

CHAPTER XV.

THE NATURE OF MAN.

“THE immortality of the soul is rather supposed, or taken for granted, than expressly revealed in the Bible.”—*Bishop Tillotson's Sermons, vol. 2, A. P. 1774.*

Olshausen, the commentator, says :—

“The doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and the name, are alike unknown to the entire Bible.”—*Comments on 1 Cor. 15 : 19, 20.*

In Gen. 2 : 7, the original word for living soul is *nephesh chayah*. Dr. A. Clarke says of this :—

“A general term to express all creatures endued with animal life, in any of its infinitely varied gradations, from the half-reasoning elephant down to the stupid potto, or lower still, to the polyp, which seems equally to share the vegetable and animal life.”

Prof. George Bush in his “Notes on Genesis,” says of this text :—

“The phrase ‘living soul’ is in the foregoing narrative repeatedly applied to the inferior orders of animals, which are not considered to be possessed of a ‘soul’ in the sense in which that term is applied to man. It would seem to mean the same, therefore, when spoken of man, that it does when spoken of beasts; viz., an animated being, a creature possessed of life and sensation, and capable of performing all the physical functions by which animals are distinguished, as eating, drinking, walking, etc. . . . Indeed, it may be remarked that the Scriptures generally afford much less *explicit* evidence of the existence of a sentient, immaterial principle in man, capable of living and acting separate from the body, than is usually supposed.”

“There is no word in the Hebrew language that signifies either soul or spirit in the technical sense in which we use the term, as implying something distinct from the body.”—*Dr. McCulloch, Credibility of the Scriptures, vol. 2, p. 466.*

“That the soul is naturally immortal . . . is contradicted by the Scripture, which makes our immortality a gift dependent on the will of the giver.”—*Watson's Theological Institute, vol. 2, part 2, chap. 18.*

H. H. Dobney, Baptist minister of England, says :—

“If in these days of multiplied infallibilities, it may be allowed us to prefer an apostolic and inspired exposition of the original record, we shall respectfully take leave to affirm that there is *no expression* on the opening page of a progressive revelation, which teaches the unutterably grand prerogative of an *uncontingent immortality* for all mankind.”—*Future Punishment, p. 120.*

In enumerating the faith of the “General Baptists” who flourished in England in the sixteenth century, Mosheim says :—

“They believe that the soul, from the moment that the body dies, until its resurrection at the last day, remains in a state of perfect insensibility.”—*Church History, cent. 16, chap. 3, sec. 3, part 2, par. 23.*

The following words purport to be those of Luther himself, and express the views he held in 1522 on the nature of man and the state of the dead :—

“As to purgatory, I think it a very uncertain thing. It is probable, in my opinion, that, with very few exceptions indeed, the dead sleep in utter insensibility till the day of Judgment. As to purgatory itself, I do not agree with the sophists in thinking it a determinate place. Who will venture to give an assured opinion on the subject? On what authority can it be said that the souls of the dead may not sleep out the interval between earth and heaven, or hell, or purgatory, in the same way that the living pass in profound slumber the interval between their downlying at night and their uprising in the morning?”—*Michelet's Life of Luther, Bohn's edition, p. 133.*

The Catholic author, Duperron, in writing against the reformers and their work asserts that—

“Luther held that the *soul died with the body*, and that God would hereafter raise both the one and the other.”—*Historical View, p. 344.*

In attempting to refute this statement, a Lutheran writer admitted the following :—

“The origin of this calumny is a letter he [Luther] wrote to Amsdorf in the year 1522; in which he appears much 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 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."—*Ibid.*, p. 347.

"Among Christians I know of but one [S. Drew] who has regarded the immortality of the soul as susceptible of demonstration. Should we believe with this ingenious writer that the soul, metaphysically considered, is so formed as naturally to be immortal, we must still acknowledge, because it cannot be denied, that its existence *may terminate at death*, or any other supposable period. Whatever has been created, can certainly be annihilated by the power which created it."—*Dwight's Sermons*, vol. 1, p. 163.

John Milton, author of "Paradise Lost," was not a believer in the immortality of the soul. He said:—

"The death of the body is the loss or extinction of life. The common definition, which supposes it to consist in the separation of soul and body, is inadmissible. . . . For what could be more just than that he who had sinned in his whole person, should die in his whole person? Or, on the other hand, what could be more absurd than that the mind, which is the part principally offending, should escape the threatened death; and that the body alone, to which immortality was equally allotted before death came into the world by sin, should pay the penalty of sin by undergoing death, though not implicated in the transgression?—*The State of the Dead*, pp. 14, 15.

Rev. Charles H. Oliphant in the introduction to a new work entitled, "The Extinction of Evil," says:—

"We believe that immortality must be sought at the feet of Him 'who only hath' it. The traditional dogma that endless life is the inherent and necessary attribute of every human soul, is repudiated; and with it the two mischievous corollaries to which it lends support,—the doctrines of eternal torment and of universal salvation."—*Page 13.*

ORIGIN OF THE NATURAL IMMORTALITY THEORY.

"The serpent said unto the woman, *Ye shall not surely die*, . . . your eyes shall be opened, and *ye shall be as gods*." Gen. 3:4, 5.

Mr. Darby, the leading spirit among the "Plymouth Brethren," England, makes this singularly frank acknowledgment:—

"I would express the conviction that the idea of the immortality of the soul,* although recognized in Luke 12: 5 and 21: 38, is not in general a gospel topic; 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. It is hardly needful to say that I do not doubt the immortality of the soul. I only assert that this view has taken the place of the doctrine of the resurrection of the Church as the epoch of its joy and glory."

In a foot-note to the above, Mr. D. makes this further concession: " * In the expression 2 Tim. 1: 10, 'Brought life and immortality to light'—immortality signifies the incorruptibility of the body, and not the immortality of the soul,"—*Hopes of the Church*, pp. 47, 48. London.

Herodotus, a Greek, born B. C. 484, regarded as the first and one of the most reliable of profane historians, says:—

"The *Egyptians* were also the *first* who asserted the doctrine that the soul of man is immortal."—*Herod. Euter.* 2., par. 123.

Bunsen, in his work on Egypt, says:—

"The *Egyptians* were the *first* who taught the doctrine of the immortality of the soul,—a fact mentioned by all the Greek writers from Herodotus to Aristotle, and one brilliantly confirmed by the monuments."—*Egypt in Universal Hist.*, vol. 4, p. 639.

Balfour testifies:—

"Mr. Stanley says the *Egyptians* were the first who asserted that the soul of man was immortal, and cites in proof, *Eusebius, Diodorus, Siculus, and Halicarnassus*."—*Inter. State*, p. 73.

Bishop Warburton says:—

"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."—*Divine Lega. of Moses Dem.*, vol. 2, p. 239.

GREEKS AND ROMANS LEARN IT FROM THE EGYPTIANS.

"It seems plain that the Greeks derived many of their notions concerning the fate and state of the dead from Egypt."—*Alger's Doctrine of a Future Life*, p. 101.

In the "Elements of Mythology," p. 36, we find the following:—

"The ancient *Egyptians* are considered as the original inventors of the arts, science, and religion of Greece."

Warburton, speaking of Pythagoras, says:—

"He and Plato with others, traveled into Egypt, like their predecessors. . . . The ancients tell us of their long abode there; their hard condition of admittance into the sacred colleges; and their *bringing away with them all the secret science of the priesthood*."—*Div. Lega.*, vol. 2, pp. 108, 109.