. Of the Episcopalian clergy, quite a host have declared themselves on this side, of late. The Rev. William Ker, M. A., Vicar of Tipton, has published a very elaborate argument; and more recently the Rev. Samuel Minton, M. A., minister of Eaton Chapel, Eaton Square, has penned a powerful letter to Mr. Robt. Baxter."

Rev. Henry Constable, late prebendary of Cork, Ireland, has lately published two excellent volumes on the subject, one on Future Punishment, and one on Hades. In the last ten years, the light upon this subject has been spreading so rapidly that now there are believers raised up, missionaries sent out, and churches established in England, Scotland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy, and Egypt. So the good work goes forward.

### In the United States.

It is in the United States that this doctrine is taking the deepest root and spreading the fastest.

In the early part of the present century, publications upon this subject began to make their appearance, and a few here and there embraced the doctrine of the mortality of the soul and the sleep of the dead.

In 1803, a church sprung up simultaneously in many parts of the United States, calling themselves *Christians*. They rejected the immortality of the soul, eternal misery, etc. Of them, the historian says: "They declared that the atonement was full; that the *wicked at death were to be annihilated*,"<sup>1</sup> etc.; that is, at the second death. This, however, was not a prominent article of their faith; hence, at present, some of them hold to it and others do not. But as many of their ministers publicly advocated these views, and a large share of their members believed them, it served to arouse discussion upon the point.

In 1808, Rev. Elias Smith, in the "first religious newspaper published in the world," viz., *The Herald of Gospel Liberty*, issued at Portsmouth, N. H., defended the view that immortality was God's free gift bestowed on the good alone through Christ at their resurrection, all the wicked utterly perishing and truly dying in the day of the second death. Thousands of his followers in the Christian connection held the same opinion.

Aaron Bancroft, D. D., an author and able Unitarian minister at Worcester, Mass., in sermons published in 1828, advocated endless life alone through Christ. The same year J. Sellon, in a work of 106 pages, issued at Canandaigua, N. Y., maintained the extinction of the wicked. Walter Balfour, in 1829,

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<sup>1</sup>The Religions of all Nations, art. Christians, p. 175.

at Charlestown, Mass., published a book advocating the sleep of the dead.

Calvin French, a deacon of the Congregational church, and afterward a minister, published a pamphlet of 54 pages at Boston, 1842, in which he defended immortality as coming only through Christ, the annihilation of the wicked, and the sleep of the dead.

Very many of the denomination called "Disciples," or "Campbellites," believe in the sleep of the dead and the destruction of the wicked, though generally, as a denomination, they do not hold these sentiments.

In the providence of God, this subject was brought prominently before the Advent people in the great religious movement of 1840-44.

In 1837, Mr. Geo. Storrs, a Methodist preacher, first had his mind called to this subject by reading a pamphlet put out by Henry Grew, of Philadelphia. After thoroughly studying the subject for some three or four years, he adopted the doctrine of the mortality of man, the destruction of the wicked, etc. In 1841, he published "Three Letters" to prominent ministers, in which he advocated his views of this doctrine. In 1842, he preached to a congregation in Albany, N. Y., "Six Sermons" on this subject. These he soon after published, and scattered extensively. In the fall of 1842, he embraced the doctrine of the soon coming of Christ, as taught by Adventists. The next year he traveled and preached very extensively among them, and freely distributed his "Six Sermons" among his hearers. His views met with much opposition at first; yet some prominent men embraced them. In 1843, he started the *Bible Examiner*, as an occasional issue, mainly for the purpose of disseminating light upon these subjects. Later, it was made a monthly.

After 1844, the Adventists almost as an entire body embraced the doctrine of the mortality of the soul,

the unconscious state of the dead, and the final annihilation of the wicked. Those who did not embrace these views were left as a separate party, which has since dwindled to very small proportions, and they have nearly lost their position as Adventists.

About this time Eld. Jacob Blaine, Baptist minister, Buffalo, N. Y., put out a book of 117 pages, entitled, "Death not Life." This had a wide and rapid sale, soon running through many editions. The arguments being very plain and pointed, it made a powerful impression on the minds of thousands. H. L. Hastings, of Boston, Mass., also dealt some heavy blows against the doctrine of eternal torment. He wrote several stirring pamphlets upon the subject, which were extensively read.

Mention should be made in this connection of the writings of the late Prof. C. F. Hudson, of Cambridge, Mass. During the latter part of his life he became interested in the subjects of future punishment, nature of man, etc., and traveled extensively, visiting libraries and consulting with literary men; and some of the fruits of his research were given to the world in an elaborate volume entitled, "Debt and Grace, as related to the Doctrine of a Future Life;" which was followed by "Christ our Life: The Scriptural Argument for Immortality through Christ Alone;" and some minor works. "Debt and Grace" is a volume of several hundred pages; and "Christ our Life" is an able work of 164 pages.

