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S The destiny of the human

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THE DESTINY OF THE HUMAN RACE.

"As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood : so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty ; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made ; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints—as it were dropped by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered."—*Butler's Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

"Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention ; but from reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so it is not mine ; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine ; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours."—*Augustine*.

"The times have changed. * * * At this moment we may be quite sure that no scheme of religious belief will be able to hold its footing abroad in the world, or beyond the walls of closets and saloons, which does not, in some intelligible and coherent manner, make provision for securing our peace of mind in regard to the present lot, and to the prospects of the human family."—*Isaac Taylor*.

THE
DESTINY
OF
THE HUMAN RACE :
A SCRIPTURAL INQUIRY.

BY HENRY DUNN.

A NEW AND REVISED EDITION.

“Even now, after eighteen centuries of Christianity, we may be involved in some tremendous error, of which the Christianity of the future will make us ashamed.”—*Vinct.*

LONDON :
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, AND CO.,
STATIONERS' HALL COURT.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY J. AND W. RIDER,
BARTHOLOMEW CLOSE.

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THE present work first appeared about nine years ago. It has long been out of print, and many requests have been made for its re-publication.

It is now, after careful revision and some abridgment, offered at half the original price. The portions that have been withdrawn will not, it is hoped, essentially lessen the value of the book, while its reduction in cost may be expected to widen the circle of its readers.

The first chapter fully explains the object and character of the publication.

BLACKHEATH, *January 1, 1872.*

CONTENTS.

PART I.

CHAP. I.—THE OBJECT OF THE WORK:—

	PAGE
Not to uphold Universalism	3
Not to deny an Elect Church	3
Regards the Race considered as a whole.	4
The question—Whither do they go?	5
The inquiry neither unpractical nor dangerous	5
The Apostle John and the closed book	6
A virtuous heathen and a modern Christian	6
The <i>existence</i> of evil not the great mystery	7
God yearns for human affection	7
Satan's lie involves God's truth	8
The one great and awful question	9
Bishop Butler on truths yet undiscovered	9
Revealed facts of the Bible	11
The authority of the Church	12
The teaching of St. Paul	13
Christ promoted doubt	14
Faith not childish	14
The duty of private judgment.	15
Acceptance of a doctrine not faith in it	17
Why men prefer half-convictions	18
Investigation not inexpedient.	19
God has provided for all difficulties	20

	PAGE
CHAP. II.—MAN A SINNER AND A SUFFERER :—	
The message of the Gospel remedial	22
Sin a great Educator	22
Also like night, a great Revealer	23
The cost of the education terrific	24
Evil not independent of God	25
CHAP. III.—THE REDEEMER OF HUMANITY :—	
The hopes of Ancient Seers	26
Universal aspect of Redemption	27
Individual aspect of it	27
The privileged must be the perfected	28
Higher mysteries for believers	28
CHAP. IV.—THE WORLD OF PROBATION :—	
The language of Moses to the Israelites	30
Bishop Butler on the analogy of probation to early education and discipline	31
Dr. Harris to John Foster on Probation	33
The pulpit, the platform, and the closet	33
The ‘whispers’ of Divine Revelation	35

PART II.

CHAP. I.—SIN FROM THE CHRISTIAN STANDPOINT:—	
Wrong-doing the habit and the joy of man	40
The Saviour comes to alter this	41
The Usurper dethroned	42
Proofs of this fact	43
Few love evil for its own sake	45
The extent of Christ’s redemption	46

CONTENTS.

ix

PAGE

Logical difficulties	47
Dr. Archer Butler on liability to error	48
The potter and the clay	49

CHAP. II.—THE WRATH OF GOD:—

An expression of Divine indignation	50
Illustrations from the Old Testament	51
Different degrees of Wrath	51
Illustrations from the Prophets	52
Misuse of Prophetic language	53
Outside nations not without God	53
John the Baptist's call to the Jews	54
Alford, Gill, and others on 'the Wrath to come'	54
St. Paul's use of the word 'wrath' in Romans	54
His approach to Universalism	55
'Vessels of Wrath,' meaning of the phrase	57
Interpretation of Doddridge and others	57
'The Children of Disobedience'	58
The 'Wrath of the Lamb'	58
The 'Greater Damnation'	59
The basis of the Evangelical Theology	61
Inferential conclusions	62

CHAP. III.—REVELATIONS REGARDING HELL:—

Hell and Future Punishment	63
Sheol, or the grave, translated Hell	64
Hades often mistaken for Gehenna	65
St. Peter on Tartarus, or 'the deep'	65
Meaning of the word Gehenna	66
Illustrations from Scripture and the Talmud	67
The 'Lake of Fire'—what it signifies	68
The 'furnace of fire'	71
The 'second death'	71

	PAGE
The 'mist of darkness'	72
Different significations of the word 'Perish'	73
Destruction not necessarily Eternal death	74
Hell admits of no degrees	75
'These shall go away into Eternal Punishment'	76
Meaning of the text—the sifting of the heathen	77
The parable of Dives and Lazarus	80
Hades a place of punishment to the wicked	81
Stuart on 'perishing' and the 'second death'	86
Will any be ultimately annihilated?	86
Bishop Pearson on Eternal torment	86
God never sanctions torture	87
Statements of President Edwards and others	91

CHAP. IV.—THE UNCONVERTED MAN:—

Are all such 'vessels of wrath'?	93
Grounds for the conclusion	94
Dr. Chalmers on the virtuous and the vicious	95
Future retribution discriminating	96
Dr. Owen on limitations in the word 'all'	99
Reconciliation depends on the Reconciler	101
Dean Alford on remission of 'sins that are past'	101
Redemption may involve a future probation	102
The Son and the hired Servant	103
The peculiar position of the believer	105
The element of fear in Scripture	106

CHAP. V.—THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT:—

The Atonement a great fact	109
Mr. Hebert on <i>the inference</i> from the fact	110
The Old Testament on the coming of Messiah	111
The narrative in the Gospels	112
The teaching of Christ	113

Coleridge on the twenty-second Psalm— <i>a note</i>	114
Christ 'stricken' but not punished by God	115
Necessity for the death of the Redeemer.	116
False views on this subject	117
Dean Alford on Propitiation	118
Counterpart and contrast to Mosaic sacrifice	118
Dr. Candlish on the extent of the Atonement	119

CHAP. VI.—CONVERSION AND REGENERATION :—

Meaning of the term 'Conversion'	120
Regeneration implies a new Birth	121
Further distinctions between the two	122
Cecil on preaching to dead sinners	123
Dr. Griffin (of Boston,) on the same topic	123
The inexorable demands of Logic in Theology	125
Where the difficulty arises	126
Conversion regarded as apart from Regeneration	127

CHAP. VII.—THE DOCTRINE OF THE NEW BIRTH :—

The word 'Regeneration' explained	131
The doctrine not peculiar to the New Testament	132
The conversation with Nicodemus	133
Two distinct suppositions	134
The Regenerate are the Elect	137
The 'little flock' and the saved world	139

CHAP. VIII.—THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT :—

Regarded as Power and as Life	142
Illustrations from Scripture	142
Bezaleel, Cyrus, Balaam, and Judas	143
The mission of 'the Comforter'	145
The world and the Church	148

	PAGE
Various forms of error regarding the Spirit	149
The view of the Fathers	149
That of the Reformers	150
Modern delusions	151

CHAP. IX.—REVELATIONS REGARDING HEAVEN :—

Its diverse meanings in the Bible	154
To be distinguished from the invisible world	156
The Rich man in Hell	156
Hades may be a probationary state	157
Not to be confounded with ‘Purgatory’	158
The visions of the Apocalypse	158
The believer in ‘the Heavenlies’	159
Bishop Newton on ‘the pattern’ on the Mount	159
Isaac Taylor on the state of seclusion	160
The immediate happiness of the saint	161
The Father’s house and ‘many mansions’	161
Testimony of Scripture in relation to Heaven	163
The Elect Church,—the Bride	164
The perpetual humanity of man	164
Dr. Chalmers on the renewed earth.	167
Isaac Taylor on the Employments of the Future	168
The New Jerusalem.	170

PART III.

CHAP. I.—SIGNIFICATIONS OF ‘SALVATION’ :—

Three distinct senses in Scripture	175
Never means mere deliverance from Hell	177
The Jews on Future punishment	177
Who were by them regarded as ‘the wicked’	178
Belief in the final salvation of Israel	180
Salvation commonly from ‘Sin’	181

	PAGE
Sometimes from 'wrath,'—St. Paul . . .	181
Represented as a thing <i>of degree</i> . . .	183
Illustrations from Scripture . . .	185
A present blessing, yet 'an inheritance' . . .	186

CHAP. II.—GREATER AND LESSER SALVATION:—

Why this distinction so distasteful to many . . .	187
The entire question one of Divine testimony . . .	188
All salvation is 'of grace' . . .	189
The higher only by personal faith exercised here . . .	190
Degrees of happiness in the world to come . . .	191
The parable of the ten virgins. . . .	193
The man who is taken captive . . .	193
The destruction of 'the power of death' . . .	194
The blessing of Abraham . . .	195
Faith exercised in other states of existence . . .	196
Rationalizing yet evangelical divines . . .	196
Forgiveness may be retracted . . .	199
The mocking shadows of the True . . .	200

CHAP. III.—SALVATION OF THE MULTITUDE:—

The multitudes of Judea . . .	201
Christ's dealings with them . . .	202
Facts not to be over-ridden by inferences . . .	202
The necessities of systematic Theology . . .	203
The agency of the Elect Church . . .	205
The salvation of infants and of idiots . . .	206
Dean Alford on 'by faith' and 'through faith' . . .	207
'Bastards and not sons' . . .	208
'As many as be perfect' . . .	209

CHAP. IV.—ELECTION TO SPECIAL SERVICE:—

Divine choice implied from the beginning . . .	213
Service the purpose of the choice . . .	213

Election <i>a doctrine</i> in the New Testament	214
Its characteristics in Scripture	215
Always mercy grafted on mercy	215
Its individual character	216
The Covenant with Abraham	216
The Jews the <i>elite</i> of the world as it then was	217
The last election under the Gospel	219
St. Paul's teaching regarding it	219
Consists of the most Christ-like souls	221
Does not exclude or prejudice others	222
Exposition of texts	225

CHAP. V.—THE GOSPEL PREACHED BY PAUL:—

This dispensation hidden from the Prophets	228
Special revelation to St. Paul	229
The mystery hitherto kept secret	230
His anxiety not for the Heathen	231
Characteristics of the last days	232
‘According to <i>my</i> Gospel’	233
The Resurrection and the new Moral World	235
Dr. Arnold and Dean Stanley on the Future	235
The ‘times of Restitution of all things’	237

PART IV.

CHAP. I.—THE RESURRECTION A REVEALED FACT:—

First notice of it in the New Testament	243
The complement of the earthly life	244
Supposes a return to a sensuous existence	245
Prebendary Griffith on the Apostles’ Creed	245
The body the medium of communication.	246
The Sadducean spirit, ancient and modern	247
Exposition of texts	248

St. Paul before the Council, Felix and Agrippa	252
‘With what body do they come’?	253
The Egyptian ‘Book of the Dead’	254

CHAP. II.—THE RESULTS OF RESURRECTION:—

The announcement to the Shepherds	256
Notice of three texts in particular	257
Joseph John Gurney on ‘the light in every man’	258
St. Paul before Festus	260
Illustrated by Moses and the Prophets	260
Three passages in the Epistle to the Romans	262
Dean Alford and Professor Hodge	264
Man thinking himself wiser than God	265
Isaac Taylor on interpretations of Scripture	266
Robert Haldane on ‘the Sons of God’	266
Views of Scott, Hodge, and Adam Clarke	267
St. Paul’s testimony in the Epistles	268
The destruction of the works of the Devil	270
Stuart, Guyse, Owen, and Gill.	271
Mr. Birks on ‘the First-Born’	272
The ‘Salvation to be revealed in the last time’	273
‘Things hard to be understood’	275
The testimony of Ezekiel and Isaiah	276

CHAP. III.—THE KINGDOM OF GOD:—

Various significations of the term	278
Both subjective and objective	278
An inheritance in reversion	279
The expectations of the Disciples	280
A synonym for ‘Eternal Life’	281
In mystery and in manifestation	283
The testimony of the Gospels	284
Those who are to enter the Kingdom	284
Forms of its realization	285

	PAGE
Exposition of <i>ten</i> passages in the Gospels .	286
Testimony of the Acts and the Epistles .	296
Exposition of <i>eight</i> distinct passages .	297
<i>National</i> pre-eminence of the Jews .	310
The only State that owns a heavenly ruler .	311
The <i>first nation</i> to bow before the King .	312

PART V.

CHAP. I.—OBJECTION AND REPLY:—

The Eternity of Punishment opposed .	315
Reply to the objection	316
Christ cannot be defeated by Satan .	316
The conditions of silence	318
God more merciful than man	319
Illustrations from Scripture	319
Restoration of 'the race,' not Universalism .	320
Sir James Stephen on modern scepticism .	321
Dr. Chalmers on the few that will be saved .	321
Robert Hall on weakness of evidence .	321
Henry Rogers on death in early childhood .	322
A serious defect in Theology	322
Will increase prevailing indifference to religion	322
Reply—We are unable to judge	323
Illustrations in support of the assertion .	323
The objector met on his own ground .	324
Effect of the orthodox view on man .	324
Popular errors relating to the future .	325
Safety the one thing thought of	326
Doctrine of man's moral inability	327
Isaac Taylor on interior antagonism .	327
The Gospel not suicidal in character .	328
Albert Barnes' distress under the old view .	329

Robertson of Brighton on 'the doubt of love' .	330
Dean Stanley on Christ and the religious world	331
Rewards and Punishments for believers	334
The human conscience	334
Dr. Norman McLeod on wide-spread indifference	335
His speculations utterly baseless	336
Unwillingness to receive 'the wider hope' .	337

CHAP. II.—ON MODERN THOUGHT :—

The appeal to Scripture only	339
Reason and conscience not to be set aside .	339
The facts of the world and the facts of Scripture	340
Reason appealed to in the New Testament .	340
Canon Lyttleton on child-like submission .	341
Mr. Goldwin Smith on ecclesiastical faith .	342
The prevailing sense of uncertainty	343
Want of truthfulness in professed convictions .	343
Preference for what is inadequate and vague .	344
Foolish speculations about Heaven and Hell .	345
Dr. Guthrie on the extent of salvation . . .	346
Modern capacity of feeling—its character .	347
Causes of the revival of Romanism	350
Theology wings the shaft of the Infidel . .	350

CHAP. III.—ON APOSTOLIC EXPECTATIONS :—

The world a great mystery to the Apostles .	351
But not a painful one	352
Their sources of Joy and Strength	353
Men who are not conquerors, yet not devils .	354
The great Mission Field of the Church . .	354
Reflections on the Divine Wisdom and Love .	354
'Slow of heart to believe the Prophets' . .	354

PART I.

INTRODUCTORY.

CHAP. I. THE OBJECT OF THE WORK.

II. MAN A SINNER AND A SUFFERER.

III. CHRIST THE REDEEMER OF HUMANITY.

IV. THE WORLD OF PROBATION.

CHAPTER I.

THE OBJECT OF THE WORK.

WHAT we want to know is simply this,—Whether it has, or has not pleased God to reveal in Holy Scripture *anything* regarding the final destiny of *the human race* viewed collectively and as a whole?

I am not supposing that any difficulty exists as to the teaching of the Bible relative to the future lot of those—be they many or few—who, in whatever form, obtain such an acquaintance with the will of God, that the acceptance or rejection of the salvation offered in the Gospel becomes *to them* a matter of necessity. I am neither directly nor indirectly seeking to uphold what is usually termed ‘Universalism;’ for the probability that *some* will be finally lost,—whatever that may imply,—seems to me to be an inevitable inference from certain passages of Scripture. It is at least an *unauthorized* conclusion to insist that no man can or will utterly destroy himself.

I am not, for an instant, questioning the existence of a redeemed and elect Church, ‘chosen’ in Christ ‘before the foundation of the world’ (Eph. i. 4);

for, open the Bible where we may, we find a doctrine of election, running, like a line of light, through the entire book, illuminating some of its darkest passages, and only disappearing amid the effulgence of a glory which bathes all around in its unutterable splendours.

The inquiry simply relates to *the race considered as a whole*; to the men that, in the days of Noah, 'filled the earth with violence,' and perished amid the waters of the Deluge; to the children of Israel, fallen and apostate in the times of the prophets; to the great idolatrous empires which seduced, and ultimately enslaved them; to the Greeks and the Romans, the civilizers and lawgivers of modern organized society; to the Jew, peeled, and scattered, and unbelieving, in all lands through more than eighteen hundred years; to the countless millions of China and India, and of the North, which every thirty years pass away and repeat their numbers; to Africa, with her endless tribes, and dark and cruel superstitions; to slaves, enthralled either by cupidity or lust; to the Mahommedan everywhere; to that vast mass of humanity, in short, which, at any given period, may be estimated at eight hundred or a thousand millions, and which, multiplied by each successive generation as it comes and goes, at length accumulates an amount of sin and sorrow, of superstition, cruelty, and blood, at the very thought of which the human mind *reels*.

until relieved by the recollection that to each separate sufferer God has given *many* animal enjoyments, *some* pure affections, relative or social, and a *capacity*, at least, for much that is far higher and nobler than anything that *here* appears to find birth and development.

The question we want answered, in regard to all this multitude of beings, is,—Whither do they go? Christ is the Redeemer of ‘the world ;’—in what sense has He redeemed *them*? The Gospel is, avowedly, ‘good tidings of great joy, which shall be *to all people*’ (Luke ii. 10) ;—when and how will it become such to these of whom we speak? Christ is to have the ‘heathen’ for His ‘inheritance,’ and ‘the uttermost parts of the earth’ for His ‘possession’ (Psa. ii. 8) ;—does the ‘inheritance’ referred to include or *exclude* the countless myriads that are already dead and gone? The Lord Jesus came ‘to *destroy* the works of the devil’ (1 John iii. 8) ;—will an incalculably vast majority of all who have ever lived and breathed on earth be given to the great enemy for ever? ✓

Indifference, or devout timidity, calling itself submission, may set aside all such inquiries as unpractical, or even dangerous ; indolence, under the guise of humility, may refuse to look at them ; ✓ spiritual selfishness, wrapt in the mantle of its own supposed security, may forbid such investigations as presumptuous : but Christ-like souls can no

more be unconcerned as to what may or may not be *revealed* respecting this vast sum of humanity, than they can stand by unaffected when the destitute perish from hunger, or the dying agonize in pain.

The *individualism* of modern thought in relation to the future life is as foreign to the spirit of the prophets of the Old Testament dispensation as it is to that of the apostles of the New. John '*wept much*' when no man was found worthy to open and to read the mystic book of the Apocalyptic vision. The tenderness that thus expressed itself was neither weak nor blameworthy; it was the pity of the child of God. He could not be content till he knew more of the destinies of his race, because the Father of that race would not allow him to be content.

Would not allow him,—I say it reverently,—to be content, as modern Christians are, to leave the matter uninquired into, exclaiming, but in a very different sense from that in which Abraham uttered the words, 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' A virtuous heathen, in his darkness, might have said as much as they do. In the absence of revelation, such a course—the only one then possible—would be piety. In men who have the Bible in their hands, it is but the cloak of indifference.

It is often urged, and by many regarded as a

sufficient reason for abstaining from all inquiry into a subject confessedly obscure and difficult, that the *existence* of evil is the one great, insoluble mystery,—that there is, in fact, no other difficulty in theology beyond ; and that until *this* is accounted for, all investigations into the character and course of the Divine procedure are vain and futile. I deny such a conclusion altogether. The *existence* of evil in the world *is not* the mystery of mysteries. It is made such only as a pretext for deterring men from the examination of theological conclusions as to its eternity and final consequences to the race. It is surely not very difficult to see that to creatures the *knowledge* and the experience of evil is essential to the knowledge and experience of *some of the highest forms* of good ; that he who, in a world like this, is led by Divine grace *voluntarily* to choose God as his portion, is higher, far higher, than he who never knew that any other choice was possible.

The grand peculiarity of the Christian revelation is, that it represents God as yearning—if I may so speak—for *human affection*. Abraham is the friend of God ; David is the man after God's own heart ; ' I call you not servants, but friends,' says Christ to His disciples. The appeal to all men is, ' My son, give me thine *heart*.' It is this revelation of Himself to men,—perfected in the Incarnation,—that renders *love* to God *possible*.

For aught we can tell, *love* to God, properly so termed, can be exercised only by redeemed men. Angels, or other high and glorious intelligences, may adore, or admire,—be filled with awe or wonder,—but we have no proof that they can *love* God as a redeemed sinner does, or that they can ever be partakers of the Divine nature in the sense of that oneness with God through Christ which is the peculiar privilege of His people. Evil, and its accompaniments, pain and sorrow, alone render this peculiar fellowship in good *possible*.

Little did Satan suspect, as with boundless malice he tempted our first parents with the words, ‘Ye shall not surely die,’—‘Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil,’ that he was but uttering an unconscious prophecy of that which should really come to pass. Little did he imagine that the very process by which he hoped to alienate man for ever *from* his Maker, was the one by means of which man was to be brought nearer than ever *to* his Maker ; to rise higher than the angels that never fell, and to exhibit to the universe the sublime spectacle of a life of faith, based on a thorough *appreciation* of good as distinguished from evil, and of God as the fountain of all excellence. The final triumph of evil, in the eventual ruin of the race, would indeed be a mystery. But the Bible reveals no such doctrine. It is a purely human invention.

We may, indeed, never be able to remove *all* that is perplexing or oppressive to the heart in the condition of humanity ; we may be obliged, again and again, to fall back upon the assurance that every individual man is in the hands of One infinitely wiser and more loving than ourselves : but we should be unchristian, if not inhuman, were we to feel no interest in the inquiry whether the sufferings of the race will terminate with mortal life ;—whether in other worlds they will be continued as disciplinary, and therefore conducive to improvement ; or whether, being simply *punitive*, they will be prolonged and intensified through all eternity.

Yes ; this is the question,—which Piety has too long considered insoluble, and to which Priestcraft has ever turned as the pillar of its vile pretensions. *Reason*, indeed, can give us no reply to it ; but *Scripture*, perchance, may do so ; for, as Butler wisely remarks, “ the whole scheme of *Scripture* is not yet understood ; nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered.”

All that we *know* of the Divine character leads us to suppose that *some light*, at least, is thrown *there* on this great question. All that we *feel* of the Divine love within our own bosoms,—the boundless pity it gives birth to, and the benevolence it excites and fosters ; all that is involved in

the assurance that, while ‘secret things belong unto the Lord our God, those things which are revealed belong’ to us and to our ‘children ;’ that while ‘it is the glory of God to *conceal*,’ it is ‘the honour’ of *man* (kings) to ‘*search out* a matter’ (Prov. xxv. 2),—all these alike encourage us, hopefully, earnestly, and humbly, with true and sincere hearts, diligently to employ every faculty in an inquiry which, end as it may, can only lead to fresh assurances that God *is* love,—that Christ *is* Lord of all creation,—and that evil, with its depths of mystery, is now, and shall be evermore, self-destructive, and subordinate to good.

We ask, then, on this, as on every other subject that pertains to the hereafter, simply, ‘*What saith the Scriptures?*’ We seek the response from that holy oracle, precisely as we should seek one from Nature, were we endeavouring to fathom *her* secrets. Not by any supposed ‘light within ;’ not by the help of any imaginary personal insight or semi-inspiration fitted to explain or to override the inspiration of prophets and apostles ; not by elaborately-drawn inferences, however ingenious or apparently necessary ; not by the application, in any form, of a merely human and finite logic to that which has relations with “the Infinite and Unconditioned,” can we hope, in this matter, to obtain satisfaction for our souls. Child-like simplicity (which may God, in His mercy, grant us),

dealing with *revealed facts*¹ just as they stand in the Divine record, and interpreting them naturally and by the context, without regard to any system of theology, or to any preconceived conclusion, can alone, we are well aware, lead us to truth and to repose.

Such is the temper and spirit in which we *desire* to carry on our inquiry. That we shall fail, to some degree at least, in doing so, is but too probable. We commend ourselves, therefore, to Him who can alone 'keep us from falling,' and leave in His hand the result of our pains.

Two objections, which some may regard as *preliminary*, must not however escape notice.

The *first* is, that the question at issue *ought* to be regarded as already settled, by the general

¹ *Revealed facts.* "The revelation contained in the Scriptures extends only to FACTS ; not to the theory of these facts, or their original causes. The most important truths are communicated in a dogmatic, not a theoretic, manner. We are taught, on the testimony of Him who cannot lie, *insulated facts*, which we cannot connect with those reasons with which they are undoubtedly connected in the Divine mind. They rest solely on the basis of Divine authority ; and we are left as much in the dark with respect to the mode of their existence, as if they were not revealed."—*Robert Hall.*

A SCRIPTURE FACT, then, is to us *revealed truth*, dogmatically communicated ; resting solely on the basis of the Divine authority ; and viewed apart from any *reasons* for its proclamation, or any *deductions* which may be drawn from it. And this, be it observed, whether that which is revealed be *an event*, or whether it be what is usually termed *a doctrine*.

consent of the Church in relation to the teaching of Scripture ; nay, that St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans, has, by inspiration, said all that can be said upon it, in telling us that ‘when Gentiles, which have not the law (*i.e.*, a written law), do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves : which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another ;’ while, in the verses that precede the parenthesis in which the words we have quoted occur, he states distinctly, that ‘as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law’ (Rom. ii. 12—15).

To this I reply, that while the “general consent” of Christians, either now or in past time, should make us *modest* in our opposition, it cannot bind us as an authority. Any plain declaration of St. Paul’s certainly ought to do so. We are bound, therefore, to show that the Apostle, neither in the text quoted, nor elsewhere, *has* declared that the heathen, remaining such, cannot be saved.

As, however, I shall have occasion to examine the passage in question at length, it may be only necessary to say *here*, that it is erroneous to suppose that St. Paul, in the chapter from which the text is taken, is declaring *the final lot* of the heathen. He is doing no such thing : he is simply

seeking to bring in all men alike guilty before God (iii. 9, 10) ; showing that neither by the deeds of the law, nor in the absence of law, can any human being be justified before his Maker. He shuts up all alike in sin, that all alike may learn their need of a Saviour ;—*the Jew*, notwithstanding his imagined self-righteousness in obeying the law ; *the Gentile*, in spite of the plea that he has had no revelation. The one he convicts of having continually violated the law in which he boasts (ii. 17—24) ; the other he finds equally guilty of offence against the light of conscience and of nature (iii. 13—16). ‘*Therefore*,’ says he, ‘by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight’ (iii. 20). Considered in themselves, and *apart from the redemption which is by Christ*, all are alike exposed to wrath, ‘for there is no respect of persons’ with God. ‘As many as have sinned without law shall (apart from Christ) perish without law ;’ and ‘as many as have sinned in the law (if without Christ) shall be judged by the law,’—a rule by which all alike are lost.

As this is followed by the glorious announcement that ‘the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets ; *even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ* UNTO (or for the benefit of) all, and UPON (or over—*i.e.*, clothing like a garment) all them that believe : for (between Jew

and Gentile) there is no difference' (iii. 20—22),—it is clear that the final ruin of the heathen is not his theme.

The *second* objection is, that investigations of this character only promote doubt ; that they are, in fact, inconsistent with that childlike and unquestioning spirit which it becomes us, as sinners, to cultivate.

To this it may be replied, in the words of a well-known writer,¹—"In what was the life of our blessed Lord consumed, but in continual labour to make the multitude *doubt* the distinctive principles which the highest authorities in their Church had brought them up in ?"

"The implicit faith of a child may be very natural and very engaging ; but is it the duty of a man to remain a child ?—to force himself back to childhood ?—to depress the development of that one faculty which constitutes him specifically a man ? For what *is* this child-like (say, rather, childish) credulity which is so bepraised ? Remember, it is the quality of a child only because (and just so long as) he is in the stage of mere animal being ; while that which constitutes his special humanity is yet undeveloped. We admire this credulity under the term child-like, but its true definition is, that it is animal-like ; that it is the

¹ Sewell's "Christian Morals."

instinct of irrational nature,—that instinct which leads all animals to believe without reflection, and even in opposition to experience, that what *seems* to be *is*,—even as the hen will sit again and again upon the same deceptive lump of chalk.”

To these true and forcible remarks I shall merely add a few additional observations of a more general character, and then close this introductory chapter.

No one certainly can well deny that the exercise of the right of private judgment in matters of religion has sometimes been fearfully injurious to those who have enjoyed it, and not unfrequently proved an occasion of stumbling, by multiplying heresies.

For this reason, or rather on this pretext, it has been maintained by many that, in the search after Divine truth, the guidance of the reason and the understanding should be abandoned; and that, since the path of humility is the path of safety, it is the part of wisdom to accept without question, at the hands of the Church’s appointed ministers, those doctrines which, it is assumed, God has committed to her charge, alike for the temporal benefit and eternal salvation of mankind.

This view of the supposed duty of a Christian man is, by the Church of Rome, as every one knows, openly held, and unblushingly defended. By Protestants it is professedly repudiated; but

there can be no question that, with various modifications, it is maintained in one form or other by almost all Christian communities who attach vital importance to particular forms of religious thought.

To the Romanist it has generally been deemed sufficient to reply, that any such attempted transference of responsibility, in relation to the discovery of truth, can, after all, only be accomplished by and through an act of private judgment ; for if a man, from whatever motive, resolves to abandon *his own* judgment in relation either to truth or duty, and to place himself without reserve in the hands of others, he is surely as responsible for the wisdom or folly of that resolution, and for all the consequences to which it may lead, as he can be for any other choice or decision.

