

# What is the Soul?



## WHAT IS THE SOUL?

"For the word of God is living and operative, and keen above any two-edged sword, and penetrating up to the parting of soul and spirit..." (Heb. 4:12).

THE LACK OF VITALITY and penetration in human literature and conversation is most clearly evidenced by the utter failure to distinguish between soul and spirit. It is almost universally the case that when the soul is spoken of, the spirit is intended. The English words which have been derived from *psuchē*, the Greek word for soul, all, erroneously, refer to various aspects of spirit. For instance, *psychology* has to do with the mind, not the soulish sensations. *Psychic*, instead of bearing its true meaning, soulish or sensual, denotes pneumatic, or spiritual. These are not mere curiosities of philology, but the sure indexes of the present day confusion which we must detect and avoid if we wish to get the truth on the subject of the soul.

To get a firm grasp of the true and proper idea conveyed by the term "soul" is not the work of an instant. It can only come by a careful consideration of the contexts in which it occurs. These form an infallible index of its force. Yet here the English reader is at a great disadvantage because the version to which he may be accustomed often translates the same words in the original by a variety of terms in the English, thus concealing their true force. *Psuchē*, soul, is so often translated by the term "life" that the distinction between soul and

life as well as between soul and spirit (the source of all life) is almost obliterated.

With two exceptions the word soul, as found in the Authorized Version, always represents the Hebrew word **נפש**, *nphsh*. Job 30:15 and Isaiah 57:16 have no reference to the soul. The latter should be rendered "breath." Apart from these, every occurrence of "soul" in the accepted version may be depended upon to be correct.

But in a multitude of instances *nphsh* has been translated by other English expressions. We give a list of these passages so that the student may correct them in his King James Bible. In all, there are about forty-four variations. These are grouped together where the meaning is allied.

THE TRANSLATIONS OF **נפש** (*nphsh*)

IN THE AUTHORIZED VERSION

(*except where rendered "soul"*)

- any*, Lev. 2:1, 24:17; Num. 19:11; Deut. 24:7.
- appetite*, Prov. 23:2; Eccl. 6:7.
- beast*, Lev. 24:18, 18, 18.
- body*, Lev. 21:11; Num. 6:6, 19:13; Hag. 2:13.
- breath*, Job 41:21.
- creature*, Gen. 1:20, 21, 24, 2:19, 9:10, 12, 15, 16; Lev. 11:46, 46.
- dead*, Lev. 19:28, 21:1, 22:4; Num. 5:2, 6:11.
- dead body*, Num. 9:6, 7, 10.
- deadly*, Psa. 17:9.
- desire*, Eccl. 6:9; Jer. 22:27, 44:14; Mic. 7:3; Hab. 2:5.
- fish*, Isa. 19:10.
- ghost*, Job 11:20; Jer. 15:9.
- heart*, Exo. 23:9; Lev. 26:16; Deut. 24:15; 1 Sam. 2:33; 2 Sam. 3:21; Psa. 10:3; Prov. 23:7, 28:25, 31:6; Jer. 42:20; Lam. 3:51; Ezek. 25:6, 15, 27:31; Hos. 4:8.
- hearty*, Prov. 27:9.
- him*, Prov. 6:16.
- life*, Gen. 1:30, 9:4, 5, 5, 19:17, 19, 32:30, 44:30, 30; Exo. 4:19, 21:23, 23, 30; Lev. 17:11, 14, 14, 14; Num. 35:31; Deut. 12:23, 23, 19:21, 21, 24:6; Josh. 2:13, 14, 9:24; Judg. 5:18, 9:17, 12:3, 18:25, 25; Ruth 4:15; 1 Sam. 19:5, 11, 20:1, 22:23, 23, 23:15, 26:24, 24, 28:9, 21; 2 Sam. 1:9, 4:8, 14:7, 16:11, 18:13, 19:5, 5, 5, 23:17; 1 Kings 1:12, 12, 2:23, 3:11, 19:2, 2, 3, 4, 10, 14, 20:31, 39, 39, 42, 42; 2 Kings