During the last thirty years so many ministers and scholars have written pamphlets and volumes advocating the Scriptural view of the subject, that we could not undertake to name them all.

In answer to inquiries upon the extent of the spread of these views, Eld. D. T. Taylor writes the author thus; "In 1860, I made a partial census of the beliefs of the so-called Adventist ministers and others on these questions. I collected the names and ad-

dresses of 600 ministers residing in nineteen different States, and in Nova Scotia and Canada. I estimated the whole number of Advent believers under the ministry and influence of these 600 clergymen to be 54,000, and the population of the community generally attending Adventist meetings as numbering 150,000. Since this census and estimate was made—now eighteen years ago—the total number of preachers has increased, I judge, to over 1,000, and I think the believers have doubled. . . . Thousands and tens of thousands in the denominations also hold the doctrine in question.”

We consider the above estimate too low rather than too high.

Prominent among those advocating this doctrine may be mentioned Prof. Chas. L. Ives, M. D., late of Yale College, and author of “Bible Doctrine of the Soul,” an able and scholarly work of several hundred pages; Rev. J. H. Pettengill, M. A., author of a masterly volume of 285 pages, called “The Theological Tri-lemma;” Rev. John Miller, of Princeton College, and Rev. A. G. Pease, of Rutland, Vt., both of whom have written able works defending the doctrine of immortality through Christ alone; Eld. J. H. Whitmore, a clear and forcible writer, the author of a book entitled, “Immortality.” Eld. D. T. Taylor, of Rouse’s Point, N. Y., has written many powerful articles on the subject. Eld. Uriah Smith, for a quarter of a century editor of *The Advent Review*, Battle Creek, Mich., and author of several volumes, has cast a heavy influence on the right side of the question. Besides articles and small tracts, he has written an excellent book on this subject, entitled, “Man’s Nature and Destiny.” Eld. J. N. Andrews, a critical scholar and a deep reasoner, the editor of a French paper, has written several tracts and many telling articles upon the subject. The following among many other Seventh-day Adventist ministers, have

publicly preached this doctrine through the length and breadth of the United States; Elders James White, J. H. Waggoner, J. N. Loughborough, Geo. I. Butler, S. N. Haskell, and W. H. Littlejohn. Of the other bodies of Adventists who have preached the same doctrine, Elders John Couch, O. R. Fassett, J. V. Himes, Edwin Burnham, Albion Ross, A. A. Phelps, H. F. Carpenter, Geo. R. Kramer, and C. R. Hendricks, are among the most noted.

The Seventh-day Adventists have twenty organized Conferences, extending from Maine on the East to Washington Territory on the West, and from Minnesota on the North to Texas on the South. They have about 400 preachers, 700 churches, and about 20,000 believers. They publish nine periodicals. Of these, one is in French, one in Swedish, one in Holland, and two are in Danish. Their list of publications now runs up to about two hundred, embracing those from a volume of 500 pages down to a penny tract. They have foreign missions in England, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy, and Egypt. They have a fine college at Battle Creek, Mich., with an attendance of over 300 students. At the same place they have the largest and best conducted Sanitarium in America. Their publishing facilities are very great, their house at Battle Creek having a capital of over \$125,000. Some weeks they send out over 300 bushels of printed matter, which is scattered to all parts of the world.

The great body of the Adventists having zealously embraced these views about 1844, as above stated, they immediately began to publish them with great energy. Numerous small tracts, many pamphlets, and finally bound volumes, were soon scattered all over the country, like leaves in autumn. Believers were raised up everywhere, and among them many able speakers and writers. This subject was preached upon, debated both orally and through the papers,

and numerous churches were raised up in all parts of the United States largely upon this one issue.

In this country alone there are now issued about a dozen periodicals which advocate this doctrine. The leading ones are: *The Review and Herald*, Battle Creek, Mich.; *The Signs of the Times*, Oakland, Cal.; *The World's Crisis*, Boston, Mass.; *The Bible Banner*, 506 Minor St., Philadelphia, Penn.; *The Restitution*, Chicago, Ill.; the *Herald of Life*, New York; *Bible Examiner*, New York; *The Tidende*, (Danish) Battle Creek, Mich.; *The Harold*, (Swedish), and *Stimme der Wahrheit*, (German), same place. Nor is this question confined to the Adventists; but some in every denomination are receiving these views. On this point, the *Methodist Home Journal*, for March 26, 1870, says: "There are many candid minds in the churches that are more or less unsettled, and honestly and eagerly seeking for new measures of light upon the question." In 1862, Prof. Hudson reported over forty evangelical clergymen of the great denominations, among his personal acquaintances, who held these views.