To the Protestant, who often unconsciously adopts Romanist principles, in consequence of his dread of doubt, his love of system, or his deference to the authority either of dead ‘Fathers’ or living ‘Brethren,’ it seems necessary to suggest other considerations, not less important, although very frequently forgotten.

And the first is this,—that the dangers and evils which arise from free thought in matters of religion, do not differ in the least from those which arise from any other exercise of that liberty which is essential to a state of probation, and without which it could not exist. Man, we may rest assured, has

not been placed in a world like this, and surrounded by temptations of every kind, without some good reason,—a reason consonant, without doubt, with the highest wisdom and love. The great end of his being unquestionably is, that he may learn, by Divine grace, to choose the good and to reject the evil, to abandon the false and to cling to the true, ‘to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever.’ But how, it may well be asked, can this be done, unless he is at perfect liberty to inquire freely, to search diligently, and to adopt, in all honesty and integrity, whatever he believes to be the good and the true?

A second consideration, also generally disregarded, is, that *the mere acceptance* on authority of any doctrine, true or false, is not equivalent to faith in that doctrine, but *quite a different thing*. Faith is not mere *assent* to truth, but something much higher. It is the reception of it *for a reason*, and a reason powerful enough to command submission; it supposes a conviction of truth so deep and profound, that the persuasion of it becomes, in extreme cases, the ground and justification of martyrdom.

For intelligent men to shrink from the investigation of truth of any kind, however specious may be the pretext, whether it be called indolence or timidity, or whether it be baptized by the Christian name of humility, is, in fact, to evade the most

important part of their moral discipline, and to render the complete development and perfection of human character impossible ; for humility, patience, candour, and charity find very little scope for exercise in the mind of any man who accepts his opinions on the authority of a party, or holds them for any other reason than that they are supported by evidence.

Two things undoubtedly tend to make men prefer half convictions to entire ones, and adherence to a party, to personal and independent inquiry. The *one* is, the extreme difficulty,—the pain and labour, the weariness and exhaustion, which often attends honest researches. The *other* is, the *imperial demand* which truth, thus sought, makes upon a man for submission when it is attained.

So long as a man is only half convinced, so long as he is simply yielding to the views of others, he can easily evade the consequences of his admissions ; if they involve anything very self-denying or disagreeable, he can easily *put off* his obedience to a more convenient season. But if, after long and anxious investigation, he has arrived at the conclusion that what he professes to have received as Divine is absolutely and eternally true, he has no choice between submission and misery ; for if truth, thus received, be not a sovereign good to man, its possession must be a source of constant wretchedness.

In our own day, Christian men shrink from independent investigation, chiefly because they think it *inexpedient*. Certain forms of thought, right or wrong, have, it is said, for generations been regarded as 'worthy of all acceptance ;' under these forms men have received spiritual blessings of the highest value ; in the belief of them they have lived well, and died happily. Why unsettle such landmarks ?

The only answer that can be made to such a remonstrance is this : The forms of thought, of which you speak, are either true or false. If true, inquiry will only strengthen their hold on men, and lead to their being still more generally supported and honoured. But if, from whatever cause, the suspicion has arisen that they are, after all, only *partially* true,—that they are, at the best, only one-sided exhibitions of truth, that they involve fallacies, or that they produce exaggerated, and therefore inaccurate impressions, they must on no account be shielded from examination ; for whatever may be the supposed value of any form of thought, if it involve important error, the support of it, or, which is the same thing, the determination not to undeceive those who hold it, is, in the eye of God, an immoral procedure. The exercise of integrity in this matter may be a sore trial to faith, but we may rely upon it, obedience will, in the end, bring with it its own 'exceeding great reward.'

The truth is, *all the difficulties and dangers that attend upon the exercise of private judgment are specially provided for by Him who has thrown upon us the responsibility of its exercise.*

Not, indeed, as some would tell us, by the residence upon earth either of an Individual or a Corporation, who, as Christ's Vicar, can solve all difficulties, and prove an infallible guide ; not, indeed, by the bodily presence of Christ himself as an abiding court of appeal ; but by what is far better, the presence and guidance of His Holy Spirit in the hearts of all those who desire Him.

And for what end is He thus willing to abide amongst us ? To strengthen the natural powers,—to illuminate the intellect,—to place the sage and the simpleton on the same platform, — to do *in reality* what the Roman Pontiff only pretends to do,—to solve all doubts, to make us infallible in our decisions, to render it impossible that we should go wrong in our pursuit after truth ? CERTAINLY NOT.

Such a gift would in no important sense differ from inspiration, and *if imparted generally*, would as completely destroy the character of our probation as that indolent reliance on human authority of which we complain. The only difference would be, that, in the one case, infallibility would be a reality, in the other it is a delusion.

Far otherwise is the intent and end of God's

great gift ; for it annihilates no distinctions, it supersedes no effort, it counteracts no weakness that is merely intellectual. It is, from first to last, an action on the heart. Under its blessed influence pride departs, prejudice gives way, and selfish passions, in all their endless variety, are weakened and subdued. But it does no more. It leaves us still to search after evidence, to balance probabilities, to be misled if we permit the old enemy to becloud our faculties. For the rest, God has adapted the human intellect to truth, just as surely as He has adapted the eye to outward nature ; and, in either case, we see *truly*, only in proportion as, by His mighty power, films are removed, and the organ of vision is purged and purified from *unnatural defilement*.

CHAPTER II.

MAN A SINNER AND A SUFFERER.

THE FALL OF MAN is the one *great fact* on which all the further revelations of the Bible hang.

Not to man *as man*, but to man *as a sinner*,—as fallen, depraved, alienated by wicked works, and in captivity to Satan,—is the word of the living God addressed.

The message it delivers is, from first to last, REMEDIAL ; it is a message of grace,—the announcement of a provision for the restoration of the lost.

Into *the origin* of evil it is vain for us to inquire. All we know on this point is, that it existed before the creation of man. Of its ill *effects* experience is but too constantly our teacher. Its *bitterness* no human pen can describe.

The *end* it is intended to subserve—for without an object and purpose its permission is inconceivable—may, more or less, be learned from the pages of Holy Scripture. It is, under God, THE GREAT EDUCATOR of the human family. It is the INSTRUMENT by which man learns how frail, how helpless, how dependent he is.

Therefore it was that our first parents were introduced into a world where evil existed. This fact alone is surely evidence enough that *not* for *unconditional* happiness, but for a *relative* one, more or less connected with moral trial, man was created ; that it was as much foreordained that ‘the first man, Adam,’ should struggle with evil, as that by ‘the second man, the Lord from heaven,’ it should be destroyed and made of none effect.

Sin, like night, is a great REVEALER. Through it man advances to a more intimate acquaintance with the character of God than, *so far as we know*, he could gain in any other way. Without its agency it is hard to see how he could ever be enabled *voluntarily to choose* God as his portion, and goodness as his chief joy ; could *ever* be fitted to rise higher than the angels ; or, as we have already intimated, *here* attain to that peculiar affection for his Maker which so strangely, and yet so lovingly, intermingles awe and filial confidence, shame and exultation, abasement and hope. *This kind* of love, unknown, probably, to other beings, is the fruit of sin and sanctification, of guilt and pardon, of the loss and the recovery of the Divine favour. And thus it comes to pass, as Luther well puts it, that ‘prayer and temptation make the Christian.’

But what a costly educator sin is ! The humi-

liation of the Glorified,—the suffering of the Sinless One,—is, in itself, a dreadful price to pay for its removal. Yet even this is not all ; for there are those (God only knows how many) who by it are ruined *for ever*. In no aspect whatever is it possible to contemplate the wickedness, the cruelty, the crime to which sin has given birth,—the sickness, the sorrow, the pain and misery which have followed in its train,—without feeling that it is indeed a stern teacher and a hard master.

One thought only is permissible. Evil is *subject to*, not independent of God. In no sense whatever can sin reverse the decisions or disturb the equanimity of the Lord of all. Anger, wrath, and jealousy, as connected with sin and sinning, are indeed attributed to God in Scripture, as well as love and grief, long-suffering and repenting. But these are only *translations* into human speech of things that cannot be conceived of by us except under a phraseology adapted to finite beings.

Confidently may we assume that the Fall can never *permanently* derange the purposes of God ; that the *ultimate design* He had in view in the creation of man, whatever that might be, will be eventually carried out ; that Satan can *do* nothing which, if it should seem good, God cannot utterly *undo* ; that, under any circumstances, the

Divine intentions, however accomplished, will finally be brought about with the least possible amount of loss consistent with the honour of the Creator and the welfare of the creature.

More than this we do not know ; *less* than this it is impossible to believe, without something like an implied reflection on the wisdom and goodness of the Father of us all.

CHAPTER III.

CHRIST THE REDEEMER OF HUMANITY.

THE promise involved in the mystic prophecy that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, in due time found its fulfilment in the birth of the Redeemer.

Ancient seers had long anticipated the advent of this Deliverer, in language glowing with expectation and delight. His coming is to them the restoration of the Paradise that was lost. 'They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks : nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more' (Isa. ii. 4). 'The government shall be upon his shoulder : and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.' 'Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together ; and a little child shall lead them. They shall not

hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain : for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea ' (Isa. xi. 5—9).

The angels announce His birth to the shepherds as 'good tidings of great joy, which shall be to *all people*.' Heaven re-echoes with the song, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to *man*.' He is 'a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel' (Luke ii. 32). He is 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of *the world*' (John i. 29).

Such is the gladdening and UNIVERSAL ASPECT of man's redemption.

But it has also an INDIVIDUAL AND EXCLUSIVE side,—one for *the believer* only.

'He that believeth is not condemned : but he that believeth not is condemned already, *because he hath not believed* in the name of the only begotten Son of God' (John iii. 16—18). Not to all, but to '*as many as received him*, to them gave he power (or privilege) to become the sons of God, even to them which believe on his name : which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God' (John i. 12, 13). 'No man,' says Christ himself, 'can come to Me, except the Father, which hath sent Me, draw (attract) him' (John vi. 44). And yet, 'except a man be born again, he cannot see (know or perceive) the kingdom of God' (John iii. 3).

Further,—the privileged must also be the *perfected*. They are to be ‘poor in spirit,’ ‘meek,’ ‘merciful,’ ‘pure,’ ‘peacemakers,’ the ‘salt of the earth,’ the ‘light of the world.’ They are *relatively* few,—everywhere the minority ; for the gate is ‘strait,’ the way ‘narrow,’ and ‘few there be that find it’ (Matt. vi. and vii. 14).

To these belong the higher mysteries of the Gospel.

‘Unto *you* (the disciples) it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God : but unto them *that are without*, all these things are done in parables : that seeing they may see, and not perceive : and hearing they may hear, and not understand ; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them’ (Mark iv. 11, 12).

For these—we had almost said for these alone—the Redeemer prays.

‘These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come ; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee ; as Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life *to as many as Thou hast given Him.*’ ‘I have manifested Thy name *unto the men which Thou gavest Me* out of the world. I pray for them : I *pray not for the world*, but for them which Thou hast given Me ; for they are Thine. Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, *as we are*’ (John xvii).

Such, and so striking, is the apparent *contrast* between the two sides of Redemption,—between the anticipations of those who waited for the advent, and the actual experience of those who witnessed it.

It seems impossible for any candid man to read the Scriptures fairly without being struck by the fact, that everything revealed *prior to the introduction* of Christianity would lead to the expectation that the triumphs of the Redeemer would be *immediate and universal*; while everything relating to its development, either in its earlier days, or during the eighteen hundred years of its existence, as clearly indicates *delay and limitation*.

Theories in explanation have never been wanting; but they are all utterly unsatisfactory. We turn from them to THE BOOK. *There*, if anywhere, shall we find the true solution of the problem that oppresses us. From no other quarter can even a solitary ray of light fall upon our darkness. We ask, therefore, for a purged eye and a purified heart, to enable us to discern in Revelation itself the hidden harmony which unites THE ELDER BROTHER OF THE ELECT WITH THE REDEEMER OF THE RACE.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WORLD OF PROBATION.

TEMPTATION, the Fall, sin, suffering, and Redemption, all alike suppose the present condition of mankind to be probationary and educational. The language of Moses to the Israelites seems to embody the great principle which underlies all human existence. ‘The Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord’ (Deut. viii. 2, 3).

What other ends the TEST to which God subjects His creatures may be intended to subserve *beyond this*, it may not be easy for us to decide. Butler, in his great work, regards the probation of man as analogous to that early education and discipline by which he is fitted for the obligations and services of mature life; and intimates that it may probably be intended to preserve us from

falling in other states of existence,—a supposition founded on the admission of at least a possibility that such future state may not be free from temptation; and that it may demand the exercise of tempers *akin to*, if not identical with, resignation, submission, and faith.

Whether this be so or not, or for whatever service in other worlds man may now be fitting, it seems at least clear that, in some form or other, the application of *a test* is, *in this world*, essential to his development and training as an intelligent and responsible creature.

We judge thus, because we have a right to suppose that *otherwise* God would not expose His children to the dangers involved in trial; and we partly see the reason of this proceeding in the apparent impossibility of revealing man to himself, and making him fully conscious of his weakness and dependence, without a test.

Yet, on the other hand, nothing is plainer than that a large portion of the race, dying in infancy, or in an otherwise irresponsible condition, escape everything in the form of trial *here*, and pass into the unseen world without having had any opportunity of developing, even in the slightest degree, the nature and tendencies connected with their birth.

Again, it is quite certain that the probation of those who live to mature years in the enjoyment of

unimpaired faculties, differs so widely both in kind and extent, that it is difficult, if not impossible, to speak of mankind generally as subjected to trial in any sense which carries with it the notion of a *common* discipline. Everywhere Probation comes before us as *a thing of degree*, involving more or less, according to the various conditions and circumstances of different men.

Facts like these, regarded by themselves, *in the absence of any revelation to the contrary*, would certainly seem to imply that in other worlds Probation *may* be extended to those who have not been subjected to it here, or *continued* in the case of others who have but imperfectly been brought under its influence.

Further, since all probation implies *risk*,—the risk of failure, with its attendant consequences,—it would seem equally evident that its all but infinite diversity in character and extent must carry with it a corresponding diversity in the actual responsibility and future condition of those who are subjected to the discipline it involves.

In the retirement of the closet, thoughtful and devout men rarely shrink from admitting that “the Divine standard of man’s accountability is a scale of all but unlimited graduation; that the place of every man in the future world will be the exact counterpart of his moral character here; that while some will be ‘beaten with many stripes,’

there will be for the minimum of guilt the minimum of punishment ; ”¹ and such like.

But it is otherwise in the pulpit. There, or on the missionary platform, it seems to be accounted dangerous to admit this diversity ; for the appeal, whether to the individual sinner or on behalf of the heathen world, is almost always made on the assumption that every child of Adam is destined either for heaven or hell ; that the only alternative in the case of each separate man is, everlasting blessedness or eternal misery.

But opposite views cannot be equally true. Either the conclusions of the closet are erroneous or the declamations of the platform are unwarranted. Surely it becomes us to inquire which is right and which is wrong ; *or*—if the two apparently conflicting modes of thought are *both* Scriptural, and therefore reconcilable—whether that reconciliation is to be sought, as so many are now seeking it, in the denial of an *objective* hell altogether,—the mind being regarded as its own place, and therefore making its own hell ; or whether it is not rather to be found in those portions of Divine Revelation which seem to teach that the destinies of the Elect Church and those of the World are, in many important respects, different ; that the one class is intended to form the

¹ Dr. Harris's Note on a Letter from John Foster.—Foster's Corresp., vol. ii., p. 446.

court, and the other the commonalty, of the world (or age) to come ; that the former, in glory, is to be identified with its Lord at His coming, and *therefore* with Him to judge both men and angels ; while the latter, each one according to his works, is to be placed in that position which will form the appropriate retribution of his belief or unbelief, of his love or scorn of the Gospel, and of his kindness to, or hate of, the little flock while on earth. That retribution may involve degradation or death, few stripes or many stripes, grievous loss or the lake of fire,—*all but* the irreparably lost being, on this supposition, again brought under influences which involve a further and probably less severe¹ probation, terminating either in restoration or the second death.

I pass no opinion, at present, either on the one view or the other. I desire to commence the inquiry with an earnest endeavour simply to ascertain the truth so far as it is recorded in Holy Writ, and, unless greatly deceived, with a perfect willingness to bow at once and for ever to the decision of that sacred record, whatever it may be.

One word only would I add. An indolent,

¹ 'Less severe,' because *good* government, and that in the highest sense, will then be established ; because *wiser and better teachers* than can now be met with will then abound ; and because many, if not all, the outward temptations which now overcome man will then have disappeared.

careless, or superficial inquiry will be of no avail to any one. It has been well said, in relation to natural science, that "safe conclusions can only be founded on the most microscopic examination, since Nature never proclaims her secrets with a loud voice, but *only whispers them.*"¹ It may with equal confidence be affirmed of many things in Divine Revelation, that they can only be known by being 'searched out,'—sometimes amid dangers which call for incessant watchfulness, humility, and prayer, and always with labour concentrated and severe. Distinctly are we told in the Divine Record itself, that he who would find truth or wisdom *there* must, as the condition of its discovery, seek it 'as silver,' and search for it 'as for hid treasure' (Prov. ii. 4).

¹ Prof. Owen.

PART II.

SCRIPTURE TESTIMONY.

CHAP. I. SIN, FROM THE CHRISTIAN STANDPOINT.

II. THE WRATH OF GOD.

III. REVELATIONS REGARDING HELL.

IV. THE UNCONVERTED.

V. THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT.

VI. CONVERSION NOT REGENERATION.

VII. THE NEW BIRTH.

VIII. THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

IX. REVELATIONS REGARDING HEAVEN.

CHAPTER I.

SIN, FROM THE CHRISTIAN STANDPOINT.

BEFORE proceeding further with our task, it seems desirable, if not necessary, to state most distinctly that the inquiry is commenced under the deepest conviction—held, indeed, to be indisputable—that every individual of that great aggregate which we call the race has within him a spirit capable either of happiness or misery in that world to which all souls are tending; and that its possessor, whether heathen or Christian, is justly responsible to the God who made him, both for the beliefs and for the conduct that have *here* tended to fashion the character of that soul, and to make it what it is.

Such is undeniably the teaching of the Bible. It becomes us, therefore, first of all, to direct our attention to what is revealed there regarding sin, and concerning the state of mind, so to speak, with which God is said to contemplate it.

‘SIN is the transgression of the law’ (1 John iii. 4). ‘All unrighteousness is sin’ (1 John v. 17). It is so because the law is a *righteous* law, ‘holy, just, and good’ (Rom. vii. 12). It is so because

the law is emphatically a law of love. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind ; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets' (Matt. xxii. 35—40). And yet so infatuated is man in his disobedience, that wrongdoing is at once his habit and his joy.

The Saviour came to put an end to this state of things ; and though, to human eye, He seemed to pass away without accomplishing His purpose, it was not really so. For among the latest words that He uttered to His sorrowing disciples before He left them were these :—' When He [the Comforter] is come, He will reprove [or convict—*marg.*] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment : of sin, *because* [or rather, *since* or *seeing*—*οτι*] they believe not on Me ; of righteousness, *since* I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more ; of judgment, *since* the prince [or ruler—*ὁ αρχων*] of this world is (has been)—*κεκριται* judged' (John xvi. 7—11).

To understand this saying of our Redeemer's aright, it is necessary to bear in mind that it was uttered to the disciples *for their consolation*,—to impress them with the conviction that it was better *for them*, and therefore for the cause they all had at heart, that He should go away.

They, naturally enough, had imagined otherwise.

If He leave us, they might well say, *who* is to show mankind their sinfulness? for who but He can unmask the heart of man? *Who* is to set forth *real* worth, since He alone can infallibly distinguish it from innumerable counterfeits? *Who* is to awaken men to a sense of their responsibilities, and to bring before them the certainty of a judgment to come, when He has departed in whom all judgment vests?

The answer of the Master to these natural inquietudes is simply this,—*I* go, in order that the objects you desire may be accomplished. *He* cometh who will achieve the victory. ‘I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven’ (Luke x. 17, 18). ‘How can one enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man?’ (Matt. xii. 29). Heard ye not the voice from heaven, which ‘came not because of Me, but for your sakes? Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out’ (John xii. 30, 31).

Such were the words of the Saviour. Yet how imperfectly have they been received! Is not Satan, it is urged, *still* the prince of the power of the air, ruling as despotically as ever in the hearts of the disobedient? (Ephes. ii. 2). What evidence have we that either his power or his malignity is diminished? Is it not plain that the reproof spoken of is simply *judicial*?—that the Spirit

convinces the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, only that He may thereby the more strikingly manifest the hardness and impenitence of the human heart? Is it not but too clear that the only result is greater condemnation?—aggravated ruin?

I reply, If it were so, it is difficult to see how the disciples could have received *comfort* from the intelligence; since it would, in that case, have merely confirmed all their fears, by announcing the hopeless ruin of mankind. If this be all, they might well have said, *Where* is the ‘glad tidings’ that were to be to ‘all people’?—where the *remedial* character of the dispensation of mercy? No! words must change their meaning, and the heart of the Saviour change too, before tidings so dismal can be called consolation, or such a result be entitled a victory over Satan.

Let us accept, then, the standpoint Christ has given us, as that from which a Christian man should now look upon a sinful world and its wicked ruler. The usurper is *dethroned*; the world is not *abandoned* to its iniquity; the advent of the Redeemer has *changed* all the relations of sin and of humanity.

At first sight this may not appear to be very obvious; for truly enough iniquity still abounds, and man too often seems to be as much as ever under the power of evil.

A comprehensive view of the great facts of the world will, however, lead us to a different conclusion. Satan is *not* now what he once was. He can no longer exercise that *direct* power over men which he so long wielded. He can no more take *forcible possession*, as he once did, either of their bodies or their minds. He cannot even *tempt* them, as he tempted their Lord and Master. Perhaps it is not too much to say that he can now do little more for our injury than evil men can do. He can seduce; but so can they. He can misrepresent God; but so can they. He can blaspheme; but so can they. Like them, he can *co-operate* with our evil inclinations,—avail himself of our sinful weaknesses, and pander to our follies; but he can no longer appear before God as our accuser, and he can no longer interfere with or control any one of our voluntary actions.

But is this all? Far from it. Admitting, as every Christian must, the broad distinctions which, in the eye of God at least, separate the Church from the world, the regenerate from the unregenerate, the ‘new creature in Christ Jesus’ from the man ‘dead in trespasses and sins,’ it is impossible to deny the fact, that, *outside* the Church—extend the term Church as we may,—among persons whom it would be folly to speak of as converted, to whom no one, with even the appearance of propriety, could apply such terms as ‘holy brethren,

partakers of the heavenly calling,' there *does* exist an amount of virtue, goodness, reverence, awe, trust in and recognition of Christ as a Saviour, which cannot *scripturally* be accounted for on any supposition save that of a work of the Spirit.

I am quite aware that some persons will be startled by this assertion. Nevertheless, it may fearlessly be said—whatever theological difficulties may seem to be created thereby,—that men *do* thus feel, and that, in a country like our own, where the light of Christianity is so widely diffused, *it is no uncommon thing* to find men whom it is impossible to regard as 'regenerate,' exhibiting in their daily life many of the virtues which are recognised in Scripture as 'fruits of the Spirit,' although too often in sad combination with much more that is as obviously worldly and sensual.

Let us not tremble or be timid in making such an admission. The *great facts of the world* never really contradict the *great truths of Scripture*. If they ever *seem* to do so in any particular, it is time for us to re-examine our views, in order to see whether we have not either misapprehended the supposed fact, or mistaken Scripture in relation to the point in question.

The excellence of which I speak must have *a root*. It either springs out of unrenewed human nature, and is apart altogether from grace,—which is inconsistent with the teachings of the Gospel

respecting man's fallen condition ; or it is inspired by Satan,—which is to make Beelzebub divided against himself ; or it is the work of that blessed Spirit from whom ‘proceedeth every good and perfect gift.’ Hesitation, in such a case, seems treason to God and goodness. But if it is His work, it has *an object*, and will have *a completion*.

Now that which is true of *individuals* in favoured Christian communities is, *in degree*, true also of mankind at large. A consciousness of sin, and feelings of sadness arising therefrom ; the recognition of a righteousness extending far beyond mere conventional morality ; and thoughts of a judgment to come, already flinging its shadows before, now pervade every nation, and, more or less, find a home in every heart. Superstition may overlay, or philosophy try to undermine these convictions,—the world may laugh, or pleasure administer its opiates,—but there they are still ; in silence and in sorrow ever rising up to witness against the transgressor, making many a Felix tremble, and many an Agrippa to exclaim, half in terror and half in scorn, ‘Wouldest thou persuade *me* to become a Christian ?’

Few, probably, now love evil *for its own sake*. Perhaps it is not too much to say that within almost every man, if he could but be withdrawn from the influences of the flesh, from the passions and their objects, there is *something*—a kind of

better self—which acknowledges the supremacy of right. The history of the civilized world, since the days of the apostles,—its moral life, its manners, its laws and institutions, form one grand and continuous illustration of the Spirit's influence as exercised in society at large. "It has made Christ the recognised Lord of every people eminent either for knowledge or power."

Are we, then, to conclude that all this is in vain and for nought?—aimless and objectless, unless it be to aggravate guilt and to deepen condemnation? We *must* do so if we set out with the persuasion,—utterly incapable, however, of being sustained by any comprehensive view of Scripture, and deriving all its plausibility from the isolation and exaggeration of particular texts,—that *because* Christ has a redeemed Church, 'chosen from the foundation of the world,' *therefore* none else can be benefited by the redemption He has wrought; that *because* 'he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned,' *therefore* they that have never heard, and they that have heard amiss, shall be all alike involved in one common, wide-spread, and everlasting ruin; that *because* he that is in Christ is a 'new creature,' *therefore* all who do not become new creatures here are for ever shut out from hope, denied mercy, and finally abandoned to Satan and his angels.

Such are the conclusions to which we are forced ;

not, indeed, by any statement of Scripture, for then it would become us simply to bow before the awful mystery ; but, as I have before said, by the isolation and exaggeration of particular texts, or by that inexorable logic which has for ages usurped dominion over thought, and trampled at once on the heart of man and the character of God.

We do not question our Lord's own words, ' No man can come to Me, except the Father, which hath sent Me, draw [*i.e.*, *attract*] him ' (John vi. 44) ; but if any man found thereon the assertion that the sinner has no ability to seek his Redeemer, and so lead others to infer further, that men cannot be justly condemned for neglecting such a duty, we feel no scruple whatever in declaring both conclusions to be erroneous.

We know that by a similar process, and by a logic apparently as faultless, nothing is easier than to demonstrate that man, as a creature governed by motives and influenced by circumstances, *cannot* be responsible either for his opinions or his conduct. But when the process is complete, and the demonstration perfect, we feel assured that the result cannot be trustworthy. It is not that we dispute the great dialectical maxim that logical inferences must be true, if legitimately deduced from what is true ; but we deny the *legitimacy* of the deduction ; and we do this, not because we can point out the flaw which invalidates the reasoning, but because

the whole subject is beyond the reach of the human faculty ; because truth never violates the moral instincts of the heart, which conclusions such as these certainly do ; because, as Archer Butler somewhere beautifully remarks, “our liability to error is extreme, when we become immersed in the holy obscurity—the cloud on the mercy-seat—of the Divine mysteries ;” because it becomes us to remember that the conditions of human thought do not, on sacred subjects, admit of our apprehending the length and breadth of the questions involved in the decision.

Mysteries abound on every side. That one man should be born in a savage, and another in a civilized community ; that one should inherit health and competence, and every mercy that a loving God can give, and another be born to sickness and poverty, to ignorance and evil example ; that children should suffer for their parents’ sins, and vice entail misery on the innocent ; these, and many other things, are to us unquestionably mysterious and perplexing ; but they are difficulties which may be met by the remembrance that ‘things are not as they seem ;’ that He who, like the ‘potter,’ fashions all, has, and ought to have, power over the clay, to make one vessel to honour and another to dishonour ; that happiness and misery are much more equally divided than we sometimes imagine ; that mankind are not isolated

individuals, but a race ; that this world is only preparatory to another ; that human probation is as diversified as the human countenance ; and that all things, under the control of infinite and everlasting love, are working together for the glory of God, and the best interests of the creature : but darkness and blackness, and infinite despair, is the only and inevitable result of theories which contemplate, as irreversible facts, the endless wickedness and everlasting misery of the myriads who now live, or have in times past lived, on the face of the earth.

Happily, these theories are only human. Not such is the teaching of Scripture. *There* all things ripen in their time,—the wicked for destruction, the righteous for glory, the world for judgment. Truth is, indeed, there seen imparted to one, and withheld from another ; but love rules over all. *Some*, to whom neither conversion nor healing can suitably be conveyed by the Lord while on earth, are spoken to ‘in parables ;’ while to others, who can both ‘hear and understand,’ it is ‘given to know the mysteries of the kingdom.’ Over the first the Saviour mourns tenderly, for they are as ‘sheep without a shepherd ;’ the last He has continually to rebuke for the hardness of their hearts ; but in relation to the lot of both it may be said with equal certainty, ‘Mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace embrace each other.’

CHAPTER II.

THE REVELATION OF THE WRATH OF GOD.

IT may, perhaps, be said that the view taken in the preceding chapter of sin is inconsistent with those portions of Scripture which declare, in the most unequivocal manner, that ‘the wrath of God resteth on the children of disobedience.’