1:13, 13, 14, 7:7, 10:24, 24; 1 Chron. 11:19, 19; 2 Chron. 1:11; Esth. 7:3, 7, 8:11, 9:16; Job 2:4, 6, 6:11, 13:14, 31:39; Psa. 31:13, 38:12; Prov. 1:18, 19, 6:26, 7:23, 12:10, 13:3, 8; Isa. 15:4, 43:4; Jer. 4:30, 11:21, 19:7, 9, 21:7, 9, 22:25, 34:20, 21, 38:2, 16, 39:18, 44:30, 30, 45:5, 46:26, 48:6, 49:37; Lam. 2:19, 5:9; Ezek. 32:10; Jonah 1:14, 4:3.

*lust*, Exo. 15:9; Psa. 78:18.

*man*, Exo. 12:16; 2 Kings 12:4; 1 Chron. 5:21; Isa. 49:7.

*me*, Num. 23:10; Judg. 16:30; 1 Kings 20:32.

*mind*, Gen. 23:8; Deut. 18:6, 28:65; 1 Sam. 2:35; 2 Sam. 17:8; 2 Kings 9:15; 1 Chron. 28:9; Jer. 15:1; Ezek. 23:17, 18, 18, 22, 28, 24:25, 36:5.

*mortally*, Deut. 19:11.

*one*, Lev. 4:27.

*person*, Gen. 14:21, 36:6; Exo. 16:16; Lev. 27:2; Num. 5:6, 19:18, 31:19, 35, 40, 40, 46, 35:11, 15, 30, 30; Deut. 10:22, 27:25; Josh. 20:3, 9; 1 Sam. 22:22; 2 Sam. 14:14; Prov. 28:17; Jer. 43:6, 52:29, 30, 30; Ezek. 16:5, 17:17, 27:13, 33:6.

*pleasure, at*, Deut. 23:24; Psa. 105:22; Jer. 34:16.

*self*, Lev. 11:43, 44; Deut. 4:15; Josh. 23:11; 1 Kings 19:4; Esth. 4:13, 9:31; Job 18:4, 32:2; Psa. 131:2; Isa. 5:14, 46:2, 47:14; Jer. 3:11, 17:21, 37:9, 51:14; Amos 2:14, 15, 6:8; Jonah 4:8.

*they*, Job 36:14.

*thing*, Lev. 11:10; Ezek. 47:9.

*whither will*, Deut. 21:14.

*will*, Psa. 27:12, 41:2; Ezek. 16:27.

*would have*, Psa. 35:25.

[*omitted entirely*, Gen. 37:21; Lev. 24:17, 18; Num. 31:35; Deut. 19:6, 22:26; Judg. 18:25; 1 Sam. 22:2; 1 Chron. 5:21; Isa. 3:20, 56:11; Jer. 2:24, 40:14, 15].

By combining this list with the occurrences of "soul" the student will have at his command every context which the Hebrew Scriptures afford for the study of this very important term.

The following list of the occurrences of *psuchê*, the Greek word for soul, will enable those who have no concordance of the original to check all the divine contexts. Every reference is given, segregated into groups according to the grammatical relation which the word sustains to its context. Thus "soul" is in one line while "souls," in the plural, is in another line. The genitive of the Greek is found following "of soul" and "of souls." The dative follows "in soul" and "in souls." The

accusative, our English objective, is not distinguished in form from the nominative, but rather by its place in the list, toward the bottom. The vocative is indicated by an exclamation point, thus, "soul!" In each case those references which have no article ("the") are given first, then those which have it, prefixed by "the soul" for the singular, or "the souls" for the plural. A helpful definition is also included.