For fourteen years the author has traveled and preached upon this subject, from Maine to California, and from Minnesota to Alabama. In every community he has found persons, both in the church and out, who say that they have never been able to believe the popular doctrine on this question.

But, as might be expected, these attacks upon the old doctrine of an immortal soul and an endless hell have brought out numerous publications on the opposite side, advocating the "orthodox" theory of the immortality of the soul, and eternal misery of the wicked. Evidently this is becoming a leading theological question of the times. Bare assertions will no longer be taken as satisfactory upon it: the people demand *proof* and investigation. Debates upon it between different ministers are of almost weekly occur-

rence. The horrid descriptions of hell and the eternal torments of the damned, which were once so shockingly common, are now seldom heard from any pulpit.

During the last ten years it has become no uncommon thing to hear of ministers in the different orthodox denominations who have espoused these views, and have come out boldly to advocate them. Indeed, scarcely a month passes without our attention being called to some case like this. Hundreds of cases among the laity are noted every year. Probably no less than one hundred churches have been raised up within the last year of those who have accepted these views. Among the believers in this doctrine in the United States there are able scholars, professors in colleges, principals in academies, and other influential men. From these, critical and learned books are sent forth answering all the objections that can be raised to the doctrine, both from Scripture and philosophy.

In the fall and winter of 1877, this doctrine was brought very prominently before the religious world.

A couple of orthodox ministers in different places in New England came out and publicly rejected the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and eternal torment. This created great excitement in certain circles. Both the religious and the secular press took it up and commented upon it, which called universal attention to the subject. Then ministers of all denominations in nearly every city in the United States almost simultaneously preached upon the subject of "Hell." The *New York Herald* stated that on one Sunday, in New York City alone, one hundred ministers preached upon that subject.

On the whole, it seems evident that, in the providence of God, the time has fully come for the fables and errors connected with this important question to be exposed, and for the glorious truth of the Bible once more to shine out.

This age of free thought, of general intelligence, and of careful scientific inquiry, is certain death to the old heathen dogma of an eternal hell of burning fire and tortures for the wicked, which flourished so triumphantly during the Dark Ages. Even those who still claim to hold to the old theory of an endless hell have so modified it that its old friends of two centuries ago would not recognize it! Of late years the popular ministry say but little about hell torments anyway, and when they do, it is more to explain them away than to advocate them. In most of the orthodox churches, members are no longer expelled for renouncing the doctrine of eternal torment.

Recently, Edward White, a well-known Congregationalist minister of England, who has already been mentioned in this book, delivered a lecture to the "Artizans of London," in which he very fully sums up the wide range which the doctrine of "Life only through Christ," enjoys at the present time. His lecture was headed, "The Churches, the Outsiders and Theological Reform," and was given May 2, 1880. He said:—

"But the Bible truth on Life only in Christ and on the natural mortality of man, is held to my certain knowledge by the following persons, whose names are at least a counterweight to any opposite authorities: The Rev. Samuel Minton is well known to have sacrificed his living and promotion to this cause. Prebendary Constable, late of Cork, is also known as one of its ablest advocates. Dr. Weymouth, Head Master of Mill Hill School, and one of the finest Greek scholars in the country, says that his 'mind fails to conceive a grosser misinterpretation of language, than when the five or six strongest words which the Greek tongue possesses, signifying "destruction," or "destruction," are explained to mean—maintaining an everlasting but wretched existence.' The late Dr. Mortimer, Head Master of the City School,

spoke in the same sense. The late eminent Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge, author of a well-known critical Commentary on the Psalms, in answer to the inquiry whether he knew any reason why the corresponding Hebrew words of the Old Testament should not be taken in their literal and obvious sense, replied in these words, 'None whatever.' The Archbishop of York, Dr. Thompson, says, in his 'Bampton Lectures,' 'Life to the godless must be the beginning of destruction, since nothing but God, and that which pleases him, can permanently exist.' This doctrine has advocates in all our chief cities. In *London* it is held by Dr. Parker of the City Temple; by the Rev. J. B. Heard, M. A., author of the work on 'The Tripartite Nature of Man,' and by not a few ministers of all denominations. In *Birmingham* it is taught by Dr. R. W. Dale. In *Liverpool* by the Rev. Hugh Stowell Brown. In *Cambridge* it is maintained by Professor Stokes, F. R. S., Secretary to the Royal Society, who holds the Mathematical Chair of Sir Isaac Newton, and is one of the foremost scientific men in Europe. In *Edinburgh* it is held by several of the leading clergy of all Churches, and by Professor Tait, perhaps the first mathematical reasoner in Scotland. In other parts of England it is held by the Rev. Thomas Davis, M. A., Vicar of Roundhay; the Rev. W. Hobson, M. A., of Douglas, two most able supporters; the Rev. J. Hay Aitken, the earnest Missioner; by the Rev. W. Ker, (author of a cheap Introduction to the study of this question, called 'Immortality: Whence? and for Whom?' intended for plain people); by Professor Stevenson of Nottingham, Professor Barlow of Dublin; Professor Barrett of the Royal College of Science in Dublin; by the Rev. W. Griffith of Eastbourne; by Dr. Morris of Plymouth; by Mr. Maude of Holloway, several of whom have written largely on the question, and all of whom are excellent biblical scholars. It is held by the celebrated

