



THE SCRIPTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY.

WE propose to set forth as compactly as possible what we conceive to be the scriptural doctrine concerning the constitution of man. Scriptural, we say: for the Scripture, although not written in a metaphysical form or with metaphysical intent, is true in itself, and, therefore, true to the facts of metaphysics. Moreover, the true anthropology is, as we believe, a revelation, as much as the creation, or the immortality of the human personality, or the reconciliation by Christ. We propose accordingly to free ourselves as far as possible from all preconceptions, and come to the Scripture really as disciples, content to adjust, if it shall seem necessary, our theories to the Scripture, rather than to accommodate the Scripture to our theories. Above all things, we shall seek to avoid the spirit of dogmatising. Always indecorous, it is specially so in a matter so grave and confessedly baffling as this. At the very outset, we make an emphatic disclaimer of any expectation of being able to lay down all our definitions with absolute accuracy. We frankly confess that we do not always see the whole of our own path clearly. We expect therefore to be charged here and there with self-contradictions. Nor will the thoughtful reader, who knows that Truth is many-sided, and must always be more or less eclipsed by the shadow of human finiteness, deem this a fatal objection. We feel assured that he will judge the views here presented by a

standard which would be more rigorous were they set forth as dogmas rather than as hints and tentatives.

Doubtless the treatment of our topic would be more natural and authoritative were we to pursue the exegetical method. But the limits prescribed by the nature of a periodical forbid such a treatment. We must content ourselves with stating as compactly as possible the conclusions we have reached by the light of exegetical study. We hardly need hint that this very compactness will doubtless often expose us to the charge of indistinctness, ambiguity, and self-contradiction.

The scriptural anthropology, as we conceive, is this: Man consists of *σῶμα*, *ψυχὴ*, and *πνεῦμα*,—body, life or living principle, and spirit. It is the union of these three which makes up the wonderful thing which we call a human being. It is not the body alone, nor the living principle alone, nor the spirit alone, which makes the man; but it is the union of the three. Herein lies our defence of the term anthropology, which in this discussion we use in its strictly literal, primary sense. Holy Scripture, unlike man, deals not in half-truths. Its anthropology is more than somatology; more than psychology; more than pneumatology; it is somatology, psychology and pneumatology combined. We do not affirm that this three-fold distinction which we have indicated is always observed in Holy Scripture. But we do affirm that it is observed with sufficient frequency and emphasis to demand from us a formal recognition of it. Neither do we pretend to discriminate with absolute accuracy between these several parts or aspects of man's nature. Even in the realm of matter there are some forms of life concerning which it is exceedingly difficult to decide whether they belong to the animal or the vegetable kingdom, as is implied in the very term formerly used to designate them, namely, *zoo-phyte*, that is, animal-plant. So in the human organism, we cannot point out with absolute accuracy where the body ends and the vital principle begins, or where the vital principle ends and the spirit begins. Certainty here is conceit. We must content ourselves with the scriptural statements on this point, and with such general outlines as observation and reasoning give. With these preliminary hints and cautions, we enter on the examination of these three elements.

I. Beginning with that which is most palpable to us, we survey, first, **THE BODY.**

Nor need we dwell long on it; for all will admit that, so long at least as we are constituted as we now are, the body is a constituent part of man. How far the body is *absolutely* essential to the existence

of the personality, or in what its identity precisely consists, are questions which will be more appropriately discussed when we come to consider the bearing of our doctrine on the matter of the resurrection. For the present it is enough to say that the body is the organ of communication between the other parts of man's nature and the outward world: the avenue through which he is fed emotionally, intellectually, morally.

II. We pass to consider the second element of man's nature, which we take the liberty of calling THE PSYCHE.

We are aware that the use of this term exposes us to the charge of pedantry. But inasmuch as Christendom has persisted in clinging to the old pagan notion of man's double nature, instead of accepting the scriptural doctrine of his triple constitution, we are compelled, in fidelity to God's revealed truth concerning the second principle intermediate between body and spirit, either to invent a new word, or to transfer the scriptural term itself, *ψυχή*, a word which, as a personification, already figures in our language under the form of Psyche. Modesty cannot long hesitate as to which is the better alternative. What now does Holy Scripture mean when it uses the term psyche?

Primarily, comprehensively and controllingly, the term *ψυχή* means, the breath, the life, the vital principle, that mysterious force which makes the object which possesses it, whatever it be, a living being. Thus in the Mosaic account of the creation of the animal kingdom including man, the terms describing the water and land animals, and rendered in our version living creatures, or creatures having life, are literally identical with the terms rendered living soul. Thus: "Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath *נפש חיה*, psyche, life, soul."¹ "Let the earth bring forth the *נפש חיה* living psyche, living creature, living soul, after his kind."² "To every thing that creepeth, wherein there is *נפש*, psyche, life, soul, I have given every green herb for food."³ "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a *נפש חיה*, living psyche, living soul."⁴ The term psyche then in its primary, essential, controlling sense, means the life, the vital principle.

And what most wonderful thing this vital principle or principle of life is! What its nature is, whether material or immaterial,—what its

¹ Genesis i. 20.

² Genesis i. 24.

³ Genesis i. 30.

⁴ Genesis ii. 7; I Corinthians, xv. 45. See also Genesis ii. 19; xxxv. 18; xlv. 30; Exodus xxi. 23; Leviticus xvii. 11; xxiv. 18; Joshua ii. 13; I Samuel xxiv. 11; II Kings i. 13; Job ii. 4; xii. 10; Lamentations ii. 12; Ezekiel xlvi. 9; Matthew ii. 20; xvi. 25, 26; Mark viii. 45; I John iii. 16; Revelation viii. 9; and very many others.