ALL THE OCCURRENCES OF *psuchē*, SOUL,  
IN THE GREEK SCRIPTURES

The result of imparting breath to the human, Gen. 2:7; in the blood, Lev. 17:14; limited to moving creatures, Gen. 1:20; distinguished from life, Gen. 2:7; from spirit and body, 1 Thess. 5:23—a *sentient* being. *Figuratively*, the person as viewed from the standpoint of his sensations or experiences, Rev. 6:9.

soul, Acts 3:23, 4:32; Rom. 13:1; Rev. 16:3. the soul, Matt. 6:25, 12:18, 26:38; Mark 14:34; Luke 1:46, 12:23; John 12:27; Acts 20:10; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 10:38; 3 John 1:2.  
 souls, Acts 2:41; 1 Pet. 3:20. the souls, Acts 27:37.  
 of soul, Acts 27:22; Eph. 6:6; Col. 3:23; Heb. 4:12, 10:39.  
 of the soul, Matt. 16:26; Mark 8:37, 12:30, 33; Rom. 16:4; Heb. 6:19; 1 Pet. 2:11; Rev. 18:14.  
 of souls, 1 Pet. 1:9. of the souls, Acts 27:10; 2 Cor. 12:15; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 2:25.  
 in soul, Matt. 6:25; Acts 2:43, Phil. 1:27. in the soul, Matt. 22:37; Luke 10:27, 12:19, 22; Phil. 2:30.  
 in souls, Acts 7:14. in the souls, Matt. 11:29; Heb. 12:3.  
 soul, Matt. 10:28; Mark 3:4; Luke 6:9; Rom. 2:9; 1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Pet. 2:8; Rev. 8:9. the soul, Matt. 2:20, 10:28, 39, 39, 16:25, 25, 26, 20:28; Mark 8:35, 35, 36, 10:45; Luke 2:35, 9:24, 24, 12:20, 14:26, 17:33; John 10:11, 15, 17, 24, 12:25, 25, 13:37, 38, 15:13; Acts 2:27, 20:24; Rom. 11:3; 2 Cor. 1:23; Jas. 5:20; 1 John 3:16; Rev. 12:11.  
 souls, 2 Pet. 2:14; Rev. 18:13. the souls, Luke 21:19; Acts 14:2, 22, 15:24, 26; 1 Thess. 2:8; Jas. 1:21; 1 Pet. 1:22, 4:19; 1 John 3:16; Rev. 6:9, 20:4.  
 soul! Luke 12:19.

We suggest that these passages be translated uniformly. It is no crime to cross out mere human deviations and insert divine verities in their place. If soul

meant "life," as our translators so often suggest, why was it not written with the Greek word for "life" in the original instead of the word for soul? We have already convinced ourselves of the fact that soul and life are utterly distinct by the phrase "living soul." (Gen. 2:7). If we translate the word *nphsh* in that phrase as it is so often translated, we come to the absurd conclusion that, as the result of the impartation of the breath of the living, man became a "living *life*." Could Job have said, "My *life* is weary of my *life*"? (Job 10:1).

The distinction between soul and spirit is no less pronounced. Besides the passage in Hebrews 4:12, which gives the Word of God the monopoly on this distinction, we have the list "spirit and soul and body" (1 Thess. 5:23). It is needless to say that this does not enter into the relation of the soul to the spirit and body at all, but only to its blameless preservation unto the presence of our Lord. The fact that the soul is the effect of the union of spirit with body is neither taught nor refuted by this text. It is thoroughly in harmony with the two-fold constitution of man. For, while the soul is not one of the units of which man is constituted, its condition in view of His coming has a place quite as important as the body and spirit. And the preservation of the entire man involves the soul just as much as the two units on which it is based.

Now, instead of the soul and spirit being the same, they are put in striking contrast in the discussion of the differences between the first man, Adam, and the last Adam, Christ Jesus. The first became a living *soul*, the last a vivifying, or life-giving *Spirit*. This same contrast is even more apparent in the adjectives "spiritual" and "soulish." In the second chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians this distinction is obscured by the

rendering "natural." Not the "natural," but the *soulish* man is not receiving those things which are of the spirit of God (1 Cor. 2:14). Such perception is reserved for the spiritual man (vs. 12). So, too, in the fifteenth chapter. The body is there called a *soulish*, not a "natural" body, in contrast to the spiritual body of the coming resurrection (1 Cor. 15:44, 45, 46).