I propose, therefore, in the present chapter to inquire into the precise teachings of the Bible on this point.

The word ‘wrath,’ as expressive of the Divine indignation, occurs first in connection with the death of Nadab and Abihu (Lev. x. 6). It finds expression *there* in an awful judgment on the sons of Aaron, which comes forth from God as *the theocratic Governor of Israel*, on account of disobedience. Similar examples are recorded in the Book of Numbers (xvi. 32—35; xxi. 6), and in other places.

In the Book of Joshua (x. 20), in the Second Book of Chronicles (xix. 2), and in other portions of the Pentateuch, judgments of a like character are seen to fall on the Canaanites, on Jehoshaphat, and on various offenders.

In the prophets, the word 'wrath' is applied to *different degrees of punishment*, whether inflicted, or only threatened. Isaiah speaks of 'a little wrath' (liv. 8), as he looks forward to the time when Israel shall again enjoy the Divine favour. He *implies* the same thing when he represents God as saying to Israel, 'In My wrath I smote thee, but in My favour have I had mercy upon thee' (lx. 10). Jeremiah, describing the scattering of the people, calls that judgment 'great wrath' (xxxii. 37). Zephaniah, looking forward to a special punishment about to fall on Judah, regards its approach as 'a day of wrath,' and 'the great day of the Lord' (i. 14, 15). Habakkuk, under similar circumstances, prays God 'in wrath to remember mercy' (iii. 2); and the Psalmist, looking forward to the second and triumphant coming of Messiah, says, 'He shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath,' and that 'His enemies shall perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little' (Psa ii. 12; cx. 5).

In all these places we observe the wrath spoken of is temporal, and inflicted *in this world*. Even that which is to be executed by the triumphant Messiah is regarded as poured out upon persons who are *in the flesh*, and *in arms*, so to speak, against His authority. It is judgment proceeding against a people who, in their 'rage,' are vainly imagining they can break loose from the rule of a

visible Christ, and cast away His restraints from them. (Comp. Ps. ii. with Rev. xix. 11—21.)

It is difficult to see that these passages have any relation to the judicial decisions of the world to come, or that they can be justly applied to the careless and ignorant around us. Yet Sunday after Sunday are they used, in all earnestness and sincerity, *as if they did*.

That they involve a great principle, belonging alike to all times, and to all worlds, viz.,—that the law of God cannot be trifled with; that sinners are, in one way or other, and in one world or other, as surely punished as that saints are blessed; and that no man is able successfully to contend with his Maker,—cannot be doubted; but they throw no light whatever on the question, What is the precise condition of an unrenewed man, *as such*, in the sight of God?

Perhaps the only passage in the Old Testament in which Divine judgment is exhibited to us as affecting man in a *future* state, is that in which Isaiah, speaking of ‘the new heavens and the new earth,’ in which the ‘seed’ and ‘name’ of Judah shall ‘remain’ before God, says, ‘They shall [then] go forth, and look upon the *carcases* of the men that have transgressed: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh’ (lxvi. 24). The criminals, whoever they may be, are here

represented as dead,—their corpses perpetually corrupting and perpetually consuming,—the objects not of pity, but of *abhorrence*. It is the loathsomeness of corruption, symbolizing the loathsomeness of the sin, which had deprived its victims of eternal life, and made them everlasting objects of disgust and dislike. It is this passage which our Lord quotes when He would teach the Jews what He meant by ‘hell’ or Gehenna.

There is not a syllable in the Old Testament which leads us to suppose that the nations *outside* of Israel were all without hope and without God—simply condemned criminals. The history of Abimelech, of Melchizedek, of Laban, of Joseph, of Jethro, of Balaam, and others, all teach a different lesson. Everywhere we discover *traces* of a pure worship, although too often mixed up with different forms of corruption and idolatry. These outside nations are not, indeed, like Israel, the elect of God; but they are neither disowned nor deserted by their heavenly Father.

The first passage in the New Testament in which ‘wrath’ is spoken of *as future* is in Matthew (iii. 7), where John the Baptist is represented as calling upon the people to ‘flee from the wrath to come.’ But there is no reason to suppose that the Forerunner here spoke of the judgments of eternity. It is obvious that he used the phrase in the sense in which our Lord afterwards applied it; viz., as a

warning of the approaching ruin of the nation : 'These be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. There shall be great distress in the land, and *wrath upon this people*' (Luke xxi. 22, 23). Dean Alford says, 'John is now speaking in the true character of a prophet, foretelling the wrath soon to be poured on the Jewish nation.' So also Dr. Gill and others.

The precise word 'wrath,' as indicative of the *Divine* displeasure, does not appear again in the New Testament until we find it used by St. Paul, when writing to the Romans. It occurs in that epistle repeatedly. It is here said to be 'revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, *who hold* [or, rather, keep back] *the truth in unrighteousness*'—those to whom God hath 'showed' what may be known of His Being and character, but with no other result than the production of greater wickedness (Rom. i. 18—32). In harmony with this teaching, the apostle goes on further to affirm that *practically bad men*, whether *professing* Christianity or not; men who addict themselves to the vices of the heathen ('*doing* the same,' ii. 3);—men who 'despise the riches of God's goodness and forbearance,' and cherish 'hard and impenitent hearts,' treasure up unto themselves 'wrath against the day of wrath,'—the day when they that *reject* the truth, and 'obey unrighteousness,' shall suffer 'indignation and wrath, tribulation

and anguish' of soul (Rom. ii. 5—9). Nothing can be clearer than his assurance that retribution is in reserve for the wicked ; and that judgment shall fall with peculiar emphasis on the idolatrous, the immoral, the persecutor, the despiser of grace, and the concealer of truth in unrighteousness of life : but not a syllable to lead us to conclude that the worshipper of the true God, the virtuous and the just, if careless, and unspiritual, and unrenewed, are involved in *precisely the same* condemnation.

The twentieth verse of the first chapter is, indeed, commonly quoted to prove that the heathen everywhere—the benighted African and the idolater of the South Seas—are '*without excuse*,' inasmuch as in creation and providence alone a revelation may be found clear enough to involve all alike in responsibility and ruin. But this is not the meaning of the text. It refers clearly to men who have known the truth, and still *know* it, but keep it back by unrighteousness. The guilt of these persons is aggravated by the fact that God has, for their warning, *witnessed* to the truth, both in their hearts, by 'showing' it to them ; and in nature, by His wondrous works. Whatever may be the fact of the case, it is certainly not asserted *here* that creation and providence are adequate to instruct a heathen in the knowledge of the 'invisible.'

In relation to *the race* generally, the apostle argues thus : By law—the law given from Mount

Sinai, *both moral and ceremonial* (for he does not separate them)—viewed simply *as law*, and apart from any work of Christ, cometh ‘wrath’ (or judgment); ‘the law *worketh* wrath;’ for ‘sin is the transgression of the law:’ hence, ‘where no law is, there is no transgression’ (Rom. iv. 15). But from this *general* condemnation (for ‘all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God’) Christ *saves*: ‘While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us’ (v. 8).

On this general redemption of humanity, whatever it may involve, he founds an argument in favour of the special blessedness of the elect. If, says he, Christ died for us all, while in sin, and impenitent, ‘how much more’ shall BELIEVERS, who are ‘justified through His blood, be saved from wrath [judgment] through Him.’ ‘For if, when we were enemies [in our unconverted state] we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, *much more*, being reconciled [*i. e.*, conscious of reconciliation by and through faith], we shall be saved by His life’ (ver. 10). And then he goes on to rejoice in the fact that as ‘*the many*’ were made sinners by Adam, so, by the obedience of Christ, shall ‘the many’ be made ‘righteous;’ while they which receive ‘*abundance of grace* and of the gift of righteousness shall REIGN in life by one, Jesus Christ’ (ver. 17—21).

To me it seems clear that Paul teaches that God

does not now look upon mankind as condemned in Adam, but, on the contrary, as brought by Christ—even while enemies and in an unconverted state into a new relationship, ‘reconciled to God by the death of His Son.’

In only one other place in this epistle does the word ‘wrath,’ as applied to God, occur ; viz., in the ninth chapter (ver. 22), where the unrepenting Jews, then *on the eve* of their destruction as a nation—for the apostle was writing only a few years before the event took place,—are spoken of as ‘vessels of wrath fitted to destruction,’¹ by whose condemnation the riches of God’s glory, in the calling of the elect Church, would be made known both to Jews and Gentiles ; or, as it is expressed by our Lord himself, that the Gentiles might see, and the Jews be blinded (John ix. 39).

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, renewed men are bidden to remember that they are ‘by nature the children of wrath, even as others’ (ii. 3) ; and in that to the Colossians they are further reminded that once (viz., in their unrenewed state) they *walked and lived* in the indulgence of the very vices and abominations *on account of which* ‘the wrath of God’ fell upon them (Col. iii. 6).

¹ So Doddridge and others. The best commentators, both ancient and modern, are agreed that *the Jews* are here meant. There is not a shadow of reason for supposing that the expression, ‘vessels of wrath,’ is to be taken as indicating individuals intended by God for eternal punishment.

Two things are here distinctly taught us. The *first* is, that by nature (*i.e.*, apart from Christ's redeeming work) *all* men are alike condemned by law and liable to judgment ; or, as it is expressed elsewhere, 'dead in trespasses and sins.' The *second* is, that 'the wrath' or judgment of God is poured out upon men, *not* on account of their natural corruption through Adam ; not on account of their being thoughtless, careless, or unspiritual ; but on account of actual vice and idolatry ; '*for which things sake* the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience' (Ephes. v. 6). Whatever may be the condition of the unrenewed in heart, *as such*, it is clearly unwarrantable to say that *here* the wrath of God is revealed as resting upon *them*.

In the First Epistle to the Thessalonians the Jews are again spoken of in reference to the coming ruin of their nation, as a people upon whom 'wrath is come to the uttermost' (1 Thess. ii. 16).

Let us next notice what is emphatically called 'the wrath of the Lamb' (Rev. vi. 16, 17). This phrase, which is found only in the Apocalypse, is essentially connected with the second advent of the Lord, and is exclusively used to express the judgment which, at that period, will fall upon the men who are in direct conflict with the authority of the Redeemer. It is of this day that the apostle Paul speaks, when, recognising the *possibility* of Christ's immediate return, he says to the Thessa-

lonians, 'God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.' 'For ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief' (1 Thess. v. 9, and ver. 4). It is *to this day*, or to its immediate precursors, that those passages must be referred which speak of the *filling up* of 'the wrath of God' upon the earth, of the 'pouring out of the wrath of God' and of the 'treading the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God' (Rev. xv. 1; xvi. 1; xix. 15).

In all these cases, let it be observed, the wrath falls upon men *in the flesh*, and while on earth; and the persons who experience it are the *active opposers* of Christ's rule.

A careful review of the words translated 'damnation,' 'condemnation,' or 'judgment,' do not lead us to any different conclusion.

The Scribes and Pharisees—'hypocrites'—are told by our Lord himself that *they* shall receive 'the greater damnation' (Matt. xxiii. 14); that it is difficult to see 'how' *they* can escape Gehenna; that *he* who blasphemes against the Holy Ghost is in danger of eternal condemnation; and that they *who have done evil* shall at the last day 'come forth unto the resurrection of damnation'¹ (John v. 29);

¹ Christ is here clearly referring to men such as were those to whom He was speaking,—Jews who 'sought to kill Him' (ver.

but there is not a word to intimate that this is, after all, the lot of the entire race, with the exception only of the Church.

St. Paul tells us, regarding those licentious Christians who, in his day, said, 'Let us do evil, that good may come,' that 'their condemnation is just' (Rom. iii. 8); and of the apostates who shall be on the earth at the second coming of the Lord, that 'God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but *had pleasure in unrighteousness*' (2 Thess. ii. 11, 12). I do not say that in any of these cases the word 'damnation,' 'condemnation,' or 'judgment' *necessarily* means the highest form of it,—the damnation of hell, or Gehenna; although in *some* of these declarations it seems undoubtedly to have that interpretation. The fact that our Lord adds the words, 'of Gehenna,' when He speaks of the Pharisees, alone shows that the word 'damnation' does not always and necessarily imply that doom. Be that as it may, it is clear that, in relation to men generally—to the race—Paul says that 'the ministration of death' (that of the law, given from Mount Sinai) is 'done away' (2 Cor. iii. 11); that it has now 'no glory, by reason of the glory that excelleth;' and that 'with open face'—without reserve of any

16—18),—persons who had rejected and hated light, 'because their deeds were evil.'

kind—he seeks to manifest this truth ‘to every man’s conscience in the sight of God’ (iv. 2).

I am not inclined to dispute that many an amiable but unconverted man is practically an unbeliever, and that, as such, he has too often ‘pleasure in unrighteousness;’ but no one, surely, can pretend that this is what St. Paul *means* either in the epistle to the Romans or in that to the Thesalonians.

On what, then, it will be said, does a doctrine which seems to lie at the very root of our evangelical theology—forming, in fact, the basis on which Christ is commonly preached—really rest?

I reply, Certainly *not* on any direct and explicit Scriptural declaration faithfully interpreted, but on INFERENCES; on inferences, I allow, that are *supposed* not only to be legitimate, but *necessary*; on conclusions which are drawn chiefly from the words of Christ himself; but still on human inferences. The doctrine in question is one which, like many others, although not to be *read* in Holy Scripture, may, it is believed by Christians generally, be clearly *proved* therefrom.

I do not say that anything is to be *rejected* simply because it cannot be found in so many direct words in Scripture; or that nothing should be believed which is arrived at only by a process of deduction. But I do say that no doctrine which is based on *inference* can ever have *the same authority*

as that which rests on *fact*,—using that term as indicative of direct and explicit revelation.

The reason is obvious. In all inferential conclusions a human and therefore imperfect element is introduced, which carries with it, of necessity, the liability to err. I hold, therefore, that all conclusions thus arrived at are open to question, in a sense which by no means applies to any plain declaration made either by Christ or His apostles.

In the next chapter it is proposed seriously and reverentially, but in an independent spirit, to examine the texts from which it is concluded that every unconverted person trembles on the verge of ‘the second death.’

CHAPTER III.

REVELATIONS REGARDING HELL.

I PROPOSE now to inquire into the testimony of Scripture relative to ‘hell,’ and to ‘future punishment.’ It will be seen, as we proceed, that I do not consider these two terms to be in all respects synonymous.

In the OLD Testament the word “hell” (Heb., *sheol*) invariably stands either for the grave, or for the invisible world of spirits,—that state in which the soul remains from the time of its departure from earth till the resurrection. ‘The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God’ (Psa. ix. 17), is a text popularly understood as referring to the final doom of the ungodly; but such is not the case: it is the sweeping away from the earth, *by death*, of the enemies of God and of His people which is alone predicted. The word translated ‘hell’ is *the same* as that used by Jacob when he exclaimed, ‘Then shall ye bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to *the grave*’ (Gen. xlii. 38); the same as that used by David when, speaking of his enemies, he says, ‘Let death seize upon them, and let them go down

quick into hell' (marg., *the grave*), Ps. lv. 15 ; the same as that by which Jonah expresses his *burial*, so to speak, in the body of the fish,—‘ Out of the belly of *hell* cried I, and Thou heardest my voice ’ (Jonah ii. 2).

Denunciations against wickedness, and threatenings of punishment, are frequent in the Old Testament, both in the patriarchal and Mosaic periods, *e.g.*, Job iv. 8 ; xv. 20—24 ; xviii. 11 ; xxi. 30 ; Ps. v. 5 ; vii. 11 ; ix. 17 ; xxxiv. 16 ; Prov. xvi. 4, and many others ; but in no case is there any distinct reference to the *final* condition of the impenitent. The first three of the passages to which I have referred seem to relate exclusively to natural retributions ; the rest point to punishment at the hand of God ; but in none of them is there any clear revelation of a future judgment. *The fact* that God ‘hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained’ (Acts xvii. 31), is itself a special revelation of the New Testament ; for although both Jews and heathens expected a retributive future of some kind or other, they knew not that God had fixed *a special time* for the judgment of mankind ; that it should be by Messiah ; or that it should take place *on earth*. They knew no more than this,—that after death men were happy or miserable according to the character and conduct they had exhibited on earth,—an

amount of knowledge with which too many Christians, in the midst of so much clearer light, still seem to be content.

How dim and comfortless these views were, it is impossible not to perceive, from the fondness with which the most pious of the old dispensation clung to life, and from the way in which they speak of the dead as 'dwelling in darkness,' and as unable to praise God (Psa. vi. 5 ; xxx. 9 ; lxxxviii. 12 ; Isa. xxxviii. 18, 19).

In the NEW Testament, several distinct words, widely different in meaning, are alike translated 'hell,' a practice which necessarily leads to a good deal of confusion in the mind of the English reader. 'Hades' is in this way commonly mistaken for Gehenna. Such, however, is not its import. It is *never* used in Scripture to express what we understand by HELL.

St. Peter (2 Ep. ii. 4), using another word, speaks of 'the angels that sinned' being 'cast down to hell' (ταρταρόω), and 'delivered into chains of darkness, to *be reserved* unto judgment,' a term probably corresponding to the 'deep' of St. Luke (viii. 31), and to the 'bottomless pit' of St. John (ἀβύσσος), (Rev. xvii. 8). 'Tartarus' (or the abyss), therefore, would seem to be *to evil spirits* what one department of Hades is to *evil men*.

The teaching of Scripture certainly is, that the soul of man, at death, passes into what we usually

term "*the separate state*;" that *there* all begin to reap that which they have sown on earth; the righteous,—peace and rest, the foretaste of better things to come; the wicked—pain and sorrow, 'the fruit of their own devices.'

In *twelve* other texts of the New Testament, 'hell' is in Greek expressed by the word Gehenna (γέεννα), which signifies 'the valley of Hinnom,'—a valley of abomination, because *there* children were sacrificed to Moloch, and because it was used as a sort of 'common sewer of Jerusalem.' Josiah, with the express purpose of degrading it, commanded that all the ordure of the city should be thrown there, with the carcasses of dead dogs, and dead men's bones. The dead bodies of criminals were, from time to time, cast into it. These, putrefying, produced worms and other vermin; to prevent any fatal consequences from which, a fire was kept continually burning (2 Kings xxiii. 10; Jer. vii. 31, 32; xix. 13; Mark ix. 44). The word 'Gehenna,' therefore, obviously implied, to the Jew, all that is degrading and corrupting in connection with death and putrefaction.

'Hell' occurs for the first time in the New Testament in Matthew (v. 22),—'Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire' (τὴν γέενναν τοῦ πυρός); it is immediately afterwards repeated in the twenty-ninth and thirtieth verses, —'It is profitable for thee that one of thy mem-

bers should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell ;' or, as the same evangelist gives it in another place (xviii. 8),—‘It is better for thee to *enter into life* halt or maimed,’ with one eye, hand, or foot, ‘rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire ;’—words reported by Mark (ix. 43—48), with the addition, *thrice made*,—‘Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.’ *Seven*, out of the twelve instances in which the word ‘Gehenna’ is used in the New Testament are, therefore, involved in the consideration of these few verses.

In relation to the first of them (Matt. v. 22), it should be distinctly recollected that the word ‘fool’ (*μωρός*) does not mean what we understand by that term, but rather ‘apostate’ (see *Alford* on this word) ; and further, that ‘Gehenna,’ *here*, probably stands only for *capital punishment*, inflicted by the highest court in Jerusalem, as contrasted with the minor sentences passed by ‘the judgment,’ or by ‘the council.’

To understand the exact bearing of the passage, it is necessary to keep in mind, *first*, that in the Jewish law it is stated, that “he who calls his brother, ‘slave,’ shall be excommunicated ; that he who calls him ‘bastard,’ shall be beaten with forty stripes ; while if he calls him ‘wicked’ (*i. e.*, in the sense of fool or apostate), he may be tried for his

life, which was also called being ‘thrust down into hell, or tossed into Gehenna.’”¹ Further, it should be recollected that there were *three* courts among the Jews,—the court of the twenty-three, the court of the Sanhedrim, and the supreme court at Jerusalem, each of which took cognizance of crimes according to the degree of guilt involved; *these* were the tribunals to which our Lord referred.

It may, therefore, without any wish to avoid the force of the passage, be fairly questioned whether, *in this particular case*, Christ is speaking at all of the punishments of the future world; whether, in fact, He is not using the term ‘Gehenna’ simply with reference to the actual ‘Valley of Hinnom’ at Jerusalem,—an application of it with which the Jews were thoroughly familiar. It is difficult to imagine that the punishments of time and of eternity would be mingled together, as on any other supposition they must be.

In the latter passage (Matt. v. 29, 30), the contrast between entering into ‘the kingdom of God,’ or ‘into life,’ as St. Mark puts it (ix. 45—47), and being ‘cast into hell,’ evidently seems to refer to the ‘lake of fire’ or ‘second death.’ Still, the emblematic language of our Lord must not be pushed *beyond* its true meaning, which is certainly

¹ Quoted from the Talmud by Lightfoot and Schoetgen, and here taken from “The Evangelists and the Mishna,” by the Rev. Thomas Robinson.

done, when the undying worm and the unquenchable fire are made to stand, as they commonly are, either for eternal remorse of conscience, or for unending torture, either in material or figurative flame. This is not only to put our own fancies in the place of revealed truth, *it is directly to contradict Scripture*; for the very words in question are but a quotation from Isaiah, who distinctly applies them, not to living beings, but to dead ‘carcasses’ (Isa. lxvi. 24). No supposed good that may arise from terrifying sinners (even if they were commonly alarmed by such statements), can for a moment justify interpretations of this character.

In *two* instances (Matt. x. 28, and Luke xii. 5), where the charge is given,—‘Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (γέεννη),’ the reference is again to the final doom of the irreclaimably wicked. So, also, in Matthew (xxiii. 15—33), where our Lord, denouncing the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees, exclaims, ‘Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell (γέεννης)?’ it seems quite plain that it is eternal and not temporal punishment that is referred to.

In the last instance (Jas. iii. 6), ‘hell’ is apparently put for Satan and the powers of evil:—‘The tongue setteth on fire the course of nature, and is set on fire of hell.’

Having now examined all the passages of Scripture which speak of future punishment under the term 'hell,' or 'Gehenna,' I proceed to notice those which unquestionably *mean* the same thing,—such as 'the lake of fire,' and 'the second death.'

The term 'lake of fire' (λίμνη τοῦ πυρὸς) is found only in the Apocalypse, in which it occurs FIVE times: *first*, in chap. xix. 20, where 'the beast and the false prophet'—whatever these terms may mean—are said to be 'cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone ;'¹ *secondly*, in chap. xx. 10, where 'the devil' that deceived the nations,—in distinction, let it be observed, from *the people* he had deceived, who are 'devoured' by fire 'out of heaven' (ver. 9),—is represented as being 'cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever ;' the *third* instance is in chap. xx. 14, where 'death and hell' (ᾠδης) are 'cast into the lake of fire ;' the *fourth* is in the fifteenth verse, where it is said, 'Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire ;' and the *last* is in chap. xxi. 8, in which we are told that 'the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and

¹ Like every other *symbol* of the Apocalypse, this is clearly taken from the Old Testament. The entire text is as the voice of Daniel,—'I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame' (Dan. vii. 11).

whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars (*i.e.*, deceivers,—of course, only if unrepenting,—for ‘such were some of you,’ 1 Cor. vi. 11), shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.’

But though the particular term, ‘lake of fire’ is found only in the Apocalypse, a somewhat similar phrase, ‘furnace of fire’ (κάνυρος), occurs in one of the gospels (Matt. xiii. 42, 50), where our Lord tells His disciples, that ‘in the end of this world, the Son of man shall send forth His Angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things (or, as it reads in the margin, all *scandals*) that offend’—*i. e.*, hinder the progress of truth,—‘and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.’

The term ‘second death’ is also confined to the Apocalypse, where it occurs FOUR times,—*twice* (Rev. xx. 14, and xxi. 8) in connection with ‘the lake of fire,’ which is distinctly said to be ‘*the* second death;’ *once* (chap. ii. 11) in the epistle to the Church at Smyrna, where it is declared that he ‘who overcometh (*i. e.*, endures to the end, in the midst of fiery persecutions) shall not be hurt of the second death;’ and *once* in chap. xx. 6, where ‘the second death’ is said to have ‘no power’ over the partakers of ‘the first resurrection.’

St. Peter, however, probably means the same thing, when he speaks of apostates, to whom, ‘the

mist of darkness' is reserved for ever (2 Ep. ii. 17); as also St. Jude, when he writes of those to whom is *reserved* 'the blackness of darkness for ever' (ver. 13).

As I am anxious to pursue the inquiry without the slightest regard to controversies, past or present, I shall not—through fear of being classed with Universalists—shrink from admitting that among the very numerous passages in the New Testament which, openly or by implication, speak of sinners as 'lost,' 'destroyed,' or 'perishing,' *many* do not apply to 'hell,' or the 'second death.'

The word commonly employed to express 'perishing,' or destruction (*ἀπώλεια ἀπόλλυμι*,—*perdition*), is a word which is used in a variety of significations. Examples in abundance present themselves. In the Gospel of St. Matthew (ii. 13), *ἀπόλλυμι* is used to express the fact that Herod sought 'the young child to *destroy* Him.' Here it obviously means temporal death. It has precisely the same meaning when the alarmed disciples cry, 'Lord, save us: we *perish*' (viii. 25). Further on (x. 6), in the instructions given to the seventy, to 'go rather to the *lost* (*ἀπόλλυμι*) sheep of the house of Israel,' lost evidently stands for persons, *wandering and neglected*, whom they were to gather in. In a verse which shortly follows (x. 28), it is plainly put for eternal death,—'Fear

Him who is able to *destroy* (ἀπώλλυμι) both soul and body in hell.' In the parables of the *lost* sheep, the *lost* son, and the *lost* piece of money (Luke xv. 6—9), it is employed to describe that which was obviously lost *only for a time*.

When the apostle writes to the Corinthians (1 Ep. i. 18) that 'the preaching of the cross is, to them that *perish* (*lit.*, that are perishing) foolishness,' he does not speak of persons who are actually *doomed*, but of those who remain under the dominant influence of ignorance, self-conceit, and rebellion. Again, when he says (2 Cor. iv. 3), 'If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are *lost*' (*lit.*, *being lost*), it is obvious that he does not mean persons eternally condemned, nor yet reprobates by a divine decree, but, as the next verse intimates, men who were *then* 'blinded' by Satan.

The text, 'Broad is the way that leadeth to *destruction*' (ἀπώλεια—Matt. vii. 13), is commonly, but erroneously, supposed to be an *authoritative declaration* on the part of Christ that the mass of mankind are ever rushing on to 'eternal death.' Such an interpretation, however, cannot be justified,—*first*, because our Lord himself refuses to sanction this doctrine (Luke xiii. 23—30), not indeed, by directly asserting the contrary, but by calling on the disciples to strive after something higher and better than mere salvation in the sense

of deliverance from hell; *secondly*, because this view of the text practically gives the victory to Satan, and directly contradicts the most express declarations of the word of God (Rom. v. 15—19; xi. 26; Heb. ii. 14); and *thirdly*, because the word translated *destruction* (ἀπώλεια) occurs further on (Matt. xxvi. 8) in the sense of *misuse*,—‘To what purpose is this *waste*?’

That (ἀπώλεια) is also used to express eternal perdition is unquestionable (2 Thess. ii. 3; 2 Pet. iii. 7; Rev. xvii. 8); but there is nothing in the word itself which could for a moment justify its *invariable* application in that sense. The lesson really inculcated in the passage under consideration (Matt. vii. 13) appears to be, that the mass, *even of professed disciples*—for it is to these, and *not* to the multitude, that the Lord is speaking—run to waste; that *few* enter in at ‘the strait gate,’ or attain to that blessedness which belongs to ‘the Church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.’

But I am anticipating. Our immediate object is to ascertain, with something like precision, what is really the testimony of scripture regarding ‘hell,’ the ‘lake of fire,’ and the ‘second death.’ To this we must, for the present at least, confine ourselves.

Putting, then, all the passages I have quoted together, and viewing them in combination, we

seem to learn—first, that the terms in question are exclusively used to denote *the highest form* of God's vengeance against iniquity ; and secondly, that 'hell,' properly so termed, *cannot admit of degrees*, either of pain or of continuance,—nothing is revealed in connection with it that corresponds either to 'few stripes,' or to 'many stripes.' Yet that 'future punishment' *is* a thing of degree, Scripture clearly teaches (Matt. x. 15 ; xi. 22—24 ; xxiii. 14 ; Luke xii. 47, 48).

Again, while *certain classes* of men are said distinctly to be in danger of hell (Matt. xxiii. 33), mankind generally are never spoken of as exposed to it ;—'salvation' is not said to be from 'hell,' but from 'wrath.' Further, the *only beings* represented as *tormented* in the 'lake of fire' (with one exception, which I shall afterwards notice), are 'the devil,' 'the beast,' and 'the false prophet,'—the two latter probably incarnated evil spirits. Finally, 'hell,' though always regarded as a locality, is never, directly or by implication, said to be the *eternal dwelling-place* of impenitent men, or even put as a general term expressive of the retribution that will fall on every wicked person ; while the doom of those who are at length cast into it is only made known at the conclusion of the mediatorial economy. These particulars we *observe* in the Record, and they are certainly worthy of being carefully noted.

We now approach texts which, though they say nothing about 'hell,' yet directly speak of future 'punishment.' The first and most striking of these is found in Matthew (xxv. 31—46), 'These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.' To this passage we must direct very careful attention.

