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SOUL—"DOES DEATH END ALL?"—REV. JOSEPH COOK,
ET ALII.

(By ALLEN PRINGLE.)

What is meant by soul? This is the first thing to be settled. Is the soul of man an indescribable "immaterial entity" apart from the mind, dwelling in the body during life, but independent of it; or is the soul the mind—the aggregate of our mental activities—a consensus of our faculties? The former view is ancient, the latter modern—the one is theological, the other scientific. We know, of course, what Webster and Worcester, and the "Commentators" tell us of soul, by *they* cannot settle the question.

In order to ascertain definitely what is meant by soul among theologians of the present day, I addressed letters of enquiry to five or six of the leading ones in this country, viz, Prof. Dawson, McGill College, Montreal; Rev. G. M. Grant, Queen's University, Kingston; J. T. Lewis, Episcopalian Bishop; Dr. Lynch, Roman Catholic Archbishop; Rev. Dr. Nelles, Victoria College, Cobourg; and Dr. Ryerson, Toronto. The following, with some variation, according to the one addressed, is a copy of the letters:—

"J. W. Dawson, I.L.D., F.R.S., Principal McGill College, Montreal:—

"DEAR SIR:—Without making any apology for addressing you, I proceed at once to state my request. Will you kindly give me a definition, as a scientist and theologian, of 'Soul,' or 'Spirit'—that part of man which is said to be immortal.

"Please give a concise statement of what you understand by the 'soul of man.'

"Yours, etc."

I received, if not satisfactory, at least courteous replies from all, except his Grace the Roman Catholic Archbishop, who made no reply, or, if he did, it failed to reach me.

Only three, however, of these theologians ventured to define "Soul," and tell what they understood by the word. Prof. Dawson, whose conception of it I was more anxious to get than

any, as he is regarded the ablest champion Christianity has in this country, did not give any definition, as the question was, he was "sorry to say, not at all in his line of study." As Prof. Dawson, by implication, if not directly, deals with theological questions in his polemical defenses of the Bible from a scientific standpoint, it is to be regretted and wondered at that he can give no account of "soul" either from a scientific or theologic standpoint.

Among the three (Principal Grant, Bishop Lewis, and Dr. Ryerson), who do give their definitions of "soul," there is much divergence. One retains the ancient Greek and medieval notion of soul as an essence or entity entirely independent of the body, and producing all of its activities—mental and physical. Another takes a more modern and scientific view, and makes soul to include the intellect, affections, etc. The other seems to hold a sort of compromise position—a middle ground—between the *entity* hypothesis and the present "consensus of the human faculties" exposition of the Positivist school. There is thus little agreement among theologians as to what soul is. In looking for anything like consensus among them, you only find "confusion worse confounded." The chaos of conflicting notions and conceptions of soul may, however, be reduced to two general propositions, thus:—First, Soul is an *essence* or *entity* independent of the organism, yet indispensable to all of its activities; and Secondly, Soul is the sum of the mental activities, resulting from organization. The former conception, in a much more extended sense, runs through Greek philosophy and medieval literature. Plato supposed this soul or entity to exist in all organisms and forms, animal and vegetable, being the source, not only of every activity, but of every *form*. The only residuum, however, of this ancient fragment that now remains is, according to Mr. F. Harrison, the notion of *man's* immortal soul. The Christian philosophy of these times still locates this soul entity in man behind all his activities; but without the consistency of the Greek philosopher, denies it to animals, trees, etc.

Now, if every manifestation of mind or emotion in man requires soul behind it to produce it, then, of course, every manifestation of mind or feeling in the lower animals must also have soul behind it to produce it. Hence, on this hypothesis, every animal has an immortal soul. This is the only logical conclusion from the premises. If man is immortal, he must inevitably take with him every animal which manifests *mind*, from the polecat to the gorilla.

In the way of this soul theory are certain difficulties which those who still adhere to it, on grounds of *evidence*, ought to clear up. The first little difficulty which we meet is, that there is not one particle of proof forthcoming outside of so-called revelation