#### THE SOUL SPEAKS OF SENSATIONS

The truth that the soul refers to sensation or conscious experience is really acknowledged by the translators themselves, though they have concealed it from their readers by their renderings. Many who think of the soul as the seat of our highest spiritual faculties would be surprised to know that it finds its fitting place between such words as "terrestrial" and "demoniacal."

In James 3:15 we have "terrestrial, *soulish*, demoniacal." The translators rendered it: "earthly, *sensual*, devilish." Here, however, if we take the word sensual in its present day acceptation, they have overshot the mark. But in their days it probably meant very nearly what soulish means—one who is swayed by physical sensation. The crowning proof of its antipathy to spirit lies in its last occurrence. There we read of those who are "*soulish, not having the spirit.*" (Jude 19). Here again the translators rendered it "sensual."

Having noted that there is a distinction between life and spirit and soul, we are now ready to inquire more closely into the characteristics which define the latter. The first few occurrences in Genesis will supply us with the information which we need at this point. There we find developed the broad distinctions between flora and fauna, plants and animals.

It is most instructive to note the contrast between the introduction of plants on the third day of God's work of

restoring the earth and the creation of living souls on the fifth and sixth days. Plants are, indeed, living organisms quite as much as animals, yet they differ from animals in a number of important particulars which are duly emphasized. Plants do not *roam*. But the first mention of living souls brings out this characteristic. "*Roam* shall the water with the *roaming*, living soul." (Gen. 1:20, C.V.). This rendering may, perhaps, best convey to our minds the fact that the words "bring forth abundantly" and "moving" of the common text are but different grammatical forms of one expression in the Hebrew. To breed may be involved but it is not so stated. Roam expresses the idea of motion, which is further developed in the next occurrence of the word "soul."

Plants cannot *move*. They are rooted in their place. But not so with animals. This is brought out in the second statement; "And creating is God (the Alueim) ... every living *moving* soul." (Gen. 1:21).

Plants are never called souls, yet, like the animals, they derive their nourishment from the soil and carbon from the air. But in them this combination causes no sensation or consciousness, which is the chief characteristic of soul. Generally speaking, soul is spoken of only in those forms of life which can move from place to place, which possess the further function of sensing the outward world, of being conscious of their own existence.

Now when, a few verses later, man is brought upon the scene, we are informed that he, too, becomes a "living soul." (Gen. 2:7). What shall this convey to our minds? Simply that he, too, like the animals, would be able to move from place to place, would have the power of sensing the world around him and a conscious realization of his own existence. He is not a plant, but an animal,

and possesses these endowments in common with other animals.

Instead of this phrase marking a difference between the man and the previously created animals, it shows his similarity to them. In fact, until we study and appreciate what has already been said of living souls, we are at a distinct loss to realize what is meant when the man is said to "become a living soul."

A striking recognition of man's distinctly *human* attributes is found in the apostle Paul's address at Athens (Acts 17:28). The spirit is recognized in the statement that "In Him we are living." The soul is implied in the word "moving," and the body in the third item, which is the usual word for "are," for the identification of the man with his material structure is consistently confirmed throughout the scriptures. "In Him we are living and moving and are" is a clear indication of the apostle's analysis of mankind. And that he considered it most elementary is shown by the fact that he does not hesitate to proclaim it to unbelieving idolators.

Plants have life as well as animals, but it is not a conscious life. They do not see and feel and hear and taste. This is the force of being a "living soul."

The connection of soul with the senses is evidenced by a selection of interesting passages. We will give the renderings of the Authorized Version. The taste is especially intended in such scriptures as "whatsoever thy *soul* lusteth after" (Deut. 12:15, 20, 21), "thy *soul* longeth to eat flesh" (Deut. 12:20), "eat grapes thy fill at *thine own pleasure*" (Deut. 23:24), "Their *soul* abhorreth all manner of meat" (Psa. 107:18), "a thief, if he steal to satisfy his *soul*" (Prov. 6:30), "eateth to the satisfying of his *soul*" (Prov. 13:25), "an honey-comb, sweet to the *soul*" (Prov. 16:24), "if thou be a

man given to *appetite*” (Prov. 23:2), “The full *soul* loatheth an honeycomb, but to the hungry *soul* every bitter thing is sweet.” (Prov. 27:7), “should make his *soul* enjoy good” (Margin reads: “delight his *senses*,” Ecc. 2:24), “the *appetite* is not filled” (Ecc. 6:7), “to make empty the *soul* of the hungry” (Isa. 32:6). In all of these cases the point lies in the sensation accompanying the use of food, the physical satisfaction which the soil furnishes when we partake of its products.

