

**THE IMMORTALITY
OF THE SOUL: A
PROTEST**

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The immortality of the soul: a protest by Joseph Agar Beet

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JOSEPH AGAR BEET

**THE IMMORTALITY
OF THE SOUL: A
PROTEST**

The Immortality
of the Soul &
A PROTEST. By
JOSEPH AGAR BEET, D.D.

"WHO ALONE HATH IMMORTALITY"

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P R E F A C E

THE following pages are a reprint of articles published in THE EXPOSITOR during the last six months.

They are a protest against a doctrine which, during long centuries, has been almost universally accepted as divine truth taught in the Bible, but which seems to me altogether alien to it in both phrase and thought, and derived only from Greek Philosophy. Until recent times, this alien doctrine has been comparatively harmless. But, as I have here shown, it is now producing most serious results. My protest against it is an appeal, which no Protestant can disallow, from the traditional teaching of the Church to the supreme authority of Holy Scripture. Of the justice of this appeal, my readers must judge.

It will of course be said, of this as of some

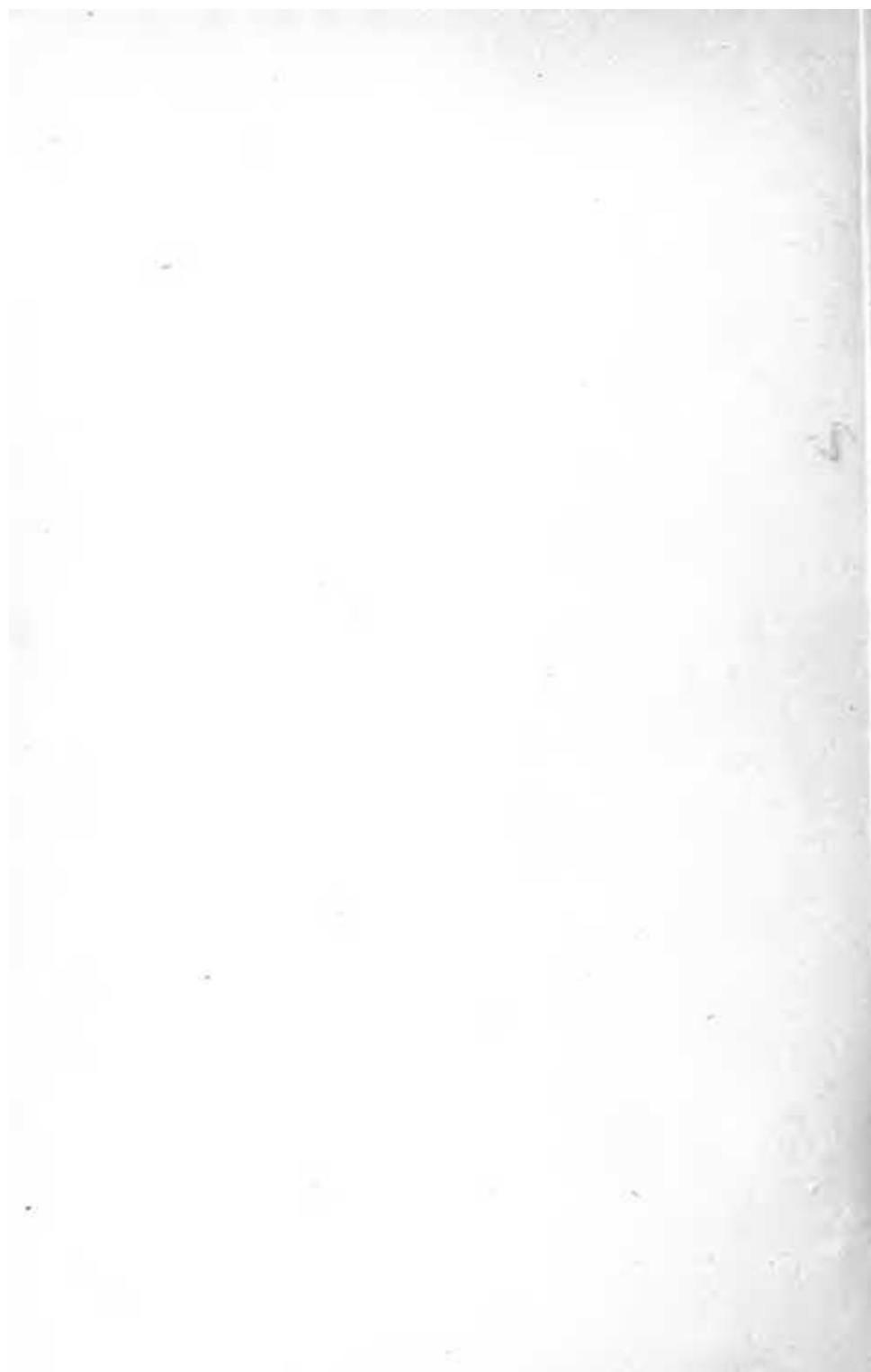
other doctrines, that, if not explicitly taught in the Bible, it is implied and assumed there. But they who ask us to accept an important doctrine on this ground must prove clearly that it is so implied and assumed. For we cannot accept their mere dictum as evidence. They who claim for their teaching the authority of God must prove that it comes from Him. Such proof in this case, I have never seen.

RICHMOND,

August 25th, 1901

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CHAPTER I

IMMORTALITY BEFORE CHRIST

DURING long ages, until some thirty years ago, the doctrine of *The Immortality of the Soul* was accepted almost without contradiction as fundamental to Christianity and even to religion. In the following pages I shall discuss the history of the phrase and the doctrine, the evidence on which the doctrine rests, and its worth as a factor of Christian thought.

We shall find the phrase and doctrine among the Greeks; other similar yet different doctrines, but not the phrase, among the Egyptians; and the phrase and doctrine in some Jewish writers shortly before or soon after the appearance of Christ.

THE GREEKS.

That the *soul* of man is *immortal* or *deathless*,

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or in other words that every soul will exist in happiness or misery for endless ages, is a conspicuous feature of the teaching of PLATO. But that this doctrine was by no means universal among the Greeks of his day, we learn from p. 70 of his *Phædo*, where we read, "In what relates to the soul men are apt to be incredulous; they fear that when she has left the body her place may be nowhere, and that on the very day of death she may be destroyed and perish, (*διαφθείρηται τε καὶ ἀπολλύηται*,) immediately on her release from the body issuing forth like smoke or air and in her flight vanishing away into nothingness."

In the pages following, Socrates is represented as arguing against this popular belief. He endeavours first to prove that the soul existed before birth, and then that it will exist after death. On p. 70 he goes on to say, "Whether the souls of men after death are or are not in Hades, may be argued in this manner:—The ancient doctrine of which I have been speaking affirms that they go from hence into the other world, and return hither, and are born from