

**THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF THE
SOUL: AN ANSWER TO THE
QUESTION, IS THE POPULAR
CONCEPTION OF THE SOUL THAT
OF HOLY SCRIPTURE?**

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The Bible Doctrine of the Soul: An Answer to the Question, is the Popular Conception of the Soul That of Holy Scripture? by Chas. L. Ives

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CHAS. L. IVES

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HOLY SCRIPTURE?

Leicester
BY CHAS. L. IVES, M. D.

*Professor of the Theory and Practice of Medicine,
in Yale College.*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

PREFACE,	5
I—SOULS OF ANIMALS,	9
II—MAN A LIKE MORTAL SOUL,	9
III—SOULS OF MEN AND BEASTS DIFFER IN THE POSSI- BILITIES OF THE FUTURE,	10
IV—EXAMPLES OF THE BIBLICAL USAGE OF THE TERM SOUL,	12
V—CORRECTION OF ERRONBOUS INFERENCES,	16
VI—IMMORTALITY AN ATTRIBUTE OF GOD ; A GIFT TO HIS REDEEMED,	25
VII—IMMORTALITY FOR THE RIGHTEOUS REVEALED IN OLD TESTAMENT,	26
VIII—IMMORTALITY NOT BESTOWED UPON THE FINALLY IMPENITENT,	29
IX—SUMMARY OF THIS BIBLICAL DOCTRINE, AND REA- SONS FOR ITS PREVALENT REJECTION,	33
X—BENEFICIAL RESULTS OF THIS DOCTRINE,	36
XI—OBJECTIONS ANSWERED,	57
APPEAL TO CHRISTIANS,	70
APPEAL TO THE IMPENITENT,	73
APPENDIX.	
A—ANIMALS AS SOULS,	74
B—OF THE MATERIAL NATURE OF THE SOUL,	77
C—OF THE MORTAL NATURE OF THE SOUL,	81
D—DEAD SOULS VISIBLE AND TANGIBLE,	94
E—THE SOUL AND ITS PARTS,	89
F—SHEOL,.....93, HADES,.....93, GEHENNA,.....103	103
G—NEW TESTAMENT ON INTERMEDIATE STATE,	104
H—THE RESURRECTION,	109
" " OF THE WICKED,	111



PREFACE.

The origin of this little sketch of the Biblical conception of the soul, was on this wise:

One Sabbath, the writer stated to his adult Bible class that immortality, as an essential attribute of the soul, is not only nowhere affirmed in the Bible, as theologians confess, but that it is in fact positively denied. Great surprise was manifested, one present even insisting that the Bible declared the soul should never die, though he could not name chapter and verse. At the request of the class this question was selected for discussion the next Sabbath, with the promise of studying it during the week. On assembling again, it was found that no proof of the soul's inherent immortality had been discovered, though some passages were brought forward from which it had been inferred. The writer presented a carefully selected list of references, and finally, as the whole subject seemed so new and interesting to the class, he promised another Sabbath to bring to each a written slip containing these references. But on reflection, as the class was so large, it seemed easier to print and better to give the passages in full, and then some explanations of misunderstood passages seemed desirable; and so the work grew upon the writer's hand. And it is now presented not to his class alone, but to all earnest students of the Bible.

It is at most but a sketch. From among the multitude of proof texts on this point, the writer has endeavored merely to present a sufficient number. And, to stimulate inquiry and remove obstacles which have hindered independent research, he has made some suggestions, rather than an elaborate argument. In these matters which revelation alone may presume to decide, he has desired to lead the reader back to the Bible, to study for himself the teachings of that inspired guide.

If such return to the Biblical standard of our faith was demanded in Luther's day, it is likewise sadly needed at the present. In the issue for April, '72, of a religious quarterly published at New Haven, we find a theological professor re-echoing this strange sentiment one of our most popular preachers had uttered not long before—"No doubt we at the present day know more of spiritual things than did the apostles." (!) Know more of spiritual things than the men inspired by the Holy Ghost for the especial work of teaching these very truths!—more than Peter and John, more than Paul who "conferred not with flesh and blood," (Gal. 1: 16,) but was permitted to hear "unspeakable words which it is not lawful (literally, possible) for man to utter." (2 Cor. XII: 4.) Well may we inquire, whither are we drifting, if in spiritual things our religious teachers set themselves above these apostles? In one, and but one respect, have we perhaps an advantage over them. Though Paul was "expressly" informed by the Spirit (1 Tim. IV. 1, 2, 2 Thess. II.) of "perilous times in the latter days," when "some should depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils," yet we can hardly think he could have fully anticipated how prevalent and how

persistent should have been that "falling away" from the faith, which history has recorded of the Christian church.

We can but infer that these claiming such pre-eminence in spiritual knowledge, must recognize that those "holy men of old" and themselves are somewhat at variance as regards the truth; so that ignorance on these subjects must pertain to one party or the other, which ignorance they quietly attribute to the apostles. It is true, indeed, that the two do differ; they are divided on the deeply important question of the soul's immortality. Paul declares that immortality is given "to those who, by patient continuance in well doing, *seek for it*;" (Romans II: 7.) Our teachers assert that it is already the inalienable possession of every man!

It is time for the Church to awake and seriously ponder these questions. Our religious teachers in these matters start from a false premise. Let the Bible testify against them, and let each earnest-hearted Christian, in his child-like study of the Holy Word, be their judge. Let the Bible speak for itself, untrammelled by human tradition.

To assist in its better understanding has been the especial aim of this little work.

Finally, the writer may be permitted to refer to the great satisfaction and comfort which he has derived from this Biblical view of the soul and its destiny. In comparing his former conceptions of this and kindred truths with his present understanding of the same, he is forcibly reminded of a like contrast in the appearance of objects seen through an optical instrument out of focus, and the same when the field of vision is brought to its proper focus. In the latter case the previous obscurity and uncertainty of