

**IMMORTALITY OF THE  
SOUL AND DESTINY  
OF THE WICKED**

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Immortality of the soul and destiny of the wicked by N. L. Rice

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AND

## DESTINY OF THE WICKED.

BY THE

REV. N. L. RICE, D.D.,

PRESIDENT OF WESTMINSTER COLLEGE.

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## P R E F A C E .

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THE following short treatise was commenced several years ago, at the earnest request of the Board of Publication. After the most of it had been written, the entire failure of the writer's health—compelling him to resign his pastoral charge in New York—made it necessary to lay it aside, and until a very recent period the idea of completing it was abandoned. At the renewed request of the Board it has now been finished, and is given to the public with the hope and prayer that, by the divine blessing, it may be of some use in the defence of the truth.

The discussion of the subjects of the Immortality of the Soul and of the Destiny of the Wicked might embrace a very wide range of argument, in-

cluding extended philosophical investigation and much learned criticism of the original languages of the Scriptures. But the truth of these, like that of all other fundamental doctrines of Christianity, can be satisfactorily demonstrated by a shorter and simpler process. We have written, not with the hope of silencing quibblers or of convincing the prejudiced, but of satisfying sincere inquirers after truth. We have aimed to make the discussion short, plain and convincing. How far we have succeeded we must leave each reader to determine; but we can say truly that, if the arguments employed are unsound, we are wholly unable to detect their unsoundness. We offer to our readers evidences on which our own Christian hopes rest.



# IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

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## CHAPTER I.

### STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION.

**T**WO great questions have, in all ages, excited the anxious inquiries of thinking minds. The first is the question of the introduction of sin and suffering into our world; the second is the question of the continuance of evil, moral and natural. The number and variety of the theories adopted on these subjects sufficiently indicate the difficulties attending the investigation, and show how little satisfaction human reason alone can afford. It is to the second of these two great questions that we propose now to devote a few

pages, relying mainly, in the investigation, on the inspired Word, though not neglecting the aid of reason.

That in this world all do sin and suffer, we know; but we inquire anxiously, What is to be the future of man? Will natural and moral evil always continue, or will both terminate either at death or at some future period? Those who regard man as only a material organism, whose conscious existence is terminated by death, of course have no difficulty respecting his eternal future. That which has no conscious existence can be neither holy nor unholy, neither happy nor unhappy. Amongst professing Christians some have held that at the resurrection, though not before, all will be holy and happy. Such is the creed of Universalists. Others think there will be, at least to many, a period of suffering after death, but that ultimately all will be saved. Such is the belief of Restorationists. But the great body of Christians of all ages have believed that after death the righteous

will be for ever holy and happy ; the wicked for ever unholy and unhappy.

But we are now plausibly urged to abandon the long-established creed of the Church of Christ, and to embrace new doctrines respecting the nature of man and his future. It is contended that evil, natural and moral, must come to an end ; that in the government of the infinitely perfect Jehovah, it cannot be eternal. It is further contended that it will terminate, not, as Restorationists and Universalists suppose, by all becoming holy and happy, but by *the annihilation of the wicked*. Those of the human race who die in unbelief, it is affirmed, will, as the just penalty of their sin, return to their original elements, and cease for ever to have a conscious existence. This doctrine has practical bearings far more important than the mere question of the final doom of the wicked, for—

1. It involves the doctrine that the human soul is mortal. One of the most plausible advocates of the annihilation of the wicked