On reading the account of this judgment as a whole, the first question that suggests itself is, '*To what class of persons does it relate,—to believers or to unbelievers?*' Is the redeemed 'Church of the firstborn' supposed to be standing there *doubtful* of its doom, and *unconscious* that it had ever lived for Christ? or are the persons in question those who on earth remained till death in ignorance of the Gospel?

The term 'all nations' (παντὰ τὰ ἔθνη) might alone decide the point, since it is always used to describe heathen *in distinction from Jews*. But if this be not enough, let it be further noticed,—first, that as the two parables immediately preceding relate to the sifting of *professed believers*, all probability favours the supposition that this belongs to a different class; and secondly, that Scripture distinctly assures us believers shall not come into judgment with the world (comp. John v. 24; Luke xxii. 30; 1 Cor. vi. 2).

The mere fact of those on the right being called 'sheep,' and those on the left 'goats,' proves no-

thing, since the goat was not an unclean animal. The paschal lamb might be 'a lamb *of the goats*,' and the 'scapegoat' is generally allowed to be a type of Christ (Exod. xii. 5 ; Lev. xvi. 21, 22). That the parties before the bar, both good and bad, are 'nations' not included in the Church, is evident, not only from the circumstance that the 'Bride of Christ' will *come with* her Lord in the clouds of heaven (1 Thess. iv. 17), but still more from the absurdity of supposing that the elect children of God, who have done everything with reference to Christ and for His sake, can ever reply, 'When saw we Thee an hungred, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink?' Such a supposition removes all reality from the scene. It is easy to say the expressions in question merely indicate humility; but this is not the character of *Christian* humility, which is always, when healthy, conscious of its *true* state. The language of the believer is that of St. Paul,—'I have laboured; yet not I, but the grace of God that is in me.'

A second inquiry would naturally be,—'Are the mass of nations before the Judge to be regarded as then and there divided into two vast bodies, and so disposed of?' I think not. For those on the 'right hand,' as well as those on 'the left,' are to be 'separated,' or severed (*ἀφορίζω*), 'one from another' (comp. Matt. xxv. 32 with xiii. 49). The

word used to denote this severance is the same as that by which St. Paul expresses his own separation from his mother's womb for the service of Christ (Gal. i. 15), and the same as that employed in the Acts (xiii. 2),—'*Separate* me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.' The 'severed' or 'separated' persons, therefore, whatever their number, are, probably, in each case comparatively few, since they are men who have either actively *aided* the followers of the Redeemer in times of persecution, or *aggravated* their sorrow by hard-hearted coldness and neglect, which could, of course, only be done by the few.

We are thus taught that persons, alike ignorant of Christ and of His Gospel, are *not*, as we are often told, *all alike* in the eye of God. There are those among them, as among Christians, who have improved the light they had, and there are those who have deliberately excluded themselves from it. Hence this judgment is purely *of works*; and not of works generally, but of one particular work,—that of helping or hindering the people of God when under persecution, hungry, thirsty, naked, or in prison. The righteous—doubtless some of the 'other sheep not of this fold' (John x. 16)—'Gentiles, which have done by nature the things contained in the law' (Rom. ii. 14), are commended and rewarded, although they knew not that in aiding 'the just' they were aiding the

Judge of all ; while the ‘cursed’—those who, from hatred to the light, have united with the persecutors—are banished from the Divine presence, although they, too, knew not that in gratifying their evil passions, and opposing goodness, they were opposing One who regardeth His children as ‘the apple of His eye’ (Zech. ii. 8); all of which is in exact accordance with the word of our Lord,—‘Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only *in the name of a disciple* (*i. e.*, knowing that the man to whom he gave it *was* a disciple, and daring the risk involved in rendering such assistance), verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward’ (Matt. x. 42).

Of the great mass from whom these persons are selected, nothing is here revealed. The parable relates only to *the sifting* of the heathen, just as the two preceding ones related to the sifting of professed believers.

But it will be said, Granting this exposition to be a correct one, we are still left altogether in the dark as to the future condition of mankind *as a whole*,—whether heathen or nominally Christian.

I admit it ; nor do I think that it was the intention of our Lord *here* to reveal what on all other occasions He kept back. Yet we are not wholly left without guidance on this subject. That such

persons are *sinner*s is, with the word of God before us, unquestionable? that, whether with or without a written law,—whether nominally Christian, or actually heathen,—they are *justly* exposed to ‘wrath,’ cannot be doubted; that they are at present unfit for the fellowship of holy beings, is certain. Yet they are among those for whom Christ died; they are the very ‘captives’ to sin and Satan that He came to deliver. Nor can we believe that His ‘finished work’ is *to them* of none effect. It can only be so regarded on the supposition—utterly unsupported by Scripture—that the second Adam came, *not* to repair the ruin involved in the disobedience of the first, but only to render salvation possible to those—alas! the very few—who in various ages should on earth be renewed by the Holy Ghost.

This question—one which certainly ought not to be evaded—brings us to the consideration of future punishment generally, so far as it can be *distinguished* from the highest expression of the Divine indignation, in the final doom of the ‘second death.’

The parable of Dives and Lazarus clearly indicates some important differences between ‘Hades’ and ‘Gehenna,’ and, coming as it does from our Lord’s own lips, it is peculiarly weighty; it is, perhaps, the only portion of Scripture, in which, so to speak, the veil which hangs over the

immediate condition of the dead is lifted, and the *retributive* character of the invisible world made known.

The suffering of Dives, judging from what he says, is mental,—it seems to arise from restlessness and fever of the mind, the effect of an awakened conscience ; he *sorrows*. This is evident from the fact that the word translated ‘torment,’ means something very different from *torture*, to express which another and distinct word is employed. This is done in the case of those who are described, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as having been ‘tortured, not accepting deliverance’ (Heb. xi. 35). Here the word employed is *τυμπανίζομαι*, a word derived from *τύμπανον*, an instrument of torture.

It is clear—apart altogether from the use of the word *hades*—that ‘hell,’ properly so termed, is not intended by our Lord, *first*, because the state described is one entered upon immediately after death, and therefore *prior* to the judgment ; *secondly*, because Dives is regarded as being sufficiently near to Lazarus to converse with Abraham, on whose bosom the beggar is represented as reclining ; and *thirdly*, because his state of mind is one in which, if penitence is not directly expressed, pity for others is certainly felt. There are manifest in him the *germs*, at least, of a better mind ; he is anxious that those whom he loved on earth should

be warned, *that they might repent* ; conditions which it is certainly very difficult to suppose can apply to the lost in hell.

The testimony of Scripture, so far as it can be gathered, relative to the invisible world, seems to me distinctly to point to the conclusion that the punishments of the wicked—that is, of all but the irreclaimable who are utterly destroyed—*commence* in Hades immediately after death ; that they *spring* out of past character and conduct ; that they are exactly *proportioned* to guilt—‘ few stripes,’ or ‘ many stripes,’ as God sees necessary ; and that they are *not incompatible* with moral improvement. *Much*, on such a subject we may not be permitted to discern, for Scripture is not given us to satisfy “ an inbred and restless curiosity.” Yet the little we *do* know is too instructive to be neglected, since we are sadly prone to *misrepresent* our heavenly Father, either on the side of justice or of mercy.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus will be of great value to us if it keeps us from either of these errors. Manifold are its lessons. It teaches us how little it avails to be *nominally* Christian ; for the punished one is a son of Abraham. It teaches us that the selfish and the worldly (for the rich man is not represented as vicious or profligate), whatever may be in reserve for them at the coming of the Lord, are in the

unseen world punished, like Dives, or disciplined, as God knows how, by *solitary thought*, each reaping precisely as he has sown. It teaches us that the 'righteous' alone, washed in the blood of the Lamb, and sanctified by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, wait, like Lazarus, in the blessed repose of paradise for the perfection of their bliss; and probably receive *there*, from Christ himself, lessons of love, and revelations of glory, which could not be imparted on earth without endangering a frame unfitted for the reception of more than earthly splendours. This much, at least, may fairly be predicated from Scripture regarding a state which, though unseen by mortal eye, is yet intensely real, and into which the children of men are every moment entering.

But not *there* alone will the past and the present influence the future. Under that further probation, after the resurrection, which I believe awaits the great majority of the race, will the result of time well spent, or misspent, still more decidedly bring forth its appropriate fruit, and every man gather precisely as he has sown. Some, with weeping and gnashing of teeth (the Jewish mode of expressing *grief and vexation*), will in that world, I doubt not, mourn, with a bitterness proportioned to what they will *then* feel to be the loss sustained by their self-wrought exclusion from the Church of the first-born; and some who, on

earth, lived and died fancying themselves *within* the guest-chamber, will then, to their utter astonishment, find themselves *without*,—plunged into that ‘outer’ (or rather, *outside*) darkness, which so strikingly contrasts with the brilliancy of the marriage banquet. They were *disciples*, but they neglected the charge, ‘Enter ye in at the strait gate,’ and they now find it is too late, for ‘the door is shut’ (Luke xiii. 24). In vain do they cry, ‘Lord, Lord, open unto us. We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets.’ The only reply is, ‘I know not whence ye are ; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when they shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and they themselves thrust out’ (ver. 26—28).

Then will some, like ‘Chorazin and Bethsaida’ (cities of privilege), find ‘Tyre and Sidon’ (heathen and untaught) in a condition far better than their own ; and others (the self-satisfied), like ‘Caper-naum,’ will discover, to their amazement, that Sodom, with all its abominations, is nearer to God than they. Now will one find himself a ‘vessel to honour,’ and another to ‘dishonour ;’ to whom ‘much has been given,’ of him will ‘much be required ;’ he who has improved his ‘one talent’ will find himself entrusted with ‘five’ or with ‘ten’

talents ; and there are 'last' which shall be 'first,' and 'first' which shall be 'last.' He who has stored his riches in the heavens now enjoys his wealth. 'The meek' are inheriting the earth. Every man receives 'according to his deeds,' and each goes 'to his own place.'

The *result* of the inquiry is, that future punishment, properly so termed, commences in Hades ; that it is strictly retributive ; that its general character arises from the natural working out of the great laws under which man is placed, and that its *degrees* are as manifold as the degrees of human guilt. Further, it has no gradations ; for how anything like *degree* can be associated with an *everlasting* punishment, *first* represented as being cast into a 'lake of fire,' and *then* explained to be a 'second death,' it passes my comprehension to imagine.

Such terms, *naturally* understood, would certainly seem to imply the absolute extinction of being, by a Divine and judicial execution. I say *naturally*, because *in no other sense* would any unprejudiced reader ever think of understanding either such a passage as Matt. x. 28, where the killing of the body and the killing of the soul are spoken of under the same term (*ἀποκτείνειν*, to kill, is used in both cases), or in Rev. xx. 14, where, as we have just said, the 'lake of fire' is distinctly stated to be the 'second death.' To allege, as the

late Moses Stuart does, that such words as destroyed, perishing, and eternal *death*, are "the most eligible that could have been chosen" to express the idea of eternal *life* in misery, "seems," as has been well said, "to be trifling with that common sense which God in His mercy has given to the unlearned, to preserve them from the infatuations occasionally incident to their superiors in knowledge."

To suggest such a *possibility*, however, as the ultimate annihilation of the irreclaimably wicked, is, at present, an offence ; it takes away, it is said, all *terror* from the minds of the guilty, and, in so doing, at once emboldens them in sin, and makes them reckless of consequences ; for *who*, it is argued, will care for the 'lake of fire,' if separated from eternal sensitive torment in its flame ? To this some add the strange notion, that, in proportion as we lessen the fearfulness of future punishment, we diminish the value of the death of Christ.

¹ Some assert that the doctrine of the Atonement *implies* that of the eternal torment of all the unregenerate ; and others (as Bp. Pearson) say, "He who believeth not the eternity of torments to come, can never sufficiently value that ransom by which we are redeemed from them." How strange that it should be thought more glorious that the redemption of Christ should be a blessing to the few than to the many ; that God's 'unspeakable gift' should alone make credible *never ending sin and misery* ; that the Gospel of holiness and love obliges us to believe in the hopeless ruin of the race !" (Quoted from "*The Duration of Evil*," an Essay.)

I am not, however, disposed to *argue* this question. The duty of the Christian, with the Word of God in his hand, is plain. It is simply to ask,—‘WHAT IS TRUTH?’ not, what is it most expedient to teach, *as if it were* truth? But I may be permitted to say to the defenders of eternal sin and suffering, that the arguments they use are *the very same arguments* that were employed for ages in defence of inflicting the most horrible tortures on criminals. What, it was said, is death (since all must die) to a murderer or a traitor?

For myself I frankly allow,—that, having searched diligently, and I hope with a sincere desire to ascertain the whole truth, I cannot find a syllable in Scripture to sanction the popular notion (really derived from the fathers and founders of the Romish apostacy), that God ever allows *torture*, or ever practises it Himself. The punishment of death—capital punishment—He commanded of old: ‘Thine eye shall not pity’ (Deut. xix. 13); that eminent criminals were, by Divine authority, burnt, seems also certain (Lev. xx. 14),—but whether alive, or after being otherwise put to death (as was the case with those who were cast into Tophet), is not so clear; that under the Christian dispensation, the judicial taking away of life is sanctioned, cannot fairly be disputed,—for the magistrate ‘beareth not *the sword* in vain’ (Rom.

xiii. 4) ; but *nowhere*, and under no conditions, does God sanction torture.

The supposition that He did, led in past time to its infliction in Christian countries by man on man ; formed the chief justification of the horrors of the Inquisition ; and laid the foundations, deep and firm, of purgatory and priestcraft. If this barbarity has so entirely ceased from among ourselves, that even the most cruel assassins are exempt from its agonies, it is only because the advancing steps of Christianity have driven it away. If the doctrine of the future—nay, the eternal—infliction of it by God yet lingers in the Church, it is because the dark shadow of the apostacy still falls over us, and because base notions of what it seems *expedient* to teach, override that love of truth which makes a man fearless of all consequences in its service.

It is impossible to suppose that St. Paul, who so strikingly calls God to witness that he kept nothing back from his converts,—that he had ‘not shunned to declare’ unto them ‘the whole counsel of God’ (Acts xx. 26, 27), *could* have used the term ‘death’ as he does in so many passages,—and always, be it observed, as the antithesis of ‘life,’—had he intended to teach that this ‘death’ *meant* eternal life in torture. The same may be observed of Peter, John, and James, the three disciples who had been most intimate with the Lord ;

of all of them we say, it is impossible to suppose that they could have kept back such a doctrine,—so unlike everything else in Scripture,—when a few plain sentences would have sufficed both to explain and to enforce it.

One *apparent exception* to all that has been stated certainly exists ; and as I have not the least wish to evade a single line of Scripture, I call attention to it. It is this,—‘The third angel,’ flying in the midst of heaven (Rev. xiv. 9—11), proclaims,—‘If *any man* worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation ; and he shall be *tormented* with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb ; and *the smoke* of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever ; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.’

On this passage it may simply be observed, *first*, that it is a special judgment, threatened only in connection with *a particular form* of idolatrous worship in the last days, carried on in ‘Babylon the great ;’ *secondly*, that the torment (βασανισμὸς) is not said to be inflicted *in hell*, or after the last judgment, but, as it would appear from the context, *on earth*, and at the second coming of Christ.

The reference to 'day and night' also indicates that *earth* is the place of punishment; *thirdly*, that the same word (*βασανίζω*) is applied to *the city itself*, whose overthrow and utter destruction is called *her torment* (Rev. xviii. 7—10), and 'her smoke' is said, in like manner, to rise up 'for ever and ever' (xix. 3), just as in Jude, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is called 'suffering the vengeance of *eternal* fire' (ver. 7), although we are told by Ezekiel (xvi. 53—63), that Sodom shall 'return' to her 'former estate,' and be given 'to Israel for a daughter, *though not by covenant.*' St. Paul speaks of these very sinners,—those of the last days,—as men who shall be punished (*lit.*, *suffer as punishment*) *everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

It is obviously neither wise nor safe to found any doctrine on a passage confessedly so obscure, and certainly so *symbolic*, as the one in question,—especially as it does not specifically point to hell at all, and is acknowledged by every intelligent reader to refer to a state of things still hidden in the future. Yet beyond this solitary and most inconclusive text, there is not anything in Scripture which even seems to justify the assertion that impenitent men are everlastingly tormented.

I repeat,—Hell, as revealed in Scripture, has *no tortures*, and, therefore, *no degrees* in punishment;

it is utter, hopeless, irremediable ruin ; and it is but right solemnly to warn every Christian man to beware what he is about when he asserts the contrary. Heathenism is an abomination unto God, mainly because *it represents Him to be what He is not*,—vindictive and cruel. Christians misrepresent Him no less when they forget either His Fatherhood on the one hand, or His hatred of sin on the other ; when they represent Him either as *all mercy*, or as so arranging the final destinies of the world, that evil triumphs in the ruin of *the race*.

I am quite aware that many will only glance at what I have written, and then ‘pass by on the other side,’ with the exclamation,—*Who now* holds to physical torture, or to material fire ? Who now would endorse the statements on this subject of President Edwards and Jeremy Taylor, of the Fathers, and the Reformers, and the Puritans ? Who now believes that *the great majority* of men will be miserable for ever ?

I reply, *the bulk of English Christians do*. The ignorant,—all of them ; children,—without exception ; well-informed adults,—generally. I am quite aware that the topic of future punishments is, in the present day, rarely introduced into the pulpit, and that when it *is* mentioned, it is always in the most vague and general terms ; for neither the rewards nor the retributions of the world to come,

occupy any prominent place in modern teaching. The *former* are frequently considered to be somewhat inconsistent with a full and free salvation ; the *latter* are regarded as too dreadful for popular handling. The *loss* occasioned by this unbelieving avoidance of important truth is far greater than is generally supposed ; but things can never be otherwise so long as men hold to the ‘ glorification ’ of *all* the saved, and the eternal misery of *all* the lost.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE DOCTRINE THAT EVERY UNCONVERTED
MAN IS A VESSEL OF WRATH, FITTED ONLY
FOR DESTRUCTION.

IN relation to this question, I propose now to examine, carefully and reverentially, those texts which are supposed to imply—nay, to *involve as of necessity*—the doctrine that every unconverted man is to be regarded as a sentenced criminal, daily and hourly in danger of eternal woe.

They are the following :—

(1) ‘He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned’ (Mark xvi. 16),¹—a declaration of Christ himself, immediately following the command, ‘Preach the Gospel to every creature.’

(2) ‘He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life : and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him’

¹ Internal evidence is very weighty against Mark’s being the author of that portion of the chapter (viz., ver. 9—20) in which this statement occurs. (See Dean Alford.)

(John iii. 36),—words addressed by John the Baptist to the Jews.

(3) ‘He that believeth on Him (the only begotten Son) is not condemned : but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God’ (John iii. 18),—part of our Lord’s discourse to Nicodemus, and to be taken in connection with the declaration (ver. 3), ‘Except a man be born again (born from above—*margin*.), he cannot see the kingdom of God.’

(4) ‘For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature’ (Gal. vi. 15).

(5) ‘According to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost’ (Tit. iii. 5).

These passages, with many others that might be named, will be sufficient to show the ground on which the Church of Christ has come to the conclusion that, apart from the regeneration of his nature by the Holy Spirit, *no man* can escape the damnation of hell; that, in short, if he that believeth *hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed *from death* unto life (John v. 24), *then* he that believeth not cannot have life, but remains *in the death* from which he might, if he would, by faith, have passed.

This inference, of course, carries with it the

further conclusion that, *as unconverted*, the virtuous and the vicious stand, in the eye of God, on precisely the same platform; that, as Dr. Chalmers puts it, “a character distinguished by all that is lovely and soothing in humanity,”—a heart “furnished, not merely with the finest sensibilities of our nature, but with its most upright and honourable principles,”—a man “whose every word carries security along with it; who, amid all the varieties of fortune, has nobly sustained the glories of an untainted character,”—is, if not renewed in the spirit of his mind—endowed with a new nature, and so made a son of God,—the subject of “entire and unmitigated depravity,” a hater of God, and a child of hell.

How can it, it is said, be otherwise, since “the Bible everywhere groups the individuals of our species into two (and only two) classes,—vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy; since it employs these terms in a meaning so extensive, that “by each couplet of them it embraces all individuals;” since there is no trace of any middle department (*i.e.*, between the elect Church and the eternally lost) to be met with in the New Testament; since *every man* will, at death, “be pronounced meet for the fellowship of God through eternity, or be turned into hell”?¹

¹ Tron Sermons.

Nothing can be more brilliant than the declamation in which Dr. Chalmers, with regal eloquence, maintains this ground ; regarding the conclusion at which he arrives as a necessary consequence of "the emptiness of natural virtue, and the natural enmity of the mind against God."

But is it a true conclusion? Is it Scriptural? That is the question.

If it be, Christ can bestow no blessing upon any child of Adam short of absolute union with Himself; His redemption is, *practically*, of no avail to any but to the elect; He is in no sense whatever the Saviour of *the world*; Bethsaida and Tyre, Capernaum and Sodom, the young ruler whom the Redeemer loved, the children whom He blessed, the multitude over whom He mourned, and the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees whom He denounced, all, if unrenewed, stand on one level, and are, in the eye of the Judge, *alike*.

Now, I frankly say, Scripture does not leave this impression upon me. Everywhere I see, in the Divine Record, God's wrath executed on earth, and, in the future state, threatened against vice and wickedness *as such*. Most distinctly are we taught there, that *degrees*, both of reward and punishment, will mark the decisions of the last day. But there can be no degrees of sorrow *in hell*; nor can there be any shades either of honour or happiness in heaven, worthy of consideration, if each individual

man becomes, at death, the companion either of angels or of fiends.

On this point, the sort of self-deception that men pass upon themselves is singular. They believe, or think they do, that everlasting torment in hell, and eternal absence from God, is consistent with 'few stripes.' They imagine that every man becoming *as happy as his nature will admit of*, is the result of being 'saved so as by fire;' that the difference between the greatest saint and the most inconsistent professor—on the supposition of both being kept out of hell—is, that the one has a higher capacity for bliss than the other; that the difference, in short, is that which may be observed in individuals here; the difference, for instance, between the happiness of a child and that of an adult. And on this follows the supposition, that the future lot of a very inconsistent Christian taken to heaven, and that of a virtuous heathen in hell, may, after all, be very much alike. The confusion of thought, the absolute incapacity of realizing either the one state or the other, which this sort of reasoning implies, would be incredible, if it were not witnessed every day.

Further, in no other sense than that of a future and *discriminating retribution*, exactly apportioned to the opportunities and privileges enjoyed, is it possible to understand such declarations as these, —'The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with

this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here' (Matt. xii. 41); or again, 'Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes' (Matt. xi. 21—24).

I say, it is impossible to reconcile statements like these with a theology which proceeds on the assumption that every man who is unconverted is a vessel of wrath, and will, at death, be adjudged to perdition; for, unless violently explained away, the language of the Lord plainly teaches that future judgment will affect the inhabitants of certain cities *as such*,—a declaration by no means strange to persons who believe in a 'new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness;' but utterly beyond the comprehension of those who hold that each separate individual, who dwelt in the cities spoken of, is at this moment either in heaven or hell.

Equally impossible also is it, on this showing, to make anything at all intelligible out of St. Paul's assertion, that 'all Israel shall be saved;' for it is clear, from the context in connection with the passage, that the apostle does *not* mean a 'remnant.' It is equally clear, from the entire tenor of Scripture, that, in relation to the retributions of the world to come, the Jew and the Gentile will be

dealt with on precisely the same principles; and while it is asserted again and again that Christ is the Saviour of *the world*, and a *propitiation* for its sins, I, for one, can find no sanction in the teachings of revelation for the belief that no man can be lost.

What, then, *can* we conclude, but that 'all,' as used by St. Paul in reference to Israel, means, as it does almost everywhere else, the whole?—with such exceptions only as cannot be got rid of without a violation of the principle that man is voluntarily wicked, and, therefore, personally responsible.¹

But THE TEXTS,—there they stand, and who shall question their truthfulness or force? Certainly I shall not. I shall deal only with the inferences drawn from them, and the application made of them by mortals as weak and as erring as myself.

First, then, let it be observed, that the ordinary interpretation always proceeds on the supposition—taken for granted as unquestionable,—that "the

¹ Dr. Owen, although for a different object, takes this view. He says, after pointing out many passages in which the word 'all' has a restricted meaning, "Therefore, from the bare word, nothing can be inferred to enforce an absolute, unlimited universality of all individuals, to be intimated thereby."—*On the Death of Christ*, quoted by Dr. Bonar, in the 'Prophetical Landmarks,' p. 118.

Bible everywhere groups the individuals of our species into two (and only two) classes, vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy (*i. e.*, receivers of favour and endurers of judgment); that by each "couplet," as Dr. Chalmers says, it "embraces all individuals;" that "every man will, at death, be pronounced meet for the fellowship of God through eternity, or be turned into hell."

This may surely be disputed in its professed character of *fact*. It is not true that the Bible teaches any such doctrine. It is nowhere asserted in so many words; and it cannot fairly be deduced from a careful and accurate survey of the entire teaching of Scripture relative to the future.

The evidence on which I rely runs through the whole revelation; it is in harmony with the tenor of the entire Book; it is sustained by a careful examination of the very texts which are usually adduced to prove a contrary doctrine. Scripture, when accurately and calmly weighed, is found everywhere to teach three things. *First*, that Christ has an Elect Church, composed of the renewed of all ages, who shall be one with Him through eternity. *Secondly*, that there are those who deliberately and resolutely reject Christ—a rejection which arises out of the fact that they *love* darkness better than light, because their deeds are evil, and for whom, therefore, there is no further hope. *Thirdly*, that *the race*, regarded as a whole

—*man*, as separated, on the one hand, from those who, by grace, ‘receive power or privilege to become sons of God,’ and, on the other, from despisers and persecutors—*man*, therefore, regarded as embracing, in all ages, the heathen, the ignorant, the captives of superstition, the careless, the indifferent, and the ungodly, is, in relation to Satan, *a redeemed creature*; that everything that is involved in that deliverance depends, not on his actual reconciliation, but on the RECONCILER; not on the faith exercised by the sinner, but on the work of THE SAVIOUR, wrought for every man while he was yet an ‘enemy by wicked works.’

But, it will be said, does the New Testament anywhere speak of a deliverance apart from personal faith in the Deliverer? Is it possible to conceive of a salvation which needs not, as a condition of its taking effect, to be received by the sinner? I simply reply, Scripture teaches that Christ’s redemption is of avail ‘for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God’ (Rom. iii. 25). Dean Alford interprets ‘sins that are past’—‘The sins of the whole world before the death of Christ.’ In this case, without doubt, there is a salvation irrespective of personal faith. I need scarcely add that, on any other supposition, infants and idiots must be regarded as lost.

The more reasonable question is, In what does such a redemption consist? What does it involve

as a practical consequence? I venture to think *a future probation*, in some respects corresponding to that *probation of grace* which the elect of earth have enjoyed here; in other respects different. *Similar*, inasmuch as it will involve the power voluntarily to accept of the Redeemer, or wickedly to reject Him. *Dissimilar*, inasmuch as it will be under more favourable auspices; since, then, men will be delivered from the 'captivity' of Satan; the great enemy will be bound; and trial will show that it is but too possible for man to fall, even apart from the influence of outward temptation. Probation *now* is for a kingly crown; probation *then* will be simply for citizenship. Then, we trust, the fallen will be *few*; for 'the veil of the covering,' that is now over all nations, will be taken off, and 'death will be swallowed up of victory' (compare carefully Isa. xxv. 6—8 with 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55).

Need I say that such a deliverance, *accomplished only through and by death*, must, from its very nature, be totally distinct from that high and blessed union with the Redeemer which is effected by the Holy Spirit *here*; which is, in fact, 'a present salvation;' the passing from death unto life *now*; a precursive victory over Satan; the pledge and the foretaste of a blessedness which will be consummated when, as perfected co-workers with God and with Christ, in the love and service of the

world to come, such saved ones enter upon that joy of their Lord, which they have, in some slight degree, anticipated while on earth. Perhaps we might say the difference is like that which is shadowed forth, in the parable of the Prodigal, between the 'son' and the 'hired servant.' The one is the loved and *trusted* in the father's house ; the other is only permitted to serve.

Viewed in this light, the texts in question become clear, and are seen to harmonize with every other portion of Holy Writ. For, *first*, they all take for granted that the persons of whom they are spoken have *heard* the Gospel, and either accepted or rejected it. He that 'believeth not' is the antithesis to 'he that believeth ;' neither the one phrase nor the other applying to those who have never known the Gospel in such a sense as to have either loved or hated it, accepted or rejected it. *Secondly*, the wrath that abideth—the condemnation already pronounced—is as evidently that which is incurred or confirmed by an actual rejection of grace. The man is condemned, it is expressly said, '*because he hath not believed.*' These words were addressed to men who, with the Scriptures of the Old Testament in their hands, and professedly honouring the prophets, whose predictions they misread, were daily witnessing *miracles* of beneficence ; men on whom overwhelming evidence only produced ever-deepening hate ; men who not only rejected and crucified

Messiah, in spite of His undeniable claim to their homage, but consciously and deliberately persisted in the wrong, because their deeds were evil. There is nothing whatever to show that the passages referred to are intended to distinguish the regenerate from the unregenerate, or the spiritual from the worldly. On the contrary, they distinctly point to the wicked persecutor, and to the *hater* of light. *Thirdly*, the 'new birth,' and 'the kingdom,'—the 'new creature,' and 'eternal life,'—the 'renewing of the Holy Ghost,' and freedom from liability to judgment with the world,—as evidently go together. They indicate the blessedness of those who, in the age to come, shall be one with Christ, kings and priests, sharers alike in His throne and in His priesthood. To this dignity Nicodemus, who probably regarded it as his *birthright*, could not attain without the new birth. Israel *as a whole* may, indeed, be 'saved,' but nowhere are we told that it shall attain to the position that it might have occupied had the nation made its 'calling and election sure.'