This is amply confirmed by our Lord’s words: “Do not worry about your *soul*, what you may be eating, or what you may be drinking... Is not the *soul* more than nourishment?” (Matt. 6:25). These creature needs are what the soul craves, yet true satisfaction is not to be found in them. Even as He said on another occasion: “For what will a man be benefited, if he should ever be gaining the whole world, yet be forfeiting his *soul*? Or what will a man be giving in exchange for his *soul*?” (Matt. 16:26). This is the evil which the wise man saw: “A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his *soul* of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it...” (Ecc. 6:2, A.V.).

#### “SAVING SOULS”

So, too, he who prefers the indulgence of his physical senses to loyalty to Christ, who shrinks from the discomfort and distress which His disciples must endure, he shall lose his *soul* in the time of Christ’s exaltation. But he who “loses his *soul*” for Christ’s sake, he will gain it in that glorious future kingdom. In the phraseology of today’s theology, to “lose your *soul*” is the very worst calamity which can occur. It is equivalent to “eternal damnation.” Yet our Lord used these very words and urged His disciples to “lose their *souls*.”

"For whosoever should be wanting to *save his soul* shall lose [or "destroy"] it." (Matt. 16:25). He who would save his soul (which is continually put before the sinner today) was to be discouraged and restrained by the fact that such would destroy their souls. Once we allow the true scriptural force of "soul" the passage is luminous with meaning and "the salvation of soul" takes on an entirely different color. This phrase, so loudly proclaimed today, is never once used in Paul's epistles. In fact, he very seldom speaks of the soul. Indeed he highly commends Epaphroditus for "risking his soul" for the sake of his fellow Philippians (Phil. 2:30). This risk was evident in his sickness and depression which accompanied it. Paul could never commend anyone risking their salvation for any cause. But in Hebrews and James' and Peter's first epistle, which are concerned with the *physical* blessings of the earthly Kingdom, in these letters we read of the salvation of the *soul*.

The term "soul" is often used as a figure of speech to denote the person from the standpoint of his sensations or experience. This is called a metonymy of the adjunct, because an object is characterized by some closely related thing. In the International Edition of the Concordant Version this figure is marked with a small superior capital <sup>A</sup>, standing for the figure of Association. Thus we speak of a human being as a "soul" when we wish to call attention to their feelings or sensations or experiences. A familiar instance is the phrase "the *soul* that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezek. 18:4, A.V.). In Israel, they had been using a proverb: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge." In other words, they accused Ieue (i.e., Jehovah) of punishing them for the misdeeds of their fathers. In reply Ieue says that the soul that sins—the one who

actually experienced the sensations connected with the sin—that soul shall die, and not one that never was experimentally connected with the sin.

With this key in hand, how much more impressive and harmonious is the proverb, “A righteous man regardeth the *soul* of his beast; but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.” (Prov. 12:10). It is not simply the *life* of the beast which is here spoken of, but the comfort and strength and sustenance of the beast which is the object of the just man’s solicitude. He will not overload it; nor will he underfeed it. He will see that it is well taken care of at all times. That this is the real thought is confirmed by the second member of the couplet, for all of this is contrasted with the cruelty of the wicked.

And how luminous does our Lord’s invitation become in the light of a true understanding of the soul! “Hither to Me, all who are toiling and laden... and you shall be finding rest in your *souls*.” (Matt. 11:28, 29). It is the soul that feels the pressure and distress of life’s burdens and responsibilities and it is the soul that finds its rest in His yoke.