physicians, Dr. Andrew Clark and Dr. Farre, and by a long array of Christian medical men in all parts of the country. It is held by Mr. Thomas Walker, late editor of the *Daily News*, a man of firm faith and uncommon literary attainments. It was held by the late Mr. John Sheppard of Frome, and by the late Mr. Henry Dunn, both of whom published works on Human Destiny. Among *American* writers may be mentioned the names of the late Dr. Horace Bushnell, author of "Nature and the Supernatural," who recently died in this faith; Dr. Huntington of Worcester, Massachusetts; the late Professor Hudson of Cambridge, U. S. A., author of the Concordance to the Greek Testament, and 'Debt and Grace, in relation to a Future Life,' one of the most accurate and accomplished scholars of our time; the Rev. J. H. Pettingell of Philadelphia, author of the 'Trilemma;' Mr. H. L. Hastings of New York, Dr. Leonard Woolsey Bacon of Newhaven, and many others. In *Jamaica* we have the Rev. J. Denniston, M. A., author of the work called 'The Perishing Soul.' In *India* we have Mr. Skrefsrüd, the Missionary to the Santhals, and one of the greatest linguists in Asia, speaking nearly twenty languages; and the Rev. W. A. Hobbs of Calcutta, an experienced Missionary, who writes that it is 'astonishing how this view of Divine Truth commends itself to the almost instant appreciation of the unprejudiced native Christian mind. I never thrust it to the front, but nevertheless it is silently and rapidly spreading.'

"Again—in *Paris* it is held by M. Decoppet, pastor of the Oratorie; M. Bastide, head of the French Religious Tract Society; M. Pascal, pasteur, M. Holland, and Professor Sabatier of the Protestant College, one of the foremost theological scholars of France. It is also held by three of the pastors in the Church at Lyons. In *Brussels* it is held and taught by M. Charles Byse, who has just published a French trans-

lation of 'Life in Christ,' a man of wide and accurate scholarship in Oriental languages. In *Germany* it was held by Rothe, Nitzsch, Olshausen, Hase, Ritschl, and Twesten. It is taught by Professor Gees of Breslau, who was theological tutor of Dr. Godet of Neuchatel, and by Professor Schultz of Göttingen. In *Geneva* it is valiantly defended by the accomplished scholar Dr. Pétavel of Chêne Bougeries, by Professor Thomas of D'Aubigné's College, by M. Mittendorff, late editor of the *Semaine Religieuse*, by MM. Walthur and Chatelain, two of the most active evangelists, and by M. Cæsar Malan.

In *Africa* it is held by Rev. Mr. Impey, Superintendent of the Caffre Mission of the Wesleyan body, who was two years ago ejected from his high office after 40 years' labor, because he could no longer teach the endless misery of the poor black Zulus and other heathens of Africa. In *China* it is held by several of the ablest Missionaries; in *Ceylon* by the Rev. Mr. Clark, M. A., of the Church Tamil Mission; in *Sydney* it was held by Mr. Ridley, the leading journalist of Australia, and an eminent scholar, whose fame has reached his fatherland; and it is held by many of the Australian Pastors.

"I have cited these names of learned believers of all Protestant Churches,—Scholars, Writers, Preachers; Professors of Divinity, Criticism, and Physical Science; Literary Men, Mathematicians, Barristers, Journalists, Evangelists, Missionaries,—some of them men of the first rank; all of them men of high education, who have carefully studied this question, under the conditions of prayerful inquiry and adequate learning,—men who have no object to serve except the maintenance of truth,—men who represent all varieties of modern knowledge and training in nearly every department of study—for a special purpose—to encourage general investigation, against the attempts of many persons, both clerical and lay, to suppress

inquiry by the assertion that no one of any consequence agrees with us. My own extensive acquaintance enables me to add that not a few other persons of eminent ability agree in this view of Divine Truth, but are constrained to silence by the menaces of ignorant men and fanatical women—especially the latter—who threaten them with the fatal charge of heresy if they avow their convictions.”

With all the foregoing facts before us, it is evident that a great theological revolution upon this doctrine has already begun. May the providence of a merciful God speed it on to a rapid and happy consummation.