Other passages of Scripture indicate this distinction still more clearly. 'To as many [*i.e.*, of the Jews] as received Him, to them gave He power [or privilege—*marg.*] to become the *sons of God*, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God' (John i. 12,

13). To such 'there is *now* no condemnation' (Rom. viii. 1). 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.' 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?' 'In all things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us' (ver. 33—37). 'When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned (judged) with the world' (1 Cor. xi. 32). To apply these texts indiscriminately to every man who escapes the final doom of the impenitent, is to destroy their force, and to deprive them of meaning.

The *true inference* to be drawn from the passages we have been considering, and from Scripture generally, is, in my view, *not* that the Divine vengeance still impends over the race; *not* that *man*, *as man*, regarded apart from the enjoyment of a special indwelling of the Holy Spirit, is simply a vessel of wrath; not that the mere fact of the Atonement aggravates the guilt of those who never heard of it; *not* that Paul's Gospel—yea, "the very substance of it"—consists in his teaching how "wrath might be averted, and God pacified;"¹ not that Divine grace is but an expression of the mercy that snatches here and there a sinner from the horrors of interminable woe; but that there is '*a prize* of our high calling in Christ Jesus,' which

¹ *Christian Observer*, Dec., 1861, pp. 945—950.

may be gained or lost ; that there is, for every man, a world of dishonour, or one of honour ; a freedom from judgment, or a being liable to it ; a future bliss, or a future sorrowing ; a present salvation, or a future condemnation ; a hell for the irreclaimably impenitent, a heaven for the new-born sons of God ; a probation, yet to come, for the helpless and the weak ; a world of retribution *so exact*, that no diversity of character, no accident of position, no favouring or unfavouring circumstance, shall, in the slightest degree, affect the justice of its decisions, or the integrity of its awards.

Far be it from me to deny that an element of fear mingles with the element of grace in the Gospel. If it were not so, it would be a gospel out of harmony with the moral instincts of the sinner. For whence the *unrest* which distinguishes him in life, or the prospective alarm which no casuistry can shut out in death, if it comes not from the deepest convictions of his soul, however neglected or crushed, that life, viewed without reference to futurity, is a failure, and that man is both a sinner and an exile ? Whence, but from the instinctive consciousness that earth is but vanity, and the world that is invisible the only reality, comes that “sublime home-sickness,” as it has been well called, which makes the young, as a rule, die so happily ?

I repeat, “a religion altogether dissociated from fear” must be, “man being what he is, emasculate

and unavailing ;" but, on the other hand, a religion based on fear, or one the *chief element* of which is terror, can, in itself, never bring forth better fruit than a selfish dread, or an equally selfish hope. That much, very much, of our popular Christianity is of this kind can scarcely be doubted ; but I firmly protest against the Bible being made in any way responsible for so monstrous a result.

It may fully be admitted that much secular excellence often exists where the love of God, as the supreme good, is wanting ; that moral beauty in the character by no means necessarily implies the possession of a new heart and a right spirit ; that it is, in itself, no evidence whatever that the man thus rendered lovable to his fellows is also one with Christ, or could, in any fitting sense of the term, be styled 'a saint,' a 'faithful brother in the Lord,' or one 'chosen from the foundation of the world,' and predestinated to 'eternal life.'

But I do hold that such are not to be confounded with the opposers of all righteousness, or the persecutors of the Church ; that we have *no right to assume* that, in the production of a lovely character, the Spirit of God has had *no part* ; or that because, in such, there may be an obvious unfitness for the higher employments of the unseen world, they must therefore be fit for nothing better than the eternal companionship of the devil and his angels.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT.

THE Atonement is *a great fact*. The philosophy of it is *a profound mystery*. It is with the fact alone that, as sinners, we have to do ; the philosophy involved we may safely leave to higher intelligences and other states of being.

The word ‘atonement’ occurs but once in our English version of the New Testament (Rom. v. 11), and there only through a mistranslation ; for *καταλλαγή* unquestionably ought to have been rendered *reconciliation*. It is so rendered in other places (*c. g.*, 2 Cor. v. 18, 19 ; Rom. xi. 15), and should have been in this also, since no argument whatever *as to the method* of reconcilment can honestly be founded upon it. To ordinary readers, ‘atonement’ conveys the idea of *substitution by sacrifice*, and so far its use is, without question, misleading.

Other words, however, supposed to *imply* the doctrine in question, frequently present themselves, such as ‘propitiation,’ ‘oblation,’ and ‘sacrifice,’—words which, like the announcement of John the

Baptist, 'Behold *the Lamb* of God, which taketh away the sin of the world' (John i. 29), and the declaration of St. Paul, 'Christ *our passover* is sacrificed for us' (1 Cor. v. 7), become unintelligible if they are not to be regarded, in some measure at least, in connection with the bloodshedding of the Old Testament economy.

Unhappily, theologians will not allow us to rest on Divine facts. They insist that it is as necessary to hold a true philosophy of the Atonement, as it is to believe in the fact of one. "The *doctrine*," says a recent prominent defender of the faith,¹ "is the *inference from the fact*, and without the doctrine the bare dry fact is nothing. The question is, *in what way* Christ's death effects its purpose? Upon our answer to this depends the nature of our religion."

It never seems to occur to such reasoners that the revealed fact² is alone Divine; that all inferences deduced therefrom, true or false, are purely human; and that, therefore, on their theory, "the nature of our religion depends," not on the simple reception or otherwise of a Divine testimony, but on a purely logical process, which, owing to the

¹ Rev. C. Hebert, M.A., in reply to Maurice, Davies, Jowett, and others.

² As I have already distinctly stated what is to be understood by a revealed FACT, it is only necessary to refer the reader to the note appended to p. 11.

unfitness of the human mind to deal with matters stretching into the infinite, is at least *as likely* to be wrong as right.

Into the various controversies that have arisen out of this perverse disposition to be 'wise above that which is written,' it is needless to enter.

I assume, as undeniable, that the Old Testament prophets predict a coming Messiah, and that they describe Him in two aspects: *first*, and chiefly, as 'a priest upon a throne,' under whose glorious reign all nations shall be blessed; and *secondly*, as a 'man of sorrows,' humiliated and suffering, yet not for any sin of His own (Jer. xxiii. 5; Isa. liii. 3—12).

The fortieth Psalm, taken, as it must be, in connection with its exposition in the Epistle to the Hebrews (x. 5—14), is, perhaps, of all these prophecies the most remarkable, since it gives us the *reason* for Christ's coming,—the inefficiency of the blood of bulls and of goats to take away sin; and the *result* of the coming,—the honouring of the law: 'Lo, I come *to do* Thy will, O God.' 'He taketh away the first' (sacrifice and offering), 'that He may establish the second' (perfect obedience). To this remarkable prophecy, and its inspired exposition, we naturally look for an explanation of the facts of the Gospel history, so far, at least, as explanation is needful.

These facts are simple, and speak for themselves.

A Jewish maiden, miraculously conceiving by the Holy Ghost, becomes the mother of a child born without sin,—free from the slightest hereditary taint of evil. This child, subject to all the weaknesses and infirmities of humanity, grows up, like any other child, obedient to His parents, faultless in life, and marked by a moral thoughtfulness rapidly deepening into a wisdom far above His age.

For thirty years He lives in obscurity ; toils, as other young men toil ; and, so far as the sacred narrative informs us, is in no way distinguished from His contemporaries, except by wisdom and goodness.

At length a great prophet (John) appears, declaring himself to be the forerunner of Messiah, and calling on all men to repent, and be baptized into the belief and expectation of this great event. In obedience to the call Jesus approaches, is recognised by John in His true character, yet submits to the rite, and is by a voice from heaven proclaimed to the Baptist the ‘beloved Son,’ in whom God is ever well pleased.

For three years more He moves about Judea, words of wisdom dropping like pearls from His lips, and miracles of beneficence thickening about His path. At length, betrayed by a familiar friend, He falls into the hands of His enemies, and finally expires in the agonies of a shameful and cruel

death. The sun darkens at the sight, and an earthquake rends the veil of the temple; but *Gentiles* alone (the centurion and his band) fear greatly, and say, 'Truly this was the Son of God' (Matt. xxvii. 51—54).

So far, and to the outward eye, nothing appears beyond *the advent* of a great Prophet, and *the commission* of a great crime.

But this is not all. The teaching of Christ is as peculiar as His life. John, as we have before observed, announces Him as '*the Lamb of God*, that taketh away the sin of the world;' Caiaphas, apparently unconscious of the weight of his words, utters a mysterious prophecy, 'that it was expedient that (this) one man should die for the people' (John xviii. 14); He himself declares that 'after three days' He will 'rise again;' His disciples have been taught that He but goes before, to send 'gifts,' to found 'a kingdom,' and 'to prepare mansions' for His faithful followers; and yet the garden of Gethsemane is the scene of a mighty and mysterious struggle, and the cross is connected with the cry, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'¹

¹ It has been made a question whether these words were the cry of despair, or uttered in order that the surrounding disciples might learn from them the true meaning of that Messianic and finally triumphant psalm (xxii. 1) *of which they form the initial verse.*

Connecting these things with other revealed facts,—such as that He came ‘to give His life a ransom for many’ (Matt. xx. 28); that He laid down His ‘life’ for His ‘sheep’ (John x. 15); that He shed His ‘blood’ for ‘the remission of sins’ (Matt. xxvi. 28); that He ‘redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us’ (Gal. iii. 13); that ‘with His stripes we are healed’ (Isa. liii. 5); and that through eternity the song of the redeemed will be, ‘Thou art worthy: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood’ (Rev. v. 9),—nothing surely can be plainer than that He died *vicariously*—for others; that He died *voluntarily*,—‘I lay down My life of Myself;’ that death was most *unwelcome* to Him, and *submission* to the cross the severest of trials,—‘Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me;’ that all this pain, ignominy, and suffering *might have been avoided* by a wish—‘Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?’ and, finally, that there was such a *necessity* for the endurance, that under the united pressure of duty and love, ‘He sweat as it were

Whether the Lord repeated the whole psalm may be doubtful, but it is clear He said enough to enable His followers to do so. “Even at this day, to repeat in the same manner but the first line of a common hymn would be understood as a reference to the whole.” —*Coleridge*.

great drops of blood' in resisting the temptation to avoid it.

All this we gather from the narrative ; but there is no assertion that He was in any sense whatever *punished* ; that He endured anything at the hand of God as a *Divine infliction* ; or that He was ever looked upon by the Father in any character save that which really belonged to Him as the Holy and the Blest.

That He was, in a sense, 'stricken of God and afflicted,' is as certain as that He was made 'perfect through sufferings' (Heb. ii. 10) ; that in all, He 'bare our sins and carried our sorrows,' is as true as that He redeemed us from Satan ; that without the endurance of this cruel and ignominious death—without the actual laying down of His life, the shedding of His blood—the work of redemption could not have been consummated, is a clearly revealed fact ; but that this was the effect of "Divine anger," or that it was "necessary to the *avenging* of the violated law," is a conclusion which, whether true or false, is the result of human reasoning, and not the direct teaching of the Bible.

If it be said—as it probably will,—Why, then, was Christ, a sinless and unfallen Being, ushered into a world of fallen creatures, and made subject to the consequences of a disobedience in which He had not participated ? Above all, why was He

God as well as man? we have not far to go for an answer.

To the *first* of these questions it may be replied, in the words of our Lord himself, 'Even so, Father, because it seemed good in Thy sight.' Enough is it for us to know that the Redeemer lived and loved, and suffered and died, *to do the will of God*.

Whether, in any sense, He *bore the penalty* of the violated law, we know not. Whether *vengeance* was *needed*, in order to its vindication before the universe, we do not presume to affirm. But of this we are quite sure—it required to be *obeyed*. Broken and dishonoured before all creation, vain were the penalties by which, in all ages, it has avenged itself on offenders, to restore the dignity it had lost. Obedience, perfect and sinless obedience, made manifest in the flesh, could alone restore it to honour. *This* Christ achieved, and, in achieving it, became to man a 'second Adam,' the head of a redeemed people, the Saviour of a lost and ruined world.

In relation to the *second* question, it is surely enough to observe that no *creature* could *do for man* what Christ has done, or *be to man* what Christ is, without becoming the object of idolatry. It was needful that the work of redemption should be a Divine work—that the deliverer of man should be his Creator—that his Saviour should be his

Judge ; since He who secures, on man's behalf, *such* blessings—who is *to him* ‘the way, the truth, and the life,’ and who obtains *for him* everything that renders life desirable,—*could not* be other, either to the eye or to the heart, than an incarnate God ; and if not the proper object of worship, would necessarily become to myriads the overpowering occasion of sin and shame.

To me it seems a strange conclusion that, because Christ came into the world *to die* ; that because it is *His blood* which cleanseth from all sin ; that because He is our ‘sacrifice,’ our ‘passover,’ and our ‘propitiation,’ *therefore* the virtue of His sacrifice lies in the *material blood* shed on Calvary ; its efficacy, in the assumption that He died under the “anger of God ;”¹ or that reconciliation with the Father was not *possible* without the crime and the cruelty of the wicked men by whose evil agency the Lord of life was ‘crucified and slain.’ That it

¹ Mr. Hebert puts the matter in the plainest form when he says, “The death (of Christ) *under the frown of God, under the weight of His wrath*, due to me for my sin, is the great difference between us and the Socinians.” (Second Edit., pp. 80, 81) I fearlessly say it is no such thing. An assertion so hasty and ill founded is calculated to do much mischief. Mr. Hebert surely knows that the doctrine of propitiation, *as now held* by orthodox churches, is the doctrine of Anselm ; that until his time this doctrine had not taken *the form* in which it is now usually presented ; that to the primitive church the central point of the spiritual life was the Incarnation ; and that the cross was for centuries regarded rather as *the culminating fact* of the atonement than the atonement itself.

pleased God to admit this agency is certain ; that Jesus was ‘delivered’ into the hands of His murderers ‘by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,’ is true also (Acts ii. 23) ; but that this wicked act had anything to do with the redemption of man, beyond consummating at once the Saviour’s work and the judgment of the Jewish nation, is nowhere taught in Holy Writ.

Dean Alford has truly said, “Never do we find in Scripture, Old Testament or New Testament, any such expression as the Father was *propitiated* concerning our sins, on account of *the death* of His Son ; or, Christ *propitiated* God or God’s wrath *by His blood* ; never, God was reconciled.” (Note on Heb. ii. 17.)

Why, then, should we *theorise* at all on a subject so much above us ? Why should we be so afraid to admit that the sacrifice of the Redeemer, while in one sense *a counterpart*, is in another *a contrast* to those of the Old Testament economy ? that it is at once the *substance* and the *supersession* of the sacrifice of animal life, by the higher sacrifice of the spirit,—‘Thou shalt make *His soul* an offering for sin’ (Isa. liii. 10) ? that it is the *putting away* of material blood, to make room for the shedding of a life spent in holy and spotless obedience ? that it is *the establishment of* ‘Lo, I come to do Thy will,’ in the place of mere deliverance from the *consequences* of sin by the substitution of a victim ?

'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise' (Psa. li. 17). This surely is the sense in which Christ, 'the perfect Son,' becomes 'the perfect sacrifice,' and 'the Saviour' of that mystical 'body,' the members of which He is ever drawing by His grace into sonship with Himself.

But let us check ourselves, for we are on 'holy ground.' Good Richard Baxter truly says, "The things of God are like snow, and man cannot touch them without leaving on them the print of his handling."

That a question should ever have arisen as to the *extent* of the Atonement; that Christian men, with the Bible in their hands, and its plainest statements before them, should ever have ventured to assert that Christ died *only* for the elect; that if He "bought" others, such "purchase" is for them "no ransom or redemption, fairly so called;" that He has bought them, only "that He may so dispose of them as to glorify the retributive righteousness of God in their condemnation;"¹ that faith is the act of "*a new faculty*,"² a Divine act, "implying the communication of a Divine *capacity*,"³ and yet that all who do not possess it are irrecoverably lost, is to me a melancholy proof of the tendency

¹ Candlish on the Atonement, pp. 193, 194.

² *Ibid.*, p. 379.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 388. I quote from Morison's Vindication.

of the human mind to claim for its own weak and erring *inferences* an authority which really belongs only to the direct teachings of God.

The true solution of the theological difficulty which has led to these sad aberrations from truth, will, I am satisfied, ultimately be found in the simple reception of the apostolic declarations to Timothy, when instructing him as to what he was to teach :—‘ This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinnners*; of whom I am chief ’ (1 Tim. i. 15) ; that ‘ God our Saviour will have *all men* to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth ’ (ii. 4) ; and that while He is ‘ the Saviour of all men,’ He is ‘ *specially* ’ so ‘ of those that believe ’ (iv. 10). ‘ *These things,* ’ says the apostle to him ‘ command and teach ’ (iv. 11).

CHAPTER VI.

ON CONVERSION, AS DISTINGUISHED FROM
REGENERATION.

CONVERSION (*ἐπιστροφή*), which literally means *turning round*, is a term used in Scripture sometimes to express an entire and radical change of *conduct*, following renewal of heart ; and sometimes to indicate return from a temporary course of wrong-doing. It is used in the former sense in the Acts (xv. 3), where Paul speaks of the ‘conversion of the Gentiles ;’ it is used in the latter sense by our Lord when He says to Peter, ‘When thou art converted (*ἐπιστρέψας*), strengthen thy brethren’ (Luke xxii. 32). In Peter’s case the conversion was sudden, and effected by a look : ‘The Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly’ (Luke xxii. 61, 62). Under ordinary circumstances, conversion (although not without exceptions) is an outward and visible thing, and, generally speaking, is, by the Divine blessing, identified with human effort and influence.

Regeneration, on the other hand, as implying a 'new birth,' and regarded as the first and transition step from death unto life, is the work of God *alone*; it is probably in all cases an instantaneous, and it is certainly a *secret* one.

Conversion is a process which may be repeated again and again; each successive spiritual impulse forming a new era in the history of the soul. It is *action* rather than life; it is commonly the result of a definite form of human agency; and it is generally brought about by influences which act upon the nature of man under all the ordinary conditions which affect responsible beings. When our Lord says *to His disciples*, 'Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven' (Matt. xviii. 3), He is not enforcing the doctrine of the new birth, but simply teaching the necessity of *turning away* from those false notions which had led them to ask who should be greatest.

Regeneration, on the contrary, is, from its very nature, complete, and commonly involves a *present* consciousness of forgiven sin; it is a change transcending all ordinary laws; it is generally independent of outward circumstances, and it is always *anticipative* of future bliss. It is, in short, the peculiar donation which God bestows on the elect, who thus receive 'power [or privilege] to become the sons of God; which are born, not of blood, nor

of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God' (John i. 12, 13). It is the accomplishment *on earth* of a change of nature, which, in other cases, may or may not be effected in the world (or age) that is to come.

Conversion, although equally the work of Him from whom cometh 'every good and perfect gift,' is not *in the same sense* supernatural, inasmuch as it may be, and often is, but temporary. If a man exchange a life of sin for a life of obedience; if earnestness and seriousness in religion take the place of habitual indifference; if pure and blessed tastes and affections are obviously superseding those which are low and depraved, we may safely speak of such a one as converted, and *hope* that the outward and visible change indicates the inward condition of the soul—that it implies the regeneration of the whole nature by the power of the Spirit of God. But months, nay, years may elapse, during which it would be neither safe nor right for us to form any practical decision on the question; for, on the one hand, differences in degree are very apt to be confounded by us with differences of kind; and, on the other, changes the most important in a man's character may be accomplished *so gradually* that no human wisdom is competent to decide when they took place, or *so suddenly* that their reality and value cannot be tested. Even in cases where the change is the unquestionable result

of religious impressions, it is often impossible to decide upon its precise character until proved by its fruits.

These distinctions, which derive all their value from being Scriptural, are of great practical importance when viewed in connection with the various agencies God has appointed for the conversion of the world.

The question must often occur, both to the minister of the Gospel and to the private Christian,—What is the actual value of the influence that can be exercised by one man over another in relation to his spiritual interests?

Sometimes it seems as if it must be rated very low indeed: “I have no encouragement to preach,” says Mr. Cecil, in his *‘Remains,’* “but the belief of a continued Divine operation. To bring a man to love God, to hunger and thirst after the mind that was in Christ—with man this is impossible! But God has said it shall be done, and bids me go forth and preach; that by me, as His instrument, He may effect these grand ends; *and therefore I go.*”

An eminent American divine (Dr. Edward Griffin) puts the same sentiment still more distinctly and forcibly. After arguing that as it was necessary for Moses to stretch out his arm, or the Red Sea would not have divided—for the trumpets to have been blown, or the walls of Jericho would not have

fallen—for the voice of Ezekiel to have been heard, or the valley of bones would have been undisturbed—he thus proceeds :—God sent Ezekiel to say, ‘Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord,’ when He knew that the bones would never hear without His supernatural interposition. And the command was a sufficient warrant and encouragement to the prophet. If God should bid *me* go and preach to the dead in yonder graveyard, I would go. *With no other encouragement*, I now stand over *this* valley of the slain (the congregation he was addressing), and say to the dead of my people and kindred, ‘Come out of your graves, ye bones that are very dry. Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.’¹

I do not think that evangelical preachers generally would like to express their views in precisely these terms, but I am quite sure that the words embody the sentiments of thousands and tens of thousands of the most excellent Christians the world has ever seen. Only let it be granted that regeneration and conversion mean *in Scripture* the same thing, and that none but the regenerate are saved from eternal ruin, and it follows, of course—regeneration being supernatural—that what are usually called means of grace, while appointed *antecedents* of conversion, are not second causes ;

¹ “Lectures delivered in Park Street, Boston, U.S., by the Rev. Edward D. Griffin, D.D.” (Third Edition.)

that if an earnest exhortation makes a deeper impression than a frigid one, it is but a *coincidence* between the supernatural and natural order of Divine operations ; that the only end of preaching is to produce *attention to truth* ; and its only use to prepare the way for a Divine work on such souls as God has foreordained to save. An Arminian would of course put the case somewhat differently, but on the supposition of his being a believer in the supernatural character of regeneration, the result cannot be different. *Such are the inexorable demands of logic in theology.*

This view of the Gospel, and of its work in the world, proceeds, of course, on the supposition that Divine sovereignty decides the eternal condition of *all* men—decides it, not in the sense in which God decides all human affairs, viz., as *that great final cause* without whom no creature can live or move, and by whose *permission* alone it is that either sin or suffering can exist, but *as the ordainer* of a destiny over which, however appearances may indicate the contrary, human volitions have no power.

I am quite aware that the faithful minister of the Gospel, however “high” his theology, always labours to show that this fixed Divine purpose in no way interferes with the freedom of the human will, or with the efficiency of human effort ; that God hears the prayers of the living for the spi-

ritually dead ; that every man might, if he would, arise and receive light and life ; that human powerlessness is but another name for human sin ; that no man finally perishes, save by his own suicidal act.

Such reasoning, inconsistent as it may seem, generally commends itself to the devout mind ; for its defects are all lost sight of in the relief which is felt at finding that even the sternest theology cannot venture to ignore those irrepressible instincts of the heart which assure us that God is just, or those plain statements of Scripture which declare that He is Love. Yet, after all, we cannot but feel that preaching of this character, if not a riddle, is a torment ; and that its perplexity must be occasioned, either, on the one hand, by some strange perversion of the teaching of Scripture, or, on the other, by vain attempts to reconcile those partial and fragmentary revelations of the Infinite which we alone possess, with the demands of a logic which is, at best, but finite and human, and *may*, therefore, be an altogether inappropriate medium for the exposition of truths which are superhuman and illimitable.

I believe that much of the difficulty in question arises from a complete misapprehension of those portions of Scripture which reveal the existence of an elect Church ; from extending to all mankind statements which are intended to apply only to the

subjects of the Divine predestination ; from the consequent assertion—implied, if not expressed—of a doctrine of reprobation ; and the final evolution of a system which no ingenuity can ever make consistent with human responsibility, with a judgment according to works, with ‘few stripes,’ or with ‘many stripes.’

At the foundation of this error lies the notion I am endeavouring to controvert ; viz., that in Scripture regeneration and conversion mean the same thing ; that both alike are sovereign and superhuman ; that election from the foundation of the world is the distinctive characteristic of every soul of man who escapes the damnation of hell ; that when St. Paul speaks of the power of the ‘potter’ over the clay, ‘to make one vessel to honour and another to dishonour,’ he teaches *not*, as one would naturally suppose, that the same God who here, without injustice, makes one a peasant and another a prince, may also, in the world to come, give or withhold dignities at His pleasure—that would be intelligible enough—but, incredible as it may seem, that they intimate His right, as sovereign, to *ordain* to eternal misery *all* who are not the subjects of His electing grace. To support this theory, the choice of Jacob, even before his birth—an illustration used by the same apostle—is held to have had relation, not to the birthright only, but to all spiritual blessings.

I 'have not so learned Christ.' I believe as firmly as any in electing love, and in the regeneration of those who are made partakers of it. Evidence of the fact is found in what such men do and dare in vindication of their high calling; justifying it, *sometimes*, at the price of all that the world calls good or great—comfort, reputation, human love, nay, even life itself; *always* at the cost of much self-denial, in the crucifixion of sin, the mortification of every evil desire, the abandonment of many of the objects of this world's ambition, and the constant sacrifice of self-will and self-gratification to the obedience of Christ and the love of the brethren.

These I hold to be the *invariable characteristics* of the man who is born, not of the flesh, but of the Spirit; and if such persons form, as they certainly do, a very small proportion indeed, even of those who are surrounded by the purest light, and who enjoy the highest advantages, I cannot but conclude that *beyond* these there will be found a multitude whom no man can number, to swell the song of redeeming love, and to celebrate the victory of the God-man, when He shall have 'the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession.'

I believe, therefore, in CONVERSION, even though it may not be accompanied by the regeneration of the entire nature. I believe in it as

the result of human influences co-working with God ; co-operating with that blessed Spirit who not only gathers His elect, but is ever convincing '*the world* of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.' I believe that the work of the Church *is now*, as it will be in the world to come, the conversion of sinners to the Redeemer ; that its *real*, as distinguished from its apparent success, will always be proportioned to its zeal, and love, and *truthfulness*, both in word and deed ; that its only sword is 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God ;' that just in proportion as the Church *illustrates* the faith it preaches by a holy and consistent life, must be its power to elevate and to bless ; that while nothing is too large for its expectations, nothing should be too small for its thankfulness ; that as its one *message* is, 'Be ye reconciled unto God,' and its one *encouragement* the assurance of the deliverance of the world, through Christ, both from the power and punishment of sin, so its one *object* should be the moral and spiritual advancement of all with whom it comes in contact. Every step in this direction, taken how or by whom it may, is to be regarded as of inestimable value ; every putting forth of *desire* after the good and the true, and especially after Him who is embodied truth and goodness, is to be welcomed as a work of the Spirit ; and since every *good* thing which is begun here will be carried

on hereafter, every shade of improvement, either in society at large or in the individual transgressor, is to be rejoiced in as evidence that in no case whatever does God's word return unto Him void ; that it always accomplishes that which He pleases ; that it invariably *prosper*s in the thing whereto He sends it (Isa. lv. 11).

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE DOCTRINE OF REGENERATION, OR THE
NEW BIRTH.

THE precise phrase, "Regeneration" (παλιγγενεσία), occurs only *twice* in Scripture; once in the sense of a change of *profession by baptism*, 'the washing [laver or pool] of Regeneration' (Tit. iii. 5); and once in the sense of *resurrection*, 'the Regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory' (Matt. xix. 28). The term is used by Greek writers to express the *re-birth* of all nature in the spring; and by Josephus, when describing the edict of Darius, by which the Jews were permitted to return to Jerusalem, it is applied to the 'regeneration' of his country.

Kindred phrases, however—such as being 'born again,' 'born of the Spirit,' becoming 'new creatures in Christ Jesus,'—occur repeatedly in the inspired volume, and generally indicate that great inward and effectual change in the heart and character of a man which is wrought by the Holy Spirit in connection with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and under the influence of which *self* ceases to be a man's centre, and God becomes such.

The doctrine is not peculiar to the *New Testament*. The prophet Ezekiel (xi. 19) assures the Jews that a time will come when God 'will give them one heart,' put 'a new spirit' within them, take 'the stony heart' out of their flesh, and give them 'an heart of flesh.' Yet, very soon after (xviii. 31), regardless of what we should consider logical consistency, or the force of necessary inferences, he calls upon the same people to cast away their transgressions, and to *make themselves a new heart* and a new spirit. Further on (xxxvi. 26, 27), he repeats the promise that God will one day do it; but places the fulfilment far in the future, and soon after connects it with the resurrection (xxxvii. 13, 14). It was to these passages that our Lord probably referred when, speaking with Nicodemus on the new birth, He says, 'Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?' (John iii. 10).

It is in this interview with Nicodemus that we have the first intimation of the applicability of these strong figures to Jews or heathen embracing Christianity. And our first inquiry is, What impression did the conversation there recorded *finally* make upon the Jewish ruler? I say finally, because, in the first instance, it is clear the language of the Lord was either *misunderstood*, or regarded as a saying *too hard* to be received. Which of the two may be uncertain. If the former, Nicodemus

exhibits the most astounding ignorance of figurative language ; if the latter, he considers it impossible that any change so radical as that intimated could be necessary at his age, and in his position.

