

God who gave it. It is an offspring of the eternal spirit, and of kin to the angels of light. Our earthly parent is the father of our flesh; God is the father of our spirit.

The immortality of the soul is recognized and illustrated and enforced in the scriptures; but the belief of this great truth is not confined to nations which have enjoyed the light of a written revelation. It has been accredited by all nations, ancient and modern, civilized and barbarous; by the Egyptians, Arabians, Greeks and Romans; by the Persians, Scythians, Celts and Druids; by the natives of Africa and of the islands of the Pacific; by the New Zealander, and by the Red Man of our own continent.

This belief, or expectation, or hope, or desire of immortality, varying with the degree of mental and moral cultivation, is the imprint of *divinity* on the soul of man; "the divinity which breathes within us," and is an ever present witness of our superiority to the brutes, and of our relationship to angels. Neither the false philosophy of unsanctified civilization, nor the stupid ignorance of barbarism, can wholly eradicate it. Plato taught that they who pass through life with peculiar sanctity of conduct, will be received on high into a pure region, where they will live without their bodies, through all eternity in a state of joy and delight which cannot be described. He believed the soul had a separate and individual existence after the death of the body, and had a complete consciousness of its own identity. Xenophon and Cicero entertained the same opinions. Socrates taught that as the soul is immortal, he knew no way in which it could avoid the evils of a future state but by becoming wise and virtuous. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul is interwoven in the poetry of Greece and Rome. It is found in the writings of Homer, and Ovid, and Virgil, who were mirrors of the age and reflected the popular opinion of the countries in which they lived. Homer spoke of "the renowned, the far-famed nations of the dead, of whom all have heard." They were the subjects of religious rites, and were addressed with sacrifices and supplications.

'Tis true, 'tis certain (said he), man tho' dead
retains

Part of himself; the immortal mind remains.

Park, the traveller, found the belief in this truth to be prevalent among the natives in the interior of Africa. Our missionaries meet with it in Burmah, in Persia, among the Brahmins of India, and throughout Asia. The Hindoo widow offers herself a sacrifice on the funeral pile of her husband, that she may enjoy with him the happiness of a future state. The American Indian believes the soul survives the body, and is taken by the Great Spirit into the spirit land. But a belief in the resurrection of the identical body, and its eternal existence in a purified state, is confined to those nations which have enjoyed the benefit of a written revelation.

When Paul preached at Athens the resurrection of the body, he was laughed to scorn, and called a babler by the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. Pliny, in his natural history, (which Humboldt calls the greatest Roman memorial transmitted to the literature of the middle ages.) pronounces the resurrection of the body to be an impossibility. Celsus, who was called the Hippocrates of Rome, stigmatizes it as abominable, and ridicules the Christians as madmen for believing it.—Tertullian says every sect of the philosophers denied its truth, and Augustine says there was nothing in the Christian religion so vehemently opposed by the philosophers as the resurrection of the body; even at Jerusalem, where the writings of Moses had been publicly read from time immemorial, so great was the disbelief of this truth among the higher classes—the men in office and the men of learning—that when Peter and John preached there, the priests who officiated at the altar, and the captain of the temple, were grieved, and laid hands on them, and shut them in prison, because they preached the resurrection of the body. And the charge of heresy for preaching in the temple of Jerusalem, the resurrection of the body, was brought by certain Jews from Asia, against Paul, on which he was arraigned before Felix.

The Egyptians, and other ancient heathen nations, believed in the transmigration of the soul into the bodies of other men, and even into the bodies of beasts and reptiles. The learned Pythagoras taught that the same soul might pass through the bodies of many men in succession.