And the same light shines from that striking contrast—the rich man who said to his soul: “Soul, many good things have you laid up for many years. Rest, eat, drink, make merry.” (Luke 12:19). But his soul was never to enjoy the rest or the feast which he had prepared for it.

Therefore the Lord told them not to worry about their soul, *what they may be eating*. We would have said that eating was a care of the *body*, not the soul. But He knew better, and, while He spoke of clothing as connected with the body, eating was for the soul. Indeed all living souls need nourishment, but not necessarily covering. No soul can live without food, but the animals,

except man, need no protection from the elements beyond what is provided for them by nature.

Just as the divine illustration of the spirit was in the *breath*, so we have the divine picture of the soul in the *blood*. Much has been lost by the arbitrary change of the word *soul* to “*life*” in the passages where this is clearly taught. Notice how the two are used together in Genesis 9:4. “*Yea, only flesh with its soul, its blood, you shall not eat.*” (C.V.). This truth is again emphasized in the phrase, “*for the soul of all flesh, it is in the blood*” (Lev. 17:11, C.V.). And again, “*...for the soul of all flesh is its blood. It is in its soul...for the soul of all flesh, its blood is it.*” (Lev. 17:14, C.V.).

Now, why should the blood be chosen to picture the *soul* to us? We have already seen that the *soul* has its origin, not in the body merely, nor yet in the spirit alone, but in their combination. And what could better portray this than the blood? It is fed from food by means of assimilation and thus is linked to the body and the soil; it is fed from the air by means of respiration and is thus linked to the breath and spirit.

Having learned that *soul* is synonymous with sensation and that the *soul of the flesh* is in the blood, we are prepared for the further truth that “*it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.*” (Lev. 17:11, A.V.), or concordantly rendered, “*for the blood, it is making a propitiatory shelter in (or, for) the soul.*”

Now, as the *soul* is in the blood, what is more appropriate as a means of propitiation than blood? The same holds true in the higher sphere of justification or acquittal. The blood of Christ, the memorial of His sensations or sufferings for sins, is the pledge of our safety from coming indignation (Rom. 5:9). Christ’s suffering was over when the soldier pierced His side and

blood flowed forth (John 19:34). And, after His resurrection, when He sought to calm His disciples, He could not say (which would have been most natural) that a spirit has no flesh and *blood*, but “a spirit has not flesh and *bones* according as you behold Me having.” (Luke 24:39).

In perfect accord with all this we are told that there is a *soulish* body and there is a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:44). The last Adam became a life-giving, or vivifying spirit, in contrast with the first Adam who became a living soul. Flesh and *blood*, indeed, is not able to enjoy an allotment in the kingdom of God, for the blood is the badge of a soulish body, while flesh and bones is in accord with a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:50). The statement that Christ’s flesh was not acquainted with decay (Acts 2:31) in the tomb is enough to show that it was the very same flesh which endured the suffering of the cross. And this is put beyond question by the nail prints and the spear wound. And the further fact that His body is bloodless reminds us that a propitiatory shelter, for the pardon of Israel’s sins, as well as those of the whole world, has been accomplished (1 Jn. 2:2). The “blood” that is “making a propitiatory shelter” has been poured out.

The just and merciful law which Ieue gave to His people Israel, while it insisted on the death of countless victims in sacrifice and countenanced the slaying of animals for food, made due provision that they should not suffer. It was obligatory that the hunter pour out the blood of an animal taken in the chase (Lev. 17:13) and blood was never allowed to be eaten.

To this very day the slaying of animals for food is the work of a Jewish rabbi who is specially trained for the task. He has a keen bladed knife with which he severs

the animal's throat and drains off the blood. The carcass is called "Kosher" meat. No other will be eaten by the pious Jew. This is far better than the usual practice of stunning an animal about to be slaughtered, for it not only eliminates suffering for the animal, but avoids the possibility of tainting its flesh by means of the blood during the process of dying.

The blood of the sin offering was poured out at the foundation of the altar (Lev. 4:7, 18, 25, 30, 34; 5:9). When their souls were poured out these souls went underneath the altar. It is said that in Solomon's temple there was a vast pit under the altar to receive the rivers of blood which flowed from the thousands of sacrifices which were offered upon it. So that we must seek the soul of the sacrifices underneath the altar, where the blood had been poured.