Set right on both these points ;—*first*, by the intimation that the term was used in the same sense in which it had been used for ages (John iii. 10)—the sense, in fact, in which the Jews applied it every day, when they baptized proselytes from heathenism ; and *secondly*, by the reiterated assurance of its absolute necessity to the Israelite as well as to the Gentile (ver. 5, 6) ;—the question still remains, How did Nicodemus understand it ? Did he suppose that the Lord meant to say that he, a ruler of the Jews, was yet an unconverted man, in the darkness of unbelief ? or did he rather understand Him to teach that *the fact of coming* to Christ at all was, in itself, a proof of the new birth, since the Lord assures him that it was not the working of miracles that had convinced him, but (whether he knew it or not) that higher work of the Spirit, without which no man could ‘see [*i. e.*, discern] the kingdom of God’ ?

I believe that neither the one nor the other supposition *fully* expresses the truth. I see no reason whatever to suppose that Nicodemus had any thoughts or feelings corresponding to those which *we* invariably associate with the term being ‘born again.’ He was a Jew, a ruler of the Jews ;

and nothing in the record indicates that he was either hypocritical or self-deceived. He came timidly, indeed, and by night, but with a true aim; and he came, not simply as an individual, but *as the representative of a class*. 'WE [the rulers of the better sort] *know* [he says] that Thou art a Teacher come from God : for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him.'

The reply of Jesus is explicit :—' Except a man be born of water ' (*i. e.*, except he *openly* avow Me by a public profession, in baptism—the baptism of John¹), and except he be 'born' also 'of the Spirit,' he can neither truly discern the character nor enter into the fellowship of the kingdom of God. For this kingdom involves much more than at present appears—much that will be hard to receive ; viz., the lifting up of the Son of man, and the salvation of the world, Gentile as well as Jew, through Him (John iii. 11—21).

Whether Nicodemus ever got beyond his timid half-heartedness—whether he ever was baptized, and confessed Christ openly—is very uncertain ; the probability is that he did not, for he appears

¹ 'The Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, *being not baptized of him*' (Luke vii. 30). 'Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on Him ; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue : for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God' (John xii. 42, 43).

to be precisely the same man at a later period, when, in his place among the chief priests and Pharisees, he counsels justice and moderation (vii. 50—52); nor does the fact of his uniting with Joseph of Arimathea (another secret disciple) in the burial of Christ indicate more than is expressed in his first nightly visit. It is possible that both these men might be amongst those who were converted after Pentecost; but no assurance of the kind is conveyed to us in the Sacred Records, an omission not without its lesson, if it teaches us to abstain from judging one another, or attempting to decide on character without adequate information.

But here the question naturally arises—and it is a very important one,—Did our Lord, when He uttered the words, ‘Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,’ mean to teach us that, without a change as great and radical as that which is experienced by the elect, no man living can escape the eternal damnation of hell? or did He simply intend us to understand that through this Divine transformation alone can any one become a member of the redeemed Church, enjoy a *present* salvation, and be a king and priest to God for ever and ever?

On the first supposition, every unrenewed man, without exception, ignorant or enlightened, Christian or heathen, hangs trembling by a thread over the verge of the bottomless pit; and distinctions

between the virtuous and the vicious, the moral and the profane, are altogether lost sight of in the tremendous alternative involved. On the second, such persons, although excluded from 'the Church of the firstborn,' as vessels for more or less dishonour—shut out from the high privileges and glorious dignity of those who are *emphatically* to be made 'partakers of the Divine nature,' to 'judge angels,' and, under the Redeemer, to teach and to rule in the world (or age) that is to come—are yet, *on the supposition of their being other than absolute rejecters of grace*, not excluded either from mercy now, or from the hope of advancing blessedness hereafter.

That there is much in Scripture calculated to support the more hopeful view, and to justify us in concluding that Regeneration should rather be regarded as the evidence of election than of grace—the peculiar privilege of those who enjoy *here* an *anticipative* reception of future blessing, and who are to form that Church which is emphatically 'the Bride of the Lamb,' can scarcely be disputed. Whether the term 'new-born' is *ever* applied in the New Testament to any but those who are regarded and generally spoken of as 'chosen before the foundation of the world,' may be doubtful. Alford thinks that in that well-known passage (Heb. vi. 4—8), where it is said to be 'impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have

tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance,' a distinction is drawn between the elect and the regenerate; and he regards the text as one among many, where in Scripture, as well as from the teaching of the Church, we learn that 'elect' and 'regenerate' are not convertible terms. All the elect, he says, are regenerate; but all the regenerate are not elect. The regenerate may fall away; the elect never can.

Let this be as it may, it is at least certain that, *generally speaking*, the two terms are regarded as one in signification. St. John, in the very first chapter of his Gospel, indicates this when he says that they among the Jews who received Christ were persons to whom God '*gave power*'—or, as it reads in the margin, 'right or privilege—to become the sons of God;' which were '*born*, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God' (i. 12, 13). It is such only who can say, 'Of His own will *begat* He us with the word of truth, that we should be *a kind of firstfruits* of His creatures' (Jas. i. 18). It is of such alone that the apostle writes when he declares that 'whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God' (1 John iii. 9). It is of such St. Paul speaks when he says, 'Neither circum-

cision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but *a new creature*' (Gal. vi. 15); a term which he has just before explained to mean 'faith, which worketh by love' (Gal. v. 6); or, as he expresses it in another place, 'keeping of the commandments of God' (1 Cor. vii. 19). These, out of the 'many called,' are the 'few chosen;' *chosen for employment* in the vineyard (Matt. xx. 16); 'vessels unto honour, sanctified, *meet for the Master's use*' (2 Tim. ii. 21). They are the Lord's 'gold,' His 'jewels' (Mal. iii. 3, 17), His 'friends' (John xv. 15).

Texts like these obviously do not apply to all who confess and call themselves Christians; but must, from their very nature, be confined to those who have 'crucified the world,' 'put on Christ,' and count themselves but 'pilgrims and strangers' here below.

Further, the great change in question is always described under terms which almost seem to forbid the idea of human co-operation. When a man is spoken of first as 'dead' and then as 'alive from the dead;' first as the 'old' man, and then as the 'new;' as quickened from above, like the babe in the womb; as made alive, like the plant while it is yet underground, it is exceedingly difficult to associate with the cause of so thorough a change anything at all approaching to an efficient human volition. Such a transformation seems of necessity one which can only be spoken of as the *special*,

direct, and sovereign act of Him in whom 'we live, and move, and have our being.'

Finally, as those who enter into the kingdom of God are always spoken of in Scripture as a 'little flock,' to whom it is the Father's good pleasure *to give* the kingdom (*i.e.*, rule and authority in the age to come); since the crowning sin of man is always declared in the Bible to be unbelief, a sin which cannot be chargeable on the myriads who have never even heard the name of the Great Object of our faith; since salvation is always spoken of as *a present blessing*, deliverance even now from the love and power of sin, I am compelled to conclude that Regeneration, in its highest sense, is a sovereign and therefore limited gift; that the regenerate will form the court rather than the company of heaven; that this dispensation is not one of universality, but of selection; that it is preparatory, and not final; that while its *primary* object is to call out and educate those who are to be 'kings and priests,' its *secondary*, but by no means less important end is, by the agency of the elect, and through the preaching of the Gospel *now*, to convert sinners from the error of their ways; to develop, through sin and sorrow, the ever-varying phases of human character; to evolve, by slow but certain processes, those great moral and spiritual principles which are embodied in the revelation of a Divine Redeemer; and to prepare

mankind at large for that coming judgment and final probation which will in due time follow the second and personal advent of the Son of God.

What, on this supposition, will, in that mysterious world to which all are tending, be the precise condition of the converted, but not regenerate ; of the unconverted, because ignorant or thoughtless multitude ; of the evil and profane ; of the heathen who have never heard of Christ ; of the Jew, from whom He is still veiled ; of the followers of Mahomet, *yct*, as it would almost seem, the sword and scourge of God wielded for the punishment of a corrupt and idolatrous Christianity ; and of the tens of thousands in the most enlightened lands, whom nobody knows how to rank or where to place, *I do not profess to know*. It is only permitted us to say, that *all* will be judged righteously, and ‘according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or bad ;’ that the feeblest faith in Christ will then be found to have had a life in it ; that the least service rendered to a disciple will, *because* rendered to a disciple, not lose its reward ; and that *they only have cause utterly to despair* who, having deliberately and knowingly rejected the counsel of God against themselves, despised and persecuted His children, and denied the Lord that bought them, can, *on no Scriptural ground whatever*, expect anything better than ‘a

fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation, that shall destroy the adversary.'

Surely it is not unreasonable to hope that these may be much fewer in number than good men are sometimes led, in their short-sightedness, to imagine.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THE first thing that strikes one in examining the testimony of Scripture relative to the work of the Spirit is, the revelation of its twofold manifestation ; viz., as POWER, and as LIFE.¹

We cannot search the Bible with any care without observing that in some cases the heavenly gift is seen simply in the bestowal of *Divine power*, while in others it is as plainly the gift of a *Divine life*. In the one case, the action of the Spirit seems to be exclusively on the intellect ; in the other, it is as exclusively on the heart, regarded as the seat of the affections. As power, the gift imparted enables the man *to do* that which otherwise he could not accomplish ; as life, it enables him *to be* what God would have him to be.

Illustrations drawn from the sacred writings will best explain what is meant.

The recipients of the Holy Spirit AS POWER may be supposed to include—

¹ The Rev. Dr. John McLeod Campbell, in his ‘Thoughts on Revelation, with Special Reference to the Present Time,’ speaks of “two forms of inspiration,—the inspiration of Revelation, and the inspiration of the Divine life.”

(1) Among others, Bezaleel and Aholiab, who were endowed with 'wisdom, understanding, and knowledge, in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass,' that they might fulfil the will of God in relation to the construction of the tabernacle (Exod. xxxi. 2—6); Eldad and Medad and the seventy elders, who were invested with what is termed a 'spirit of prophecy,' that they might aid Moses in teaching and ruling (Numb. xi. 16, 17, 26); Joshua, filled with 'the spirit of wisdom,' that he might govern the people (Deut. xxxiv. 9); Cyrus, 'anointed' to be a 'shepherd' to Israel (Isa. xlv. 1; xlv. 28); and the hundred and twenty in the upper room, endowed with the power of speaking with tongues, that they might be evangelists to the nations.

(2) Moses, and the prophets of the Old Testament; the apostles of the New; and those of their disciples who were invested by them with ability to heal diseases, to work miracles generally, or in any other way to accomplish acts beyond the range of human capacity. The rapture of Ezekiel and of Philip (Ezek. iii. 12—15; Acts viii. 39, 40); the judgment of Ananias and Sapphira; the miraculous discipline of the apostolic age; its 'rod,' as exercised on Elymas and on the Corinthian offenders,—all come under this head.

(3) All persons endowed with the power of pre-

dicting future events, whether under the Old or the New Dispensation. And—

(4) All who were inspired to teach men truths which could only be known by immediate revelation ; to record conversations or actions, discourses or events, intended for the instruction of future ages ; to write history, poems, proverbs, or epistles, which should authoritatively guide men through all time ; and to expound things which were for some years but partially revealed to the Church generally. Among these may be ranged apostles, evangelists, psalmists, and probably, *in degree*, the primitive elders or rulers of the infant Church. For what else were those special gifts which are sometimes called ‘words of wisdom,’ ‘words of knowledge,’ ‘prophecy,’ ‘discerning of spirits,’ ‘divers kinds of tongues,’ ‘the interpretation of tongues’ (1 Cor. xii. 6—12), but special endowments granted to particular individuals to enable them to perform the precise work they had to do?

Now let it be distinctly noted—for it is of great importance to mark such peculiarities—that in all these cases the Divine gift is simply POWER—power bestowed *for a certain time*, and *with a definite object* ; that it is never given or used for the individual benefit of the recipient ; and that it contains in itself no moral or spiritual element whatever. In apostolic estimation, all these gifts are

counted as nothing compared with love (1 Cor. xiii. 1).

That their possessors were *generally* partakers also of the higher and more spiritual donation is certain. But this is by no means universally the case. Of the moral and religious character of such men as Bezaleel we know nothing; Cyrus was a heathen; Samson, though a judge in Israel, was a semi-barbarian, and can scarcely be regarded as a spiritual man; Balaam was *a type* of evil; Judas probably worked miracles; and a human, if not a sinful, element seems sometimes to have blended with inspired songs, such as that of Deborah and some of the Psalms. Everywhere we are taught that the possession of a Divine POWER, whether it be to build, to govern, to fight, to predict, to teach, to heal, to work miracles, or to speak with tongues, is not, *in itself*, proof of a renewed heart, or *of necessity* moral and spiritual in its nature.

The *second* form in which the work of the Holy Spirit is revealed to us is that of LIFE—Divine life, implanted in the soul of the individual man, and productive, in various degrees, of moral and spiritual blessing.

Yet here also a *twofold* operation is plainly revealed.

Our Lord himself has drawn the distinction to

which we advert. The 'Comforter,' without whose blessed presence believers would be as 'orphans,' and the world at large friendless, comes, we are told, to *convict* some, and to *renew* others; perhaps we might say, without blame, to renew *the few*, and to convict *the many*; to make the one class, even now, 'partakers of the Divine nature,' and to prepare the rest for that future, whatever may be its character, in which their eternal destiny will be adjudged.

That in many cases conviction is but the prelude of conversion, and that in others it is the first step in the regeneration of the entire nature, cannot be doubted. But it is not always so. The world at large—in accordance with the promise of the Saviour—is *now* by the Comforter or Monitor *convinced* 'of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come;' but large portions of it are, in no sense whatever, submitted to the Redeemer. Christendom, in centuries long past, was as a whole *converted* from heathenism to the worship of God, the living and the true; but comparatively few were *renewed* in the spirit of their minds.

The *higher gift* belongs only to the believer. It is seen when the early Jewish churches, walking 'in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied' (Acts ix. 31); when they consisted of men upon whom was 'great grace;' men whose religious history was distin-

guished by joy, and the character of whose life was everywhere manifested in praise and thanksgiving.

It is seen, too, in those Gentile fellowships of whom it could be said, 'Ye have received the Spirit of adoption;' 'The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ' (Rom. viii. 15—17). It is seen in all of whom it can be affirmed, 'The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you' (1 John ii. 27); 'Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things,'—*i. e.*, all things which 'pertain unto life and godliness' (comp. 1 John ii. 20 with 2 Pet. i. 3). It is seen *in all* who, in every age, bring forth 'the fruits of the Spirit, which are love, joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost' (Gal. v. 22); for such, we are told, have, as the result, *not as the cause* of their faith, been 'sealed' for God. 'In whom also, *after that ye believed*, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession' (Ephes. i. 13, 14).

It *is* itself the life-giving water that Christ promised, when, in Jerusalem, 'on the last great day of the feast, He stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.' 'The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of

water springing up unto everlasting life' (John vii. 37, 38 ; iv. 14).

The 'Holy Spirit,' *in Scripture*, is always either DIVINE POWER given to man for a special end, and therefore temporary in duration,—without any *necessary* connection with moral or spiritual excellence,—and not intended for the individual benefit of the recipient ; *or* it is DIVINE LIFE, which is purely moral and spiritual, and intended for the benefit of the individual to whom it is given ; in its lower forms convincing of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and in its higher forms renewing the entire nature, and ending in everlasting life.

The one form (that of conviction) is for the world ; the other is for the Church. The *first* is, as we believe, the *commencement* of a work, intended to be carried on in other worlds, and to find a completion either in the gradual approximation of the man to whom it is given towards the Divine likeness, or in his utter and irreparable ruin ; the *second* is *privilege*, granted to those who, 'chosen from the foundation of the world,' are, in an emphatic sense, the 'sons of God.'

Beyond these forms, Scripture reveals no work of the Spirit of which we have a right to speak, or on which we ought to rely. And, with few exceptions, all Christians are agreed that it is only as *Divine life* that the gift of the Holy Ghost is permanent, or in any intelligible sense promised to ourselves.

But while this is admitted in words, it is commonly denied in fact. It has been thus denied ever since the dark shadow of the coming apostasy first fell upon the early Church. From that hour the Divine 'counsel' on this, as on almost every other matter, has been 'darkened,' and the word of God too often dealt with 'deceitfully.'

The *forms* of error relating to the work of the Holy Spirit thus generated, have been many and dangerous.

(1.) Losing sight of the distinction, always preserved in Scripture, between the gift of the Holy Ghost as power and as life—regarding the action of the Spirit as being alike on the intellect and on the heart, men soon came to believe that while purifying, it was "a light playing on the rational faculties, and clearing mental perplexities,—a secret energy, through which every organ discharges its functions aright."¹ It was under the influence of this delusion that the creeds were developed, that doctrine was drawn from doctrine, that liturgies were collected, and that Gentile customs were adopted. It is under this same delusion that the Pope and Cardinals to this day invoke the Holy Spirit on all their transactions.

(2.) The Protestant Reformation, while it changed the direction, and somewhat modified the character

¹ Basil.

of the error in question, was far from eradicating it. That great event simply *transferred* the supposed Divine light, *first* from the Church Catholic, regarded as a unity, to the various branches which, by their separation, bore testimony against the errors of Rome; *then* to the diverse fellowships which soon after separated from the original seceders; and *finally* to every individual Christian who, to this day, each for himself, devoutly believes that in answer to his supplications, *he*, amid all the diversities of theological opinion, certainly attains to those views which are *best for him*, and, as he thinks, which are most in accordance with the will of God.

(3.) The most common form of delusion, however, is that which supposes that the Holy Spirit, *in some special manner*, accompanies and gives effect to sacred oratory;¹ that He co-operates with ani-

¹ Scripture does not support this view. When Peter speaks of the apostles as preaching the Gospel 'with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven' (1 Pet. i. 12), he simply means that what they taught was *by inspiration*. When St. Paul says his preaching was 'in demonstration of the Spirit and of power' (1 Cor. ii. 4), he refers to the signs and miracles by which it was accompanied (Rom. xv. 19). The 'treasure' is in 'earthen vessels,' that the 'excellency of the power may be of God' (2 Cor. iv. 7). But that power is the Gospel of Christ, which 'is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth' (Rom. i. 16). And whensoever and wheresoever that Gospel comes with *renewing force* upon the heart, it is because it is received, not outwardly and in word only, but inwardly as the voice of the Holy Ghost (1 Thess. i. 5).

mal excitements, exaggerated appeals, and inflated eloquence ; that He gives *power* to all the various devices—borrowed, although unconsciously, from Rome—by which men, with the best intentions, and under the influence of the purest motives, are ever seeking to awaken and alarm the thoughtless through the influence of the imagination, and by action on the nervous system.

Into the “Natural History” of these extravagances, or the sources of the delusion which connects them with a Divine blessing, and regards them as more or less *endorsed* by the Holy Spirit, I cannot here enter ; but I may be permitted to observe that they will never vanish until texts are interpreted more soberly than they are at present, and their bearing controlled by the context ; until this dispensation is viewed in its true character, as one marked rather by selection than by universality,¹ until the age to come is connected with

¹ The notion that Scripture leads us to expect the universal triumph of the Gospel under this dispensation is for the most part based on passages which were never intended to be thus applied. Some of them (*e. g.*, *Psa.* lxxii. 16, 17 ; *Isa.* xi. 6—9 ; xxxii. 15—20) predict the reign of Messiah, without any reference to the *time* when it shall take place ; others (*e. g.*, *Zech.* xii. 10 ; *Ezek.* xxxvi. 25—27) evidently belong only to the Jewish people regarded as God’s chosen ; and others (*e. g.*, *Isa.* lxxv. 25 ; xlv. 23, comp. with *Rom.* xiv. 11 ; and *Isa.* xxv. 6—8, comp. with *1 Cor.* xv. 54) are as plainly connected with the resurrection, and with ‘the new heavens and new earth in which dwelleth righteousness’ (*Psa.* civ. 29, 30 ; *Isa.* lxxv. 17).

the age that is ; and the distinction drawn in Scripture between the glorified Church and the 'nations of the saved' (Rev. xxi. 24) is fully and fairly recognised.

Then will it be seen that Christ is indeed the Redeemer of *the world* ; that mankind form a community, common participants in the miseries of the fall, and therefore common sharers in the blessings of the recovery ; that Satan's *apparent* triumph is unreal and but temporary ; that Divine love is wider and deeper than we are apt to imagine ; that 'all things' are working together for good to them that love God ; that Christ, raised from the dead, is not only in this age, but also in the age which is to come, head *over all* things for the exaltation of the Church (Ephes. i. 22) ; that they who love Him are not 'strangers and foreigners,' as were the men of other nations in Jerusalem, and as in the age to come will those be who are not of the Church, but 'fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God' (Ephes. ii. 18, 19) ; that what we know not now we shall know hereafter.

Then, and not till then, shall we learn to separate the superhuman process by which God calls and trains His elect, from the great principles on which He governs the world ; to be thankful for a light which, however dim, clears up many dark and painful mysteries ; and to rejoice in a hope which relieves the sadness of the renewed heart when

crushed by the thought of abounding sin and sorrow, holding out the blessed prospect in a future age of a ransomed world, dwelling under the righteous rule of its lawful Lord and loving Saviour.

But this can never be so long as we persist in maintaining that the conviction of the world by 'the Comforter' is but aggravated condemnation, —that God has no blessing for an Esau, and can show no favour to any man short of absolute union with Himself.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE REVELATIONS OF SCRIPTURE REGARDING
HEAVEN.

THE word 'Heaven' (*οὐρανός*), or, as it is frequently found in the plural form, 'Heavens,' occurs about two hundred and eighty times in the New Testament alone. In *ten* of these it is translated 'air'—as in the parable of the sower,—'the fowls of *the air*' (Luke viii. 5). In *five* others it is rendered 'sky'—as in the discourse of our Lord,—'Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of *the sky*' (Luke xii. 56). In *eighty-six* other places although translated 'heaven,' it is obviously put rather for the visible firmament—as in Mark xiii. 25,—'the stars of *heaven* shall fall;' or as indicative of the direction from which Divine communications seemed to come—as in Matt. iii. 16, 17,—'Lo, the *heavens* were opened;' and again, 'Lo, a voice *from heaven*.'

In *eighty-three* instances heaven is expressly intended to indicate the peculiar residence of God and of the holy angels; the place *from* which Christ came, *to* which He is gone, and *whence* He

will one day come again ; *the locality*, so to speak, from which all authority and all blessing proceeds ; e. g., ‘ Our Father which art in *heaven* ’ (Luke xi. 2). ‘ *Heaven* is My throne ’ (Acts vii. 49). ‘ No, not the angels which are *in heaven* ’ (Mark xiii. 32). ‘ He that came down *from heaven* ’ (John iii. 13). ‘ The great High Priest, that is *passed into the heavens* ’ (Heb. iv. 14). ‘ To wait for His Son *from heaven* ’ (1 Thess. i. 10). ‘ The true bread *from heaven* ’ (John vi. 32) ; and such like.

In *thirty-three* other places the term is associated with ‘ the kingdom ’ of the Redeemer, which is styled ‘ the kingdom of heaven ’ (Matt. iii. 2), and the ‘ heavenly kingdom ’ (2 Tim. iv. 18) ; just as the calling of the Christian is termed a ‘ heavenly calling ’ (Heb. iii. 1)—his resurrection body a ‘ celestial ’ or *heavenly* body (1 Cor. xv. 40), and the future residence of the saints the ‘ heavenly Jerusalem ’ (Heb. xii. 22).

In the book of the Apocalypse the term occurs *fifty-four* times, *sometimes* indicating the immediate residence of Jehovah, but *commonly* the world of separate spirits, or Hades. This intermediate state between death and the resurrection is generally called, in reference to the Christian, *heaven* ; but not properly so, for it is but the temporary residence of the dead, and should never be confounded with the dwelling-place of God and of the holy angels.

The existence of this state, although rarely if ever

denied, is, in our own day, commonly ignored, under an impression,—altogether unsupported by Scripture, that *at death*,—and therefore long before either the second coming of Christ or the judgment day, the souls of the departed, according to their character, enter into the full enjoyment of the blessedness of heaven, or into the untold miseries of the lake of fire.

And yet nothing can be plainer than that the Bible teaches that the soul at death goes to hades, and that the word hades, although in our English version usually translated “hell,” simply *means* the invisible state—the place of departed spirits—without any reference whatever to the condition of its inhabitants.

Whether the fact that Dives, when suffering, distinctly expresses pity for others, and desires their timely repentance, is intended to indicate that the retributions of hades *may* be—nay, that in some cases they *are*—disciplinary as well as punitive, many will be inclined to doubt. Yet it is, at least, far from improbable. And if it be so, why may not these sorrows be regarded as introductory to that further probation in the world (or age) to come, which, it is believed, Scripture in many places *hints at*?

I am quite aware that the very term ‘probation’ implies more or less of pain and sorrow, of perplexity and of depression, arising *from evil*, and can quite

understand the indignation with which some will resent the very thought that, in any other world than this, evil can exist out of hell. Such objectors, however, may be reminded that from the teachings of the Bible it is an indisputable fact that evil existed in heaven before it came down to earth; that 'the angels who left their first estate' did so, if not under temptation from without, certainly from the workings of evil within them; and that there is nothing whatever, either in the Bible or in the analogy of God's dealings, which should lead us to suppose that *moral trial* terminates here.

For the redeemed,—for the elect Church of Christ,—for all that are here one with Him, trial obviously does terminate; for they have 'washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes' (Rev. vii. 13—17). And again, 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, *that they may rest* from their labours; and their works do follow them' (Rev. xiv. 13). But where is the authority for applying to every professing Christian—however cold, or negligent, or inconsistent he may be—passages which, in Scripture, are carefully confined to martyrs, apostles, and eminent saints? (John xii. 26; xvii. 24).

The prejudiced, or the careless, may call the very idea of a probation for anybody in the world

to come, 'purgatory,' and content themselves with the sneer; but thoughtful readers will perceive at once that it is at least no such purgatory as that with which Rome deludes her victims. The sorrows of *hades may*, indeed, and in some cases I think will be, only the prelude to final destruction; but that such will be invariably the case is nowhere taught in Holy Scripture.

¶ The revelations of the Old Testament cannot be expected, for reasons we have already stated, to throw any additional light on this subject; for the few highly figurative passages which are found in the prophets, such as the triumphal song which celebrates the overthrow of the king of Babylon,—deceased monarchs taunting him on his entrance into *sheol* (Isa. xiv. 9—12),—or Ezekiel's description of 'the strong among the mighty' speaking to the king of Egypt 'out of the midst of hell' (*sheol*, or *hades*, Ezek. xxxii. 21); or Pharaoh seeing the fall of empires, and being 'comforted over all his multitudes slain by the sword' (ver. 31), can scarcely teach us more than that the wicked dead in the invisible world are, to some extent, under the influence of the passions that enthralled them on earth, and that they are capable of aggravating each other's sorrow.

In the book of the Apocalypse, the apostle John, *entranced*, finds himself indeed in vision before the throne of God; but that throne seems to be set in

hades, where the Father, in His official character, as the originator of the work of redemption, is, in this magnificent imagery, supposed to preside.

The form of worship described as carried on there corresponds to the course and manner of worship in the earthly temple ; and, as has been well observed, there is a remarkable analogy between this representation of the invisible, and the *tabernacle service* generally, which, as we are told, was arranged *according to the pattern* (or copy) showed to Moses in the mount ; all seeming to imply that the employment of happy separate spirits is that of frequent worship, and that this holy and blessed service is very closely adumbrated by that of the Jewish tabernacle.¹

It is in this upper world that the Christian is called *even now* to dwell. This is 'the heavenly,' in which the believer should, by faith, already feel himself *at home*, domesticated, so to speak, with the Redeemer. For 'God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, *hath quickened* us together with Christ, and *hath raised us up* together, and made us sit together in heavenly places [*lit.*, in the heavenlies] in Christ Jesus' (Ephes. ii. 4—6). Now, says the apostle to the Colossians, 'Ye are dead, and your life is hid with

¹ See Bishop Newton's 'Dissertation on Rev. iv.,' and 'Saturday Evening,' by Isaac Taylor.

Christ in God.' Here ye are but aliens, for your spirits are not the property of this world ; by faith ye dwell *in that holy seclusion from the tempests of time* to which the Redeemer has risen. But 'when Christ, who is our life, shall appear,' or manifest Himself,—when He shall renew His sensible relation to earth, and bring it into subjection to Himself,—THEN all shall be changed. 'Ye also shall appear with Him in glory' (Col. iii. 4), and enter into diviner relations both with Him and it (1 Thess. iv. 14 ; Matt. xiii. 43).

In harmony with the view we have here taken of the separate state is that beautiful delineation of its character which has been set forth by Mr. Isaac Taylor in his 'Saturday Evening.'

"The spirit," says he, "is then, when freed from the body, to be thrown upon the play of its AFFECTIONS—whether these be malign or benign, pure or depraved,—and it is moreover to be thrown upon them in preference of objects of the most stupendous magnitude. In place of the measured and mingled emotions of the present life, there are to be encountered, in the next stage of our existence, excitements of overwhelming force, and all of one quality. And amid them, the soul, quiescent in regard to what might move it to wonder or terror, is to be nakedly sensitive to the MORAL QUALITY of what it beholds. Human nature, thus reduced to its most simple element, shall exist in one mood

only,—that of AN INTENSE CONSCIOUSNESS OF ITS OWN MORAL CONDITION.”