It is the suffering and anguish which God's faithful witnesses will endure during the reign of Antichrist that calls for avenging. When Abel died his blood cried from the *ground*, whence it had been poured (Gen. 4:10). But when these martyrs die for the sake of their testimony to the one great Sacrifice, their blood is, as it were, poured out underneath the *altar* and their death ascends as a sweet savor to God. Hence we read of those under the fifth seal (Rev. 6:9) who were slain because of the word of God and because of the testimony which they had, that their *souls* were underneath the altar, where it was customary to pour the blood of the animal sacrifices. And the reason for the figure characterizing them as "souls" is very evident, for they cry for avenging on those dwelling on the earth who had shed their *blood*. It was the sufferings unto death which they had endured for His sake which cried aloud for God's judging and avenging. We need not imagine that

Abel's blood, which had been swallowed by the ground, actually became endowed with the organs of speech and made an articulate audible appeal to Ieue. Neither should we suppose that the souls of these martyrs received a miraculous embodiment for the purpose of crying aloud for avenging on their adversaries. To say the least it would take a large altar to cover them all or very small souls to be cramped in such numbers into so small a space. Such a dismal, bloody, ashy pit would hardly be a fit recompense for their previous tribulation!

Many attempts have been made to define the soul. Among these may be mentioned the suggestion that it refers to man as an *organism*. This is chiefly founded upon those passages in which a dead soul is translated a dead "body," which could not be touched without defilement. Yet these instances are better understood when we remember the figurative usage of the word in connection with death. When death is viewed as an experience, it is the soul which departs; when it emphasizes the end of life, it is the spirit which expires. It all depends upon the viewpoint.

That the soul is not merely another name for "organism" may be seen from several considerations. Plants are organisms, yet they have no soul. They are living organisms but not living souls. The glorified body, too, could hardly be *contrasted* to a living organism for it continues to be such even when it becomes a spiritual body. To call a soulish body an organized body tells us nothing more than is already contained in the word body. Let us put the word "organized" for soulish and it will be most evident that it will not do. "The *organized* man receiveth not the things of the spirit." (1 Cor. 2:14); "earthly, *organized*, devilish." (Jas. 3:15); "*organized*, having not the spirit." (Jude 19)—these

are discords which hinder, rather than help our apprehension of the true force of the term "soul."

The context gives us the needed clue to a clear distinction between soul and spirit. The soul senses the material, tangible, visible, physical sphere; the spirit moves in the realm of the ethereal, the invisible, the metaphysical. The soul *sees* the letters upon the page, the spirit *perceives* the meaning which they convey. Time and time again, the terms which primarily refer to soul have been transferred to spirit. We *taste* food with the soul and we *taste* God's goodness with the spirit. We *feel* the comforting warmth of the sunshine with the soul, while we *feel* the effects of His love in our spirits.

It is not that the soul is essentially bad and the spirit essentially good. Nor yet the reverse, for many evil things, such as pride, may be spiritual rather than soulish. Yet, as the delights of the senses are satisfied by the physical, so the spirit craves the metaphysical. The prevailing tendency is towards allowing the soul to rule. Elegant edifices, robed choirs, popular preachers—all these appeal to the soul and seek to satisfy the senses. This tendency is not surprising since our present body is a *soulish* body. It exaggerates the importance of its sensations. It does not readily respond to the spirit.

Thus, to sum up, just as human *existence* is joined to the soil (for the *human* was formed of the soil *before* the spirit was imparted), and as spirit is the source of *life*, so the soul is the seat of *sensation*. And for human beings, sensation is impossible except where there is a material body vivified by a spirit. Sensation does not depend upon a distinct entity or organism apart from either body or spirit, but rather upon their union. This union and its resultant sensation is termed "soul" in the sacred Scriptures.

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**Concordant Publishing Concern**  
**P.O. Box 449**  
**Almont, Michigan 48003**