Of the *immediate happiness* of the saint after his departure from earth, no Christian who refuses to accept the theory that the soul sleeps till the day of the resurrection, can entertain a doubt. To such men unquestionably ‘to die is gain;’ to be ‘with Christ’ is ‘far better’ (Phil. i. 21, 23). ‘Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them’ (Rev. xiv. 13). ‘In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also’ (John xiv. 2, 3).

The phrase, ‘My Father’s house,’ is, I am aware, usually understood to mean the peculiar and special dwelling-place of God. But not justly so. For everywhere else ‘the *house* of God’ clearly stands for the *people* of God, the *family*, who are constantly represented as a ‘household,’ a ‘building,’ a ‘temple,’ and such like. The natural meaning surely is—‘In My Father’s (household or family) are many (dwelling-places);’ *not*, as it is usually read, ‘In My Father’s habitation are many habitations.’

Where Enoch is, or Elijah, or Moses, we know

not, for these are exceptional instances ; but *we do know* that ‘David is not ascended into the heavens’ (Acts ii. 34), but that his soul is yet in hades, and his flesh has seen corruption. We know, also, that while angels ascend and descend from heaven, humanity in the ‘Son’ *alone* has entered its everlasting gates (John i. 51 ; xx. 17). For, says Christ himself, ‘*No man* hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven’ (John iii. 13). Nothing seems to be clearer than that we must all wait in the invisible till ‘the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised.’ ‘Beloved,’ says St. John, ‘*now* are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when He shall appear’ (or rather, ‘that if it were manifested’—*Alford*), ‘we shall be like Him ; for we shall see Him as He is’ (1 John iii. 2). But we can find no authority whatever for asserting that the happiness of the redeemed, either immediately after death, or subsequent to judgment, is enjoyed *in heaven* properly so called. On the contrary, Scripture distinctly teaches that *after the resurrection* the spirit, till then in the separate state, is again united to the body, and finds its home and its work on the regenerated earth.

The point to be noticed is—and, as contrasted with popular impressions, it is a very singular one --that THE WORD ‘HEAVEN’ IS NEVER USED IN

SCRIPTURE TO DENOTE THE FINAL DWELLING-PLACE OF BELIEVERS IN THE WORLD THAT IS TO COME. We all speak of going to heaven when we die, and are apparently quite unconscious that we are using a term which is nowhere sanctioned in Holy Writ.

Heaven, as the abode of Christ, is always and justly regarded as the spot where our 'hopes' rest (Col. i. 5), and where that reward is 'reserved' which is to be *revealed* in the last time (1 Pet. i. 4). *There* our 'inheritance among all them that are sanctified' is deposited (Acts xx. 32); our 'treasure' is *there* (Matt. vi. 20; Heb. x. 34); our 'names' are 'written' *there* (Luke x. 20); our 'reward' is *there* (Matt. v. 12); the 'crown of righteousness' is *laid up* there (2 Tim. iv. 8); our 'conversation' (moral life) is *there*, 'from whence also we look for the Saviour' (Phil. iii. 20); but our final home is *not* there; for the 'house' with which we are to be 'clothed upon,' although as yet, by a figure, spoken of as 'in the heavens,' and declared to be 'eternal' in character, is to be a house '*from heaven*' (2 Cor. v. 2); and 'the holy city, the new Jerusalem,' is to 'come down from God *out of heaven*' (Rev. xxi. 10); and the dwelling-place of risen men is to be '*a new earth*,' in which dwelleth righteousness (Rev. xxi. 1); and Christ is to return,—'for the Lord himself shall *descend from heaven* with a shout, with the voice

of the archangel, and with the trump of God' (1 Thess. iv. 16); and 'the tabernacle of God' is to be 'with men,' and '*He will dwell with them,* and they shall be His people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God' (Rev. xxi. 3).

That the elect Church, 'the Bride,' will occupy a position higher than the rest, nearer to Christ, and more glorious than that of many who will be saved, we have already seen to be probable from the statement that such shall be with Christ *within* 'the holy city,' while others, 'saved nations,' only dwell 'in the light' of it (Rev. xxi. 24); but there is nothing whatever to support the ordinary expectation that, at the resurrection, this material world of ours will be destroyed, and the righteous conveyed to heaven, to be for ever happy among the angels of God, sharing with them in the services of the upper world. There is far more reason to suppose that the angels will continue for ever to be 'ministering spirits' to those who are 'the heirs of salvation' (Heb. i. 14).

In all the *speculations* which excellent persons so freely indulge in about 'being happy in heaven'—for, unsupported by Scripture, they are nothing but speculations—the point forgotten is, *the perpetual humanity of man*, so clearly indicated in the incarnation of the Redeemer, and in the fact that He ascended, in His human body, to 'His

Father and to our Father, to His God and to our God.'

To a similar forgetfulness may probably be traced a tendency, now very common, to contemplate future happiness apart altogether from its connection with *locality*.

That there is a sense in which heaven may be *within us* is certain ; for where God is, heaven is ; and unfettered communion with Him, through Christ and by the Holy Spirit, is perfect happiness. But this is no argument whatever against a locality as the future residence of the redeemed. God is everywhere, but we cannot be everywhere ; and since, *at present*—even were it true that space is merely subjective to the mind of man—we can comprehend the idea only as *a relation*, all the probabilities are that we shall continue to do so ; for however glorious may be the spiritual bodies of the saints, however free from imperfection or corruption, however much they may transcend the limitations of our earthly conditions, the notion of *place* seems inseparable from the possession of a body.

That *the body* will be raised is the distinct teaching of revelation. That this union of the soul, after death, *with matter*—however spiritualized the new material frame may be—is essential to the rebirth of the spirit into 'the new world of knowledge and action,' may fairly be gathered from Scripture. That the first consequence of this birth

must be 'the acquirement of locality in the extended universe' is certain.

The mischief involved in the tendency to think of the future in connection with the spirit alone, and of heaven as merely subjective, commences whenever such interpretations are supposed to include *all that Scripture is intended to teach us* relative to the world to come. Such is certainly *not* the case. Heaven is *there* always spoken of as a locality, the special residence of the Court of the Most High ; hell is distinctly revealed to us as *a place* 'prepared for the devil and his angels ;' and the 'new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness,' as clearly declared to be the final abode of the 'children of the resurrection.'

And why should it not be so? Has not God made the world to be inhabited? Hath He not made all nations of men for to *dwell* on the face of the earth? 'Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens ; God himself that formed the earth and made it ; He hath established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited : I am the Lord ; and there is none else' (Isa. xlv. 18). The assurance given to man of sovereignty in it—a dominion far too absolute to be regarded as fulfilled either in the present or in the past—alone proves that it is not destined to destruction (Heb. ii. 8, and Ps. viii.). It is '*till the day of Christ*' that St. Paul prays the Philippians may be preserved ;

and it is '*in* that day'—the day of His return—that He is so desirous to 'rejoice' (Phil. i. 10; ii. 16).

Further, the world is a *redeemed* world. Christ died to restore all things; to deliver all things from the grasp of the evil one; and who will venture to say that this design can ever be thwarted? that Satan is able to hinder the world from becoming the dwelling-place of the creature formed in God's image? or that 'Wisdom' can be compelled to cease 'rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth,' and no longer to find 'delights with the sons of men'? (Prov. viii. 31).

These views, so far as they relate to the probability of this world becoming, when purified by fire, the future abode of man, are not new. Dr. Chalmers, in his '*Astronomical Discourses*,' supports them with all the argument and eloquence of which he was so distinguished a master; and Mr. Isaac Taylor, in his '*Physical Theory of Another Life*,' expresses his conviction that "all the practical skill we acquire in managing affairs; all the versatility, the sagacity, the calculation of chances the patience and assiduity, the promptitude and facility; as well as the higher virtues which we are learning every day, will find scope in a world such as is rationally anticipated when we think of heaven as the stage of life that is next to follow the discipline of earth."

“ With no other indication of the destinies of the universe than what may be furnished by the swelling emotions of pity that are now working, pent up in tender and noble hearts, we should hardly fear to err in assuming that a sphere will at length open upon such spirits, wherein they shall find millions needing to be governed, taught, rescued, and *led forward from a worse to a better, or from a lower to a higher stage of life.* It is quite as easy to suppose that the Creator should have imparted to human nature the notion and the desire of immortality, without intending to realize it, as that He should have instilled a boundless benevolence, which is to have no more opportunity to express itself than it may chance to meet with in the present state.”¹

It may be added—and *who* so likely to be the objects of this benevolence as those who, on earth, have never been under any government deserving of the name; who from birth upwards have been abandoned to ignorance, superstition, and vice; and who wait only for a wise and kindly hand to lead them from evil to good, and from self to Christ?

It is a favourite idea with many, and doubtless regarded as a very spiritual one, that the employment of the redeemed will be *perpetual worship.*

¹ ‘Physical Theory,’ p. 190.

This notion proceeds on an utter forgetfulness of the fact that “our Lord carried up into heaven, to live there for ever, *human nature complete*—all the powers of a perfect man. Does any one believe that these powers, being carried into heaven, are to lie dormant there for ever? Is it not manifest that there must be some exercise for them all? Will any one maintain that a glorified spirit will be *more* spiritually-minded, more full of love to God, than ‘God manifest in the flesh’ was? Yet *He* had room in His human nature for *personal friendship*, as well as for the perfect love of God. Or will any one deny that the Perfect Man delighted Himself in the contemplation of the flowers of the field, the fowls of the air, the great order of God’s works? Surely there must be room in heaven for the infinite pleasure of studying God’s works—for ‘*dressing and keeping*’ the marvellous ‘*garden*’ of a perfected universe, in all its infinite expanse, in all its unnumbered provinces!”¹

The main difficulty in the way of impressing these truths upon mankind arises from the false associations that are commonly thrown around matter. We forget that when God first framed the *body* of a man, He pronounced it ‘very good;’

¹ The Hon. and Rev. W. H. Lyttleton, M.A., in ‘Tracts for Priests and People,’ No. xii., pp. 36-7.

and that it was in his *material* dwelling-place that Adam originally enjoyed unclouded fellowship with his Maker. We forget that there is no essential connection between materialism and sin ; that it was over the *material* world that ‘the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy ;’ that it is the material and visible ‘heavens’ that ‘declare the glory of God ;’ that if the body were indeed nothing better than the prison-house of the soul, Divine love itself would hinder the possibility of its resurrection ; that it is the substitution of righteousness for sin, of the pure for the vile, of love for selfishness, and not of spirit for matter, that will distinguish the new economy ; for its special and distinctive mark is simply this, —‘A NEW EARTH, WHEREIN DWELLETH RIGHTEOUSNESS.’

Such a view—the only revealed, and therefore the only reasonable idea of the future life—puts to shame not merely the “dreamy Elysium of classical antiquity, and the sensualisms of Oriental beliefs ; it rises above all the wearisome and vapid inanities of modern poetical or philosophical surmises,” and transcends every speculation which would attempt to draw evidence of the nature of man’s futurity from the analogies of nature. “It is,” as has been well said, “the belief to which a genuine philosophy would instantly give the preference, if, among the many hypotheses of a future stage of human exist-

ence which have been imagined as probable, it must make a choice."

We gather from our investigation that, whatever may be the final destiny of the race, Scripture clearly teaches that the soul of *the believer in Jesus* passes at death into the world of separate spirits—the 'paradise' of which Christ spoke to the penitent thief; that it remains there in a state of blessed repose, and in the enjoyment of close fellowship with the Redeemer, till the resurrection of the body; that when that great event takes place, *the whole man*, body and soul once more united, becomes again an inhabitant of a material world (*probably* our earth, purified by fire), a dweller in the new Jerusalem, and a participator in the regal and priestly glories of the Redeemer.

PART III.

ON SALVATION.

CHAP. I. VARIOUS SIGNIFICATIONS OF THE TERM
IN SCRIPTURE.

II. THE GREATER AND THE LESSER SALVA-
TION.

III. THE MULTITUDE—LOST OR SAVED?

IV. ELECTION—TO SPECIAL SERVICE.

V. THE GOSPEL AS PREACHED BY ST. PAUL.

CHAPTER I.

SALVATION,—VARIOUS SIGNIFICATIONS OF THE TERM.

THE word 'Salvation' occurs in the OLD TESTAMENT in *three* distinct senses.

First,—It is put for signal deliverances wrought by *human* agency ; *e.g.*, 'Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great *salvation* in Israel?' (1 Sam. xiv. 45). *Men* are, in this sense, frequently called 'saviours' (Judg. iii. 9—15 ; Obad. 21).

Secondly,—It is used to indicate *Divine* protection and blessing. God is spoken of as a 'rock' of *salvation*, a 'shield,' and a 'horn' (2 Sam. xxii. 3), and special manifestations of His providence are emphatically called 'His *salvation*' (Exod. xiv. 13 ; 1 Chron. xvi. 23—35 ; Psal. xxvii. 1). In this sense, too, Jehovah is said to be 'the *saviour*' of Israel (Isa. xlv. 15 ; Hos. xiii. 4).

Thirdly,—It is employed to describe *a state of mind*,—consciousness of peace with God, and deliverance from the dominant power of evil ; *e.g.*, 'Let Thy priests, O God, be *clothed with salvation*, and let Thy saints rejoice in goodness' (2 Chron. vi. 41) ; and again, 'He hath clothed me with the

garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness' (Isa. lxi. 10). 'Salvation,' in this sense, was joy and peace to its possessor. So David prays, after his sad fall, 'Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation' (Psa. li. 12); by which he means, 'Give me again the sweet consciousness of forgiven sin.'

Prophetically, the *everlasting blessedness* of Israel (whatever that state might signify to the Jew) is called her '*salvation*' (Isa. xlv. 17; xlv. 13; lii. 7). I say, *whatever* that state might signify to the Jew; but I have no doubt as to what it *did* signify to him. I believe that, to the ancient Israelite, it always and *rightly* meant, *the exaltation of Abraham's seed under the Messiah, after the resurrection* (Isa. xxv. 6—8; xxvi. 19; xlv. 17—23, comp. with Rom. xiv. 11; Ezek. xxxvii. 1—14; xvi. 53—63). It is in this sense that the coming King is emphatically termed by Isaiah 'a *Saviour*, and a great one' (xix. 20), and is spoken of by the same prophet (xlix. 8) as given 'in a day of salvation,'—to 'establish [raise up—*marg.*] the earth,'—to cause 'to inherit the desolate heritages,'—to 'say to the prisoners (in the grave), Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves' (xlix. 9),—to cause the chosen people to enter upon a period when 'they shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for He that hath mercy on them shall lead them,

even by the springs of water shall He guide them' (xlix. 10, comp. with Rev. vii. 16).

'Salvation,' as it is now generally understood, in the sense of *deliverance from hell*, is a term unknown to the Old Testament. Such passages as, 'Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell' (Psa. lxxxvi. 13), or, 'Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and deliver his soul from hell' (Prov. xxiii. 14), refer only to the grave, and are usually so translated in the margin.

That the ancient Jews believed in *future punishment* is clear enough. The amount of light they had on this subject may be gathered from the various Scriptures which speak of sinners as 'silent in darkness' (1 Sam. ii. 9); as 'reserved to the day of destruction' (Job. xxi. 30); as persons whose 'name' shall, by God, be 'put out for ever and ever' (Psa. ix. 5); *on whom* He will 'rain burning coals, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest' (xi. 6); who 'shall not inhabit the earth' (Prov. x. 30); who shall be slain by 'the breath of the lips' of Messiah (Isa. xi. 4); who shall be made as 'ashes under the soles of the feet' of the righteous (Mal. iv. 3); and whose 'carcasses' (dead corpses) shall be for an enduring memorial of God's judgment on them, for 'their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh' (Isa. lxvi. 24). From these passages,—*and there are none of a contrary*

character,—it is difficult to see how the Jew could gather more than that the wicked would rise again, and, at the judgment, be subjected to the punishments thus threatened.

What classes of persons were by the Jews included under the term ‘wicked,’ it is not difficult to gather. Primarily, and *as a rule*, the idolatrous enemies of Israel,—their seducers and oppressors,—constituted the great body of transgressors; *exceptionally*, apostate Jews,—men of violence and blood, flagrant opposers of God and goodness,—were comprehended; but there is nothing whatever to indicate even a suspicion, on the part either of priest or prophet, that mankind *as a race*, in consequence of Adam’s fall, were born under a liability to eternal misery after death,—that all alike were, *by nature*, involved in this one great and common condemnation. Explain the fact as we may, it cannot be denied that the doctrine of the *liability* of all mankind, *in consequence of the fall*, to eternal misery, if revealed at all in Scripture, can be found only in that later revelation, the advent of which was announced to the wondering shepherds as ‘good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people’ (Luke ii. 10).

Nothing can be plainer than that the Jew looked at the condition of the race from a stand-point differing in many respects from our own. It never seems to have occurred to him that man, *as man*,

was under condemnation ; that the original threatening, 'In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,' meant *more* than God declared it to mean when He said to Adam, 'Cursed is the ground for thy sake ; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life ; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground ; for out of it wast thou taken : for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return' (Gen. iii. 17—19) ; or that a Jewish babe was *born* 'under wrath,' and, until regenerated, regarded as a child of the devil. Explain this state of things as we may, we are forced to conclude that, if man did really *then* enter upon existence in the condition supposed, the Antediluvian, the Patriarch, and the Israelite, were alike ignorant of the fact.

That the distinctions which exist *now*, between the spiritual and unspiritual, the merely moral and the truly devout, the men of form and ritual, and the men whose purged eye pierced through these outer coverings into the invisible and eternal, existed among the Jews, cannot be doubted. Such men knew, as well as we do, that they were fallen and depraved, that they had natures prone to sin and averse to holiness, and that God therefore required 'a new heart and a right spirit' (Ezek. xi. 19 ; xviii. 31) ; but, as I have said before, this necessity is, in the OLD TESTAMENT, never spoken of as attaching to man, *as man*, in consequence of

Adam's sin ; is never regarded as existing apart from *personal* transgression, or ever supposed to be essential to salvation.

Whether rightly or wrongly, the Jews assuredly *believed* that, whatever might become of other nations, 'Israel' would be 'saved.' Individually, they were quite aware that the birthright might be cast away, that God might be rejected, and His favour lost by apostacy ; but, *as a nation*, they always regarded themselves, and were regarded by the prophets, even in the midst of their backslidings, as a chosen people (Rom. xi. 26).

In the NEW TESTAMENT, the word 'salvation' first meets us in the announcement of the angel that the holy child shall be called Jesus (*i. e.*, Saviour), because He shall save His people *from their sins* (Matt. i. 21). Peter, addressing the Israelites, says, 'Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, *in turning away every one of you from his iniquities*' (Acts iii. 26) ; and Paul but teaches the same doctrine to the Gentiles when he tells them that 'the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation' (Rom. i. 16) ; that they must 'work out' their 'salvation with fear and trembling' (Phil. ii. 12) ; that salvation is 'a helmet' for daily use in the warfare of time ; and that the 'wise' are they who *live* it (Ephes. v. 15^l ; vi. 17). Nothing can be clearer than that *the primary and principal idea* of salvation in the New

Testament is deliverance from the *bondage* of evil, emancipation from the '*captivity*' of Satan.

But this is not the only sense in which it is used,—for St. Paul, writing to the Romans regarding Christ, says, 'Being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved *from wrath* through Him' (Rom. v. 9); and again to the Thessalonians—'Jesus, which delivered us from *the wrath* to come' (1 Thess. i. 10); and again, 'God hath not appointed us *to wrath*, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him' (1 Thess. v. 9, 10).

In all these cases, the wrath referred to is that which shall fall upon the enemies of Messiah when He comes in triumph,—makes 'known His salvation,'—'openly shows His righteousness in the sight of the heathen' (Psa. xcvi. 2),—bares 'His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations,' and causes 'all the ends of the earth' to 'see the salvation of our God' (Isa. lii. 10; Luke iii. 6).

With these *two* ideas clearly before us,—that salvation is *primarily* deliverance from the bondage of sin and Satan, and *secondarily*, as a consequence, deliverance from wrath,—we need not be perplexed if we find this same word 'salvation' often put for something *far higher*, even for a present *union with Christ*; involving freedom from *the love* of sin,—the partaking of a 'Divine nature,'—being 'born

again,'—'created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them' (Ephes. ii. 10).

Hence it is that Peter is sent to tell Cornelius 'words whereby he and all his house should be saved' (xi. 14), although *before he heard those words* the Lord himself had said to him, 'Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God' (x. 4). Hence, too, Zaccheus, a man evidently accepted beforehand on account of his works (Luke xix. 8), has salvation 'brought to his house' by that blessed Redeemer who 'came to seek and to save that which was lost' (ver. 9, 10). It is in this higher sense alone that salvation comes to the Gentile *through the fall of the Jew* (Rom. xi. 11); that some are 'from the beginning *chosen* to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth' (2 Thess. ii. 13); and that for others there is 'a day' (or period) in which, as 'in a time accepted,' they may gain or lose the precious boon. And so it is recorded on one occasion, that 'as many as were ordained (set in order) to eternal life believed' (Acts xiii. 48); and on another, that 'the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved,' or, as Alford translates it, '*those who were being saved*' (Acts ii. 47). In all these cases the salvation spoken of is *much more* than deliverance from wrath, much more than emancipation from the captivity of Satan; it is

admission to fellowship with the Redeemer, it is the earnest and pledge of a full and final victory over all evil.

Greatly, therefore, as some may be stumbled at being told that salvation is represented in Scripture as *a thing of degree*, involving more or less according to circumstances, we fearlessly affirm it to be true. Scripture does indeed teach that to be '*in Christ*' involves a title to every form of spiritual blessing, whether for time or eternity ; but it does not teach that every man not thus united to the Saviour is abandoned to Satan, or that he who fails to become *in the highest sense* a child of God, is by necessary consequence a child of the devil. Not so easily does the Father in heaven let His feeble and erring ones go. For men are *His* children in *two* senses,—by birth, and by adoption ; they can be the devil's only in one,—by giving themselves up to his power and service, and by a voluntary and wicked rejection of the offered love of the Redeemer.

If salvation be not a thing of degree, what does St. Paul mean when he speaks of it as especially sent to God-fearing men—'Whosoever among you *fearth God*, to you is the word of this salvation sent' (Acts xiii. 26)? when, writing to 'saints'—saved men—he says, 'Whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and *salvation*' (2 Cor. i. 6)? when he tells the Philippians that the contradic-

tions he experienced should turn to his '*salvation*' through their prayer, and 'the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ' (i. 19)? when he bids Timothy 'take heed' unto himself, and to 'the doctrine' he teaches, since 'in so doing' he should 'both *save* himself and them that heard him' (1 Tim. iv. 16)? when in one place he affirms it to be certain that 'all Israel shall be *saved*' (Rom. xi. 26), and, in another, labours 'if by any means he might *save* some of them' (xi. 14)?

In what other sense than in that of a *present and higher* salvation, as distinguished from a *future and lower one*, is it possible to conceive of the loving Saviour saying, 'Unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them' (Mark iv. 12)? Does any reasonable being, with the fear of God before his eyes, dare to say that words like these, whether found in the Prophets or on the lips of the Lord himself, mean more than that the parties here referred to were not *then* capable of profiting by the instruction He imparted,—that they were not fit to be numbered among His chosen disciples,—that their reception of His teaching *at that time* would only lead to its misapprehension and abuse? Does any one imagine that the Redeemer meant it to be supposed

that He abandoned the multitude to Satan for ever ?

The conclusion may be a startling one, but it cannot be escaped,—Grace, in one form or other, *must* extend beyond this dispensation ; Mercy must be future as well as present ; Forgiveness must be *possible*, not only in this world, but in the world to come ; Pardon and Union to Christ cannot be identical ; Salvation is a thing of degree.

And now we come to understand why it is that salvation is spoken of in Scripture as accomplished through so many agencies ; that belief in Christ's power to heal *saved* when He was on earth (Luke vii. 50) ; that baptism once *saved* (1 Pet. iii. 21) ; that hope *saves* (Rom. viii. 24) ; that memory *saves* (1 Cor. xv. 2) ; that the Word *saves* (Jas. i. 21) ; that the love of the truth *saves* (2 Thess. ii. 10) ; that preaching *saves* (1 Cor. i. 21) ; that grace *saves* (Ephes. ii. 5, 8) ; that endurance to the end *saves* (Matt. xxiv. 13) ; that calling on the name of the Lord *saves* (Acts ii. 21) ; that coming to Christ *saves* (John x. 9) ; that His life *saves* (Rom. v. 10) ; that His death *saves* (Col. i. 22) ; that faith *saves* (Acts xvi. 31) ; that belief in the resurrection of the Lord *saves* (Rom. x. 9) ; that the knowledge of Scripture *saves* (2 Tim. iii. 15) ; that Christ is himself '*salvation*' (Luke ii. 30 ; Acts iv. 12) ; and that real Christians, while *saved already*, come at

length to say, 'Now is our *salvation* nearer than when we believed' (Rom. xiii. 11).

Hence, too, it is that 'salvation,' while a *present* blessing, is yet an 'inheritance' (Heb. i. 14); *enjoyed now*, yet *to be received* by them that 'look for the Saviour when He shall appear the second time without sin (a sin offering) unto salvation' (Heb. ix. 28); in one sense entered upon when faith is *first* exercised; in another, the crown and completion of the Christian life.

It is in this latter sense, as an inheritance 'reserved' for those 'who are kept by the power of God,' that 'salvation' was so deep an object of interest to holy men of old. For *this*,—the highest privilege of the elect and the gift of Christ,—was the salvation 'of which [or, regarding which] the prophets have [in all ages] inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace [the peculiar favour] that should come unto [the saints]: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us [of the Gentile dispensation] they did minister the things which are now reported by them [the inspired apostles] that preached the Gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into' (1 Pet. i. 10—12).

CHAPTER II.

ON THE GREATER AND THE LESSER SALVATION.

I AM by no means unaware that the course of inquiry here pursued will be very distasteful to that large class of *dubious* Christians who—to use a phrase of their own—never do more than indulge *the hope* of being eventually saved, and yet are, nevertheless, marvellously satisfied with their spiritual condition.

Accustomed, as such persons have always been, to regard ‘salvation’ only in one light, viz., as complete deliverance from evil and sorrow *after death*, anything which seems to indicate the possibility of the future state involving trial is to *them* intolerable.

Impatient under the discipline of this life, irritated rather than improved by its cares, people of this class cling only the more closely to the conviction that, if ‘saved’ from hell, they *must*, in the world to come, be *perfectly happy*; have done for ever with the vexations and contradictions which have tormented them in this mortal state, and find

no further occasion for the exercise of a forbearance, the practice of which has been so difficult and disagreeable while here. It never seems to occur to them *as possible* that those who leave the earth meek and chastened, loving and truthful, may, perchance, carry with them, even into paradise, the elements of their joy; or that others, by the same law of continuance, may bear in their own bosoms seeds of sorrow capable of development even in a world of bliss. How *can* it be so, they say, since 'saints' are by grace alone made 'heirs' of heaven, and 'sinners' altogether excluded from joy or hope? Beyond this awful alternative, Scripture, they imagine, reveals absolutely nothing.

Not such, however, so far as I have yet been able to discover, is the teaching of the Bible. If it were so, our only duty would be silence. But believing that such is not the case—that *some* portions of revelation, at least, are intended to lead us to a very different conclusion, and that while Scripture distinctly reveals a salvation of the highest kind for the few, it intimates also a salvation of a much lower kind for the many, we may venture to pursue our search *for the whole truth*, without fear or hesitation.

The entire question is simply one of Divine testimony, and its only importance is that which it derives from its bearing on the revealed character of God; on the extent and efficiency of the work

of Christ ; and on the promotion of holiness among those who believe themselves to be emphatically His children.

The ground over which we have to pass is one that has been little trodden. Whether ‘Redemption’ be general or particular—whether Christ, properly speaking, died for the Church only, or for the world also, is a point which has long divided theologians ; but all parties appear to have agreed that, whatever be the right way of viewing *this* question, redemption can only become practically available to any child of Adam by the exercise *in this life* of a personal faith, wrought by the Holy Spirit.

That the salvation, whether of the individual or of the race, is of grace alone, I should be the last to dispute ; but I am not quite so ready to accept the logical consequence, necessary as it may seem to be, that the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus can have no efficacy apart from the present and personal faith of the sinner ; or, which is the same thing, that the redemption of mankind by Christ becomes *a reality* only in so far as the truths of revelation are applied by the Holy Spirit to the hearts of individuals. I see, indeed, abundant reasons in Scripture for believing that a man may *reject* the salvation thus wrought out for him ; that he may count himself ‘unworthy of eternal life,’ and so perish in his pride ; but I can discover none in

support of the notion that the great *sacrifice*, after all, only *rendered it possible* for men to be saved in connection with their faith in it while on earth ; or that if no man in Judea had believed in Christ, the only result of His boundless love would have been the deeper condemnation of us all.

That there *is* a salvation which is *only by faith* may readily be admitted, for in no other way can any man attain to that vital union with the Redeemer, which is life eternal ; but that where this great and vital change is not effected, nothing which can be of any avail to the sinner is accomplished, I as strenuously deny ; for the world is given to Christ, and not to Satan ; and the redemption which suffices, ‘through the forbearance of God,’ for ‘sins that are past’—the sins of those who lived before the incarnation, and therefore never knew the Lord, suffices also, through the same forbearance, for sins committed by men to whom the Gospel has never been preached, or by whom it has been so imperfectly understood, that it cannot truthfully be said either to have been intelligently received, or consciously rejected. ‘If I had not come and *spoken* unto them,’ says our Lord of the Jews, ‘they had not had sin ;’ and again, ‘If I had not done among them *the works* which none other man did, they had not had sin’—*i. e.*, they had not incurred the sin involved in my rejection. How, then, can *they* have incurred it who

have never heard His name, or heard it only in connection with idolatrous superstition, and without any spiritual apprehension of its power and beauty? Yet strange indeed would be the conclusion, that there is, therefore, no difference, either in this world or in the world to come, between the man who is *now* one with Christ, and the man who *here* remains ignorant or negligent of His great salvation.

That there are *degrees of happiness* in the future world few will be inclined to deny. Passages which refer, on the one hand, to a salvation 'so as by fire' (1 Cor. iii. 15), and on the other to an 'entrance ministered abundantly into the everlasting kingdom' (2 Pet. i. 11), forbid even doubt as to whether or no *all* redeemed persons in the world to come will be alike honoured or honourable. Further, it is generally admitted that, at the coming of Christ—in whatever sense the second advent is to be understood—even among those who 'wait for His appearing,' *some* will 'be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless,' while others will be 'ashamed before Him at His coming' (2 Pet. iii. 14; 1 John ii. 28). Nay more, (neglected as such truths commonly are), few, probably, would be found absolutely to assert that a 'prize' (1 Cor. ix. 24; Phil. iii. 14) and a 'gift' (Rom. vi. 23) imply, *in all respects*, the same thing; that a 'crown,' which some obtain, and others lose

(Rev. iii. 11), is not a special distinction ; or that it is impossible to be 'beguiled' of our 'reward' (Col. ii. 18).

But these admissions, much as they involve, practically amount to little or nothing, since they are all but universally stript of their power by what is usually considered 'sound' interpretation,—according to which the diversities referred to, all end in every individual being *as happy as he can be* ; each vessel, it is said, whatever be its capacity, will then be full of joy and glory,—the only difference being that one will be able to *contain* more than another. The slightest reflection, one would think, would be sufficient to show that this is really *explaining away* the entire doctrine ; for what can any man desire more than to be *as happy* as his nature and capacity will admit of ?

The point at issue is simply this,—Will the Elect Church, the Bride of Christ, occupy, in the world (or age) to come, any position materially differing from that of other 'saved' persons ? Is there, from the testimony of Scripture, any reason to suppose that, without and beyond the pale of the Church, properly so termed, others will be found tributary to its glory, but not partakers of its dignity and splendour ?

Something of this kind would surely seem to be *indicated* in the forty-fifth Psalm, where, in prophetic symbols descriptive of Messiah's glory, the

Church, under the name of the king's daughter, is described as 'all glorious within,—her clothing of wrought gold;' while the daughter of Tyre (heathen) is *there* 'with a gift.' Something of the kind is surely *asserted* in the Apocalypse, where the Church is described under the figure of a glorious city, of which 'the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb' are 'the temple,' and *into which* 'saved' nations outside do bring 'their glory and honour' (Rev. xxi. 24).

The same truth is probably taught in the parable of the ten virgins, five of whom were foolish and unwatchful, and therefore shut out from the marriage banquet. For there is nothing to show that these women were intended to represent the lost. On the contrary, they are recognized as expectants of the Bridegroom, and go out to meet him; but since they are negligent attendants, they suffer exclusion from the post of honour.

Again, is nothing to be learned from the distinction drawn in Scripture between persons 'taken captive by the devil at his will' (2 Tim. ii. 26), and those who voluntarily choose his service? St. Paul recognizes a difference between these two classes when, speaking either of himself or of another, as the case may be, he describes the condition of the man who is brought 'into captivity to the law of sin' (Rom. vii. 23), or, as he expresses it elsewhere, who is 'sold under sin' (ver. 14). That he means by

this something very different from voluntary servitude is clear from what follows,—‘That which I do I allow not : for what I would, that I do not ; but what I hate, that do I. To will is present with me : but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would, I do not ; but the evil which I would not, that I do.’ Who can doubt that this state,—in the Apostle’s case temporary,—is the *permanent* condition of multitudes, who never get beyond it, but live and die in this wretched bondage ?

Further,—the Lord, through His own death, is said ‘to deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage’ (Heb. ii. 15). This text is generally supposed to intimate that by faith in Christ timid believers are freed from the fear of physical death. But this is not its meaning, for the words are obviously connected with the ninth verse, in which the Saviour is spoken of as tasting ‘death for every man,’ and with the fourteenth verse, where the Redeemer is represented as, ‘through death,’ destroying ‘him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.’ It must, therefore, in some form or other, apply to *all men*. The true meaning, probably, is that Christ, ‘by the favour of God,’ suffered for ‘every man’ (ver. 9), in order that ‘He might subdue him who has a deadly power—that is, the devil—and free those who, through fear of *condemnation* (death being here used as including its consequences), had

during their whole lives been subject to bondage.' —*Stuart.*) The phrase 'power of death,' or deadly power of the devil (Heb. ii. 14), is probably parallel to 'works of the devil' (1 John iii. 8); and both imply that Christ's death delivers the race from 'the curse of the law,' that 'the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles' (Gal. iii. 13, 14).

But *what is* the blessing of Abraham? Clearly the restoration of his race at the resurrection. And this is the blessing which the Gentiles also are to enjoy. For 'the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed' (Gal. iii. 8). There is nothing to show that *all nations* would, by the exercise here of a living faith, be spiritually united to the Redeemer. The teaching is, that by faith in Christ alone, as opposed to works of law, could they be saved; and that 'the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe' (Gal. iii. 22). But since myriads who lived *before* the Incarnation are, 'through the forbearance of God,' saved by a Redeemer whom on earth they never knew; so, in virtue of the like forbearance, myriads who have subsequently lived on earth under similar circumstances, will be saved too; not, indeed, without faith, but *by a faith* exercised in other states of existence,—saved *in that lower*

sense, which implies deliverance from the captivity of Satan, but not that higher and closer communion with Christ which belongs to those who love and trust Him here, and, by His grace, 'endure unto the end.'

The words of the Apostle Paul to Timothy (1 Ep. iv. 10), 'We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, *specially of those that believe*,' can scarcely have any other meaning than that some will be saved with a higher, and some with a lower, salvation. They seem distinctly to imply that *for some* there is a salvation, inseparably connected with belief, entered upon *here*, by faith; and for others, who—it may be for want of a teacher—have not accepted the Gospel, a salvation of an inferior kind.

Divines have felt the difficulty, and tried to get rid of it by *rationalizing*, and asserting that Saviour here does not mean Saviour. So they read it thus:—'God preserves *all* by the care of His providence, but saves *believers* from eternal death' (so Macknight, Baxter, and Gill). Alford, following Clarke, interprets,—'Saviour *intended* for all, but *appropriated* only by believers.'

The reply to such interpretation is decisive. The text does not say *intended* for all; it says, '*who is*' (ὅς ἐστι), in some sense or other, 'the Saviour of all,' but specially and in a higher sense 'of those that believe.' The same word is used for Saviour

here as everywhere else ; and it is sought to disregard this, merely lest countenance should be given to Universalism.

But why should it be supposed that evasion of this kind can ever be necessary to protect truth ? Why cannot we—without pushing the word ‘all’ to the absurd extent of practically denying that any man can destroy himself by his wickedness and impenitence, accept the teaching in its simple and obvious sense ? If we do so, the passage is confirmed by another text in the second epistle (2 Tim. ii. 20), where we are told that in the Church, as in ‘a great house,’ there are ‘some vessels to honour, and some to dishonour ;’ and that he who would be ‘a vessel unto honour,’ must ‘purge himself’ from ‘profane and vain babblings,’—such as those indulged in, who maintained that the resurrection, being merely a spiritual thing, was ‘past already,’—and, in addition thereto, live a holy and godly life (2 Tim. ii. 16—18 ; Rom. vi. 4). Then would such a man be ‘meet for the Master’s use,’—fit for closer union with the Redeemer than others, and therefore for more distinguished service.

Viewed by the light thus thrown upon the Divine procedure, other passages of Scripture, which often perplex us, become clear,—such as those which speak of *the forgiveness of sins*. ‘Thy sins are forgiven thee,’ is a declaration frequently

made by the Saviour, and apparently quite apart from a consideration of the previous character of those to whom the words were spoken. Sometimes it is made in connection with bodily healing, and then it is under but one requirement,—faith in the Saviour's ability and willingness to grant the required boon. 'Believe ye that I am able to do this?' (Matt. ix. 2, 5).

Now, without going here into the question as to what forgiveness comprehended when connected with bodily healing,—whether it implied, as we think probable, only the forgiveness of the particular sin for which the disease, thus miraculously removed, had been under that peculiar economy inflicted (in which case the phrase was simply an equivalent for 'Arise, and walk'), or whether, as in the case of the woman 'who was a sinner' (Luke vii. 37—50), it involved the pardon of sin generally,—it is surely safe to affirm that it did not, *in all cases and necessarily*, imply spiritual communion with the Redeemer. In the case of the sick, it was a low, not a high salvation; for it healed the body without necessarily purifying the heart.

Nor are these the only cases in which the forgiveness of sin is separated from oneness with Christ. 'If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive your trespasses,' is a direct assertion from the lips of one who cannot deceive; and yet, who will say that a forgiving

spirit is the only requisite for union to Christ? To be *forgiven* a sin is one thing; to be so completely delivered from its power, that we shall altogether abstain from it, is another: to know that we shall be *pardoned* for Christ's sake is a mercy truly; but infinitely greater is the blessing which reveals to us the place we shall occupy 'among them that are sanctified' (Acts xxvi. 18).

Further, *forgiveness may be retracted*. At least, so the parable of the unforgiving servant (Matt. xviii. 34) is usually understood to teach. But oneness with Christ, once enjoyed, can never be lost. God forbid that we should think lightly of the forgiveness of sins by Christ in any sense; yet what renewed man does not *feel* the difference—however difficult it may be for him to expound it—between the words addressed to the palsied sufferer, 'Man, thy sins are forgiven thee' (Luke v. 20), and the call so soon after made to Levi the publican, 'Follow me; and he left all, and rose up, and followed Him'? In the one case there is a declaration of pardon; in the other, an invitation to communion. To the former, the gift is *bodily health*; to the latter, *the honour of service*. To forgive sins (whatever the term may mean) was, as our Lord himself tells us, equivalent to saying, 'Arise, and walk;' it was a boon capable of being conferred by mortal man; for whomsoever the apostles forgave on earth were to be forgiven in heaven. But

who imagines that the twelve could forgive sin in any sense which implies a change of heart? Who does not know that they possessed no power to insure even their own continued union with the Master?

The conclusion to be drawn from the whole is, that the pardon of the sinner, and the glorification of the saint, are two distinct things, and ought never to be confounded; that the work of Christ and of His Gospel on earth is twofold;—*first*, to call out His Bride,—His Elect Church; and *secondly*, to destroy the works of the devil, by forgiving sins, by delivering captives, and by preparing mankind at large for higher and nobler revelations in the age to come, when Christ himself will rule and teach through those whom He has *here*, for that special end, taught and trained. *Then* will it be seen that the falsehoods of Romanism on the one hand, and the delusions of Infidelity on the other, have been but mocking shadows of the true; that the Lord is at once a Priest upon a throne, and the social Regenerator of the race; that while, on the one hand, as King and Judge, He executes vengeance on His enemies, He is *still*—His nature being unchangeable—‘kind even to the unthankful and to the evil’ (Luke vi. 35).

CHAPTER III.

SALVATION OF THE MULTITUDE.

THAT in Christian countries the multitude,—ignorant, thoughtless, and too often absolutely irreligious,—die hopefully, if not happily, can scarcely be disputed. The question recurs continually,—Whither do they go ?

‘ Say,—are they lost or saved ? ’

Is it not certain that such persons live and die very much as the crowds lived and died, who eighteen hundred years ago witnessed our Lord’s miracles, and heard His words, on the hills and in the plains of Judea ? Whatever conclusions, therefore, we arrive at as to the one, must greatly affect our conclusions as to the other.

But here it will be said, ‘ How can we arrive at any judgment at all on such a subject ? ’ I reply, in one way only, by carefully observing our Lord’s conduct and teaching in relation to these same multitudes when He was on earth. They were not ranked, we know, among the disciples ; for He distinctly tells us that He spake to them ‘ in parables,

that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand' (Luke viii. 10). It is equally certain they were not classed with the Scribes and Pharisees, whom He denominates 'vipers;' He never says *to them*, 'How shall *ye* escape the damnation of hell?'

On the contrary, His sympathies seem to have been, as a rule, with these common people. He heals their diseases; He forgives their sins, whatever that phrase may be intended to include; He mourns over them as 'sheep without a shepherd;' and He regards them as 'the harvest.'

These are *Scripture facts*, and we ask, Are they intended to teach anything? or are they to be altogether over-ridden by *inferences of our own*, drawn from other Scriptures, such as the declaration of our Lord to Nicodemus, or the various statements in the Epistles which speak of Christians as 'a peculiar people,' called with a 'holy calling,' regenerated by the Spirit, sanctified by grace, and preserved unto the end?

I know how easy it is to maintain that such inferences are *necessary*;—that a man unconverted is morally unfit for the companionship of the redeemed; and that, were such an one in heaven, he could have no sympathy either with its inhabitants or its employments. I am not insensible to the force of this reasoning; and within limits fully admit its truthfulness. But I cannot, therefore,

come to the conclusion that no man can be saved who is not on earth made morally and spiritually 'meet for the inheritance of the saints in light ;' or that all, who are not made 'partakers of the Divine nature' here, are for ever left to the companionship of Satan, and doomed to eternal hatred of God and goodness in the regions of darkness and despair.

I cannot admit such a view, (1) Because it is by no means clear that our Lord's words to Nicodemus *ought* to be understood in the sense ordinarily attached to them. (2) Because other texts usually adduced to prove that the way to heaven is very narrow, and that *few* reach the realms of bliss, are for the most part irrelevant, being addressed, not to the unbelieving world, but to the disciples *as such*. (3) Because the course pursued by the Saviour towards the unconverted, both in His teaching and conduct, are inconsistent with the supposition that none but the regenerate can be saved ; and (4) Because the later revelations of the Holy Spirit through the apostles, lead to the conclusion that the salvation of mankind, and the glorification of the saints, are by no means one and the same thing.

The necessities of a systematic theology, consisting, as I have frequently said, mainly of human inferences, may require us to believe, on the one hand, that the young man whom Jesus 'loved,'

since he was not 'perfect,' was for ever abandoned to Satan; and on the other, that the Divine Redeemer, while healing the diseases of the body, kept back the Word of Life from the perishing multitude, *lest* they should be saved: but, apart from such bias, renewed hearts, interpreting their Lord by the love with which He has Himself inspired them, revolt from such conclusions, and feel assured that the *highest form* of spiritual blessing only was withheld; that he who could not give up *all* for Christ was sent away sorrowing, simply because he was morally unfit to rank with the apostles; and that they whose eyes were 'closed,' lest they should see, were blinded but *for a time*, and if in judgment, in mercy also; for He who said on one occasion, 'For judgment (*i. e.*, as a test) am I come into the world,' assures us on another that he came 'not to judge' (to condemn) the world, but to 'save it' (John ix. 39; iii. 17; xii. 47).

Never should we forget that it was the same voice which said to one, 'If thou wilt be perfect, sell that thou hast, and follow me' (Matt. xix. 21), that said to another, *who wished to follow Him*, 'Return to thine own house,'—be thankful for deliverance, and 'show how great things God hath done unto thee' (Luke viii. 38, 39); that the crowds, sustained more than once by the Lord's bounty, were, when fed, *sent away*; and that from these masses many forms of truth were avowedly

withheld, because they were not able to receive them.

To what conclusion can we come, then, but that the spiritually unenlightened,—those who *have never understood*, and therefore neither accepted nor rejected the Gospel,—whether involved in the thick darkness of heathenism, or lost amid the mists of a superstitious and sectarian Christianity, are saved, but with a lower salvation; saved, not in the sense in which apostles and martyrs are saved, but saved from the ‘captivity’ of Satan, and brought under a probation adapted to their weakness, and in harmony with what is to be their final position in the universe?

Where, and in what precise way, such probation will be effected, I do not profess to know. I think it most probable that it will *commence* immediately after the Resurrection; that it will *follow* the teaching and discipline of the invisible world, so far as that teaching may be brought to bear on the disembodied spirit; that it will be *carried on* upon the new earth in which dwelleth righteousness; and that it will be accomplished *through the agency of the Elect Church*.

That the saints of God, ‘the Church of the First-born,’ will in that blessed state be free from sin and all its seductions, cannot be doubted, for they will be united to their Lord; but there is nothing to show that this will be the condition of *all* who rise

from the dead, or that they who have had no probation on earth will have no enemy to fight in the world (or age) that is to come.

Salvation is, in Scripture, never regarded as separable from *probation*. And yet it must be so, if infants, and idiots, and the utterly unenlightened, are to be regarded as saved, *in the same sense*, and with the same glorious results, as the faithful of all ages. For then must heaven be entered by millions without faith, or love, or holiness, or discipline, or a new heart ; *or*—which is still more opposed to all that is revealed concerning God—these same millions must be regarded as lost ; multitudes of them without having committed actual sin,—without having, even once, exercised a rebellious will ; and other multitudes without ever having heard of the Law which condemns them, or of the Saviour whom they are supposed in this case, by something like a legal fiction, to have rejected.

But the entire difficulty passes away if we are permitted to suppose that such, while saved from the captivity of Satan, are not yet made partakers of the glory that shall be revealed ; that faculties, never developed here, will find development in other states of existence ; and that the offspring of believers, under the care and love of parents then perfected in Christ, will there be trained for ‘glory, honour, and immortality,’ in a school far higher and purer than that of the world they so prematurely left.

Whether such texts as John xi. 25, 'I am the Resurrection AND the Life,' phrases not *necessarily* synonymous, may mean that the one (the Resurrection) relates to physical life, and is for *all*, while the other (the Life), which is spiritual, is for the Church; *or* Rom. iii. 30, 'It is one God, which shall justify the circumcision BY faith, and uncircumcision THROUGH faith,'—a distinction 'not to be made,' as Dean Alford says, 'too much of,' yet not without its meaning; *or* Heb. xii. 23, 'The general assembly and *Church of the Firstborn*,' as distinguished from 'the spirits of just men *made* perfect;' *or* 2 Tim. ii. 10, 'The salvation which is in Christ Jesus, WITH (μετὰ) eternal glory' (salvation *here*, and glory *hereafter*,—so Alford); *or* John i. 4, 'The life was the light of men,' *i. e.*, Christ the life (of the Church), and that life the *light* of multitudes who partake not of the life; *or* such passages as 'God gave His Son' for *the world*, 'that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish,' and Christ gave Himself for *the Church*, 'that he might sanctify and cleanse it,' and 'present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing;'—whether, I say, any of these Scriptures bear on the question now under our notice; whether or no the distinctions in them, to which we have adverted, are real and important, and intended to teach us what they *appear* to teach, I will not positively affirm. But there is one text

which it seems difficult to read without receiving a strong impression that it is intended to indicate the existence of two classes of *saved* persons. I mean that in the Hebrews, where St. Paul, speaking of the blessedness of sorrow to a child of God, says, 'But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye *bastards, and not sons*' (Heb. xii. 8).

The precise distinction here drawn by the Apostle is indicated under the figure of illegitimate (*νόθοι*) and legitimate (*υἱοί*) children. The words are specially addressed to *believers* as such. *Both* classes of children are therefore sons, although not in the same sense. The one is the child who inherits the Father's name, wealth, and position; the other, although provided for, is altogether in a lower rank,—helped or supported, as may be needful; acknowledged, but not honoured.

What we really want to know is, whether or not we are to understand, from these words, that some *of the saved* will occupy the position of unrecognized, and others of recognized children? It is difficult to see what else *can* be intended.

The general lesson imparted is plain; that persecution, severe discipline, and painful trial, so far from being indications of *a want of love* to us on the part of God, are, in fact, *evidences* that they who are 'exercised thereby' are intended for higher services and nobler rank in the world to come.

But how, on this supposition, is it possible to avoid the conclusion that *two distinct classes of saved persons* will be found in that coming age, and that the illegitimate are those who, though delivered from the captivity of Satan, and brought under the rule of Christ, are yet not invested with the dignity and glory of the Elect Church?

It may, indeed, be said, that the ‘bastard’ is a child only by creation, and therefore, as such, has no share in a blessing which is of grace. But this goes on the supposition that the writer *meant*, ‘If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers,’ then are ye undistinguishable from those who are ‘in danger of hell fire;’ he does not, however, *say* anything of the kind, nor is there any reason to suppose that he intends to leave such an impression.

Again, in reading the Epistle to the Philippians (iii. 15), we find a somewhat similar distinction made by the Apostle Paul; where, after speaking of himself as counting ‘all things but loss,’ if by any means he ‘might attain unto the resurrection of the dead,’ and as ever pressing ‘toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,’ he adds, ‘Let us therefore, *as many as be perfect*, be thus minded;’ indicating, that among the Philippians there were those who, like himself, were already striving for the crown, and others who needed to have this high calling revealed to them.

Some, indeed, there were who were 'enemies of the cross of Christ,' whose 'end is destruction ;' but others were plainly regarded as imperfect and ill-instructed persons, who, though professedly Christian, had 'not apprehended' that for which they had been 'apprehended of Christ Jesus.'

It is because salvation is a thing of degree, and because of the consequent possibility of losing ground for eternity by continued life, that premature death is sometimes a blessing. When our Lord says, 'Whoso shall offend (hinder, or become a stumblingblock to) one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea' (Matt. xviii. 6), He expresses this thought. It is as if He had said, It is better to die than to deteriorate ; better to die *to-day*, than to sin in some aggravated form *to-morrow* ; better for yourself through all eternity to be drowned now, than to live to hinder the progress of others. And why ? Simply because death is a less evil than sin,—a doctrine to which every true-hearted disciple instinctively responds.

And now, in the light of all these considerations, let us look at the great *facts of the world*, with which, it should never be forgotten, the *facts of Divine revelation* cannot clash. These, explain it as we may, bring before us, as we have already said, not two, but *three classes* of character, even

among men who alike live under the light of the Christian dispensation ; those who, by Divine grace made free, *resist* evil, and by faith obtain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil ; those who, from ignorance or weakness, or under the pressure of overwhelming circumstances, as ‘captives,’ *submit* to the evil they cannot overcome ; and those who, from sheer wickedness, *as the voluntary servants of Satan*, love iniquity, and rejoice in it as their chosen portion.

Accepting these distinctions *as real*,—for they cannot be set aside or denied,—I again ask, Are they, or are they not, in harmony with what Scripture (if read without reference to existing schemes of theology) would lead us to expect ? If they are, let us thank God, and, with renewed courage and energy, carry on the warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil, both in ourselves and in all around us, assured of this, that although multitudes may refuse to believe that God hath called them to ‘glory, honour, and immortality,’ inasmuch as they *will* not come to Christ that they may have ‘life,’ our labour is not lost, nor does it necessarily aggravate their guilt and misery. The message we bring is one of ‘life unto life,’ and it *may*, by wilful rejection, become ‘a savour of death unto death.’ But such rejection is happily the exception, not the rule. Dulness, misapprehension, and indifference are the evils we have mainly to con-

tend with ; and, in relation to these, it is indeed a comfort to feel that God permits us to believe that a day is coming when the veil shall be removed ; that what we accomplish not now, shall be accomplished hereafter ; that though we fall short of our hopes, we cannot fall short of His purposes ; that no word of God, however feebly or imperfectly ministered by us, shall return to Him void, or fail to accomplish the design for which He sent it.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION.

THE doctrine of Election, viewed scripturally, and apart altogether from inferences drawn by theologians, seems to me to be in perfect harmony with the opinions I have been advancing.

A few pages may perhaps not be unprofitably occupied in stating distinctly what I regard as the teaching of the Bible on this important subject.

Divine choice, or ‘election,’ as it is usually termed, although *implied* from the beginning in the Scriptures of the OLD TESTAMENT, is nowhere distinctly asserted until Moses, in the book of Deuteronomy, affirms it of the people of Israel,—‘The Lord thy God hath *chosen* thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth’ (Deut. vii. 6).

The *purpose* and *peculiarity* of the choice is involved in the declaration of *the fact*. It is election *to service*. The Israelites are to be ‘a special people unto the Lord, *above*’ (but not to the exclusion of) others; they are—as is subsequently revealed—to be ‘witnesses’ to the Divine unity

(Isa. xliv. 8) ; publishers 'to the sons of men of God's mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom' (Psa. cxlv. 10—12) ; and they are to become eventually the channel through which mercy should be extended to all nations (Gen. xxvi. 3, 4 ; xlix. 10 ; Isa. xlix. 6). But there is nothing to show that it was ever the design of God to save *them only*, and to abandon the rest of the world to ruin. Even their final restoration—come when and how it may—is distinctly declared to have other and higher ends than their own benefit. 'Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you : be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel' (Ezek. xxxvi. 32).

In the NEW TESTAMENT, election becomes a *doctrine*.

The elect *there*, whoever they may be, and whether many or few, are spoken of as persons peculiarly *dear to God* (Mark xiii. 20 ; Luke xviii. 7) ; who shall be *preserved from apostacy* under every form of seduction or fiery trial to which the saints shall be subjected (Mark xiii. 22 ; Rev. xiii. 8) ; who are the *special objects of apostolic solicitude* (2 Tim. ii. 10 ; Titus i. 1) ; and who shall finally be *gathered by the angels* from the four winds of heaven into the garner of God (Mark xiii. 27) ; while election itself, as distinguished from 'calling' (Matt. xx. 16), is said to be a *sovereign gift* (Rom. ix. 15, 16 ; 1 Cor. i. 27, 28),—*personal* (1 Thess. i. 4 ;

2 Tim. ii. 19),—*limited* (Matt. xx. 23 ; Rom. xi. 7), —*absolute* (Rom. ix. 11), and *eternal* (Ephes. i. 4) ; yet needing to be made ‘sure’ (2 Pet. i. 10), since it is *to sanctification*, or setting apart for Divine service (2 Thess. ii. 13), *to holiness* of heart and life (Ephes. i. 4 ; Col. iii. 12), and *to office* (1 Pet. ii. 9). It is in relation to office, and *to office only*, that the term ‘Elect’ is applied to Christ (Isa. xlii. 1 ; Matt. xii. 18 ; 1 Pet. ii. 6) ;—to angels (1 Tim. v. 21) ;—to David (2 Sam. vi. 21 ; Psa. lxxviii. 70) ; and to the apostles (John xv. 16—19).

We gather from the whole, that election is a privilege granted to some, but not to all ; that its object is special service ; that it in no way whatever interferes with the condition of others, excepting in so far as it improves that condition, by providing for them further instruction ; that, in short, its one distinguishing characteristic is mercy, *grafted on* mercy,—*favour* to the few, that through their agency its blessings might be extended to the many ; just as God includes ‘*all*’ (whether Jew or Gentile) ‘in unbelief, *that He might have mercy upon all*. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out !’ (Rom. xi. 32, 33).

· I have already said that an ‘election of grace,’ in some sense or other, is *implied* from the begin-

ning of the Old Testament. Abel, Seth, Enoch, and Noah, were obviously, in the Divine eye, 'chosen and precious' in a sense which did not, and could not, belong to the men by whom 'the earth was filled with violence.' On such, as the appointed heads of their families or tribes,— 'sons of God' (Gen. vi. 2), as distinguished from the unrighteous seed,—devolved the preservation of purity and love upon the earth, in connection with the worship and service of the one true God.

Nor is it easy to conceive of such an election—if so it may be called—as other than personal; for it was as *individuals* these men feared God above many; and it was in their individual character that they acted as guides and examples to those among whom their lot was cast. We see no impropriety in regarding these Antediluvians as the subjects of *the first*, or primitive election.

The covenant made with Abraham indicates, if we may so say, the commencement of *the second* election; and it differs from the earlier one chiefly in its *national* character. For the covenant is made, not with Abraham only, but with his seed after him; *they*, rather than he, being the destined inheritors of Canaan, the depositories of Divine truth, and the future lights of the world. It is the election of a whole people, through all their generations, to be, in a peculiar sense, 'the people of

God,' a 'holy nation,' a community of 'kings and priests' to all around.

That the Jewish nation was *set apart*, by this solemn act of choice, to be the rulers and teachers of the rest of the world, cannot be doubted. Their miraculous history—miraculous from its commencement to its close; their instinctive consciousness of a regal destiny—a consciousness still clinging to them as closely as ever; their marvelously unworldly institutions—such especially as the Sabbatic year,—all testify to the fact that God *intended* them to enjoy pre-eminence, as the best men of that period of the world's history.

Nor should it be forgotten, while perusing that dark record of their folly and crime which it has pleased God to stereotype for use in all ages, that while no other people ever had their inner life so faithfully depicted, or their faults so unsparingly disclosed, the nation, *as a nation*, during by far the greater part of its existence, was *immeasurably* superior to any other people then existing; and that its representative men, its kings and warriors, its prophets and its priests, its heads of families and well-conducted households, were really the *élite* of the world, and the 'salt of the earth,' as it then was. Who can read David's heart-stirring comparison between the pure and cheerful worship of Jehovah, perpetually celebrating on Mount Zion, and the horrid and foul rites of the surrounding

nations, without feeling how righteous was the scorn which made him exclaim, 'Their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips?' Who can think of the *peaceful joy* that so often breathes in the Psalms, that was echoed in the temple, that lingered on the hill-sides of Judea, and that abode in 'the tabernacles of the righteous,' without feeling how vast was the distance that intervened between the moral condition of the Jew, and that even of the most philosophic and accomplished Gentile?

Still they *failed* as a people to answer the end God had designed them to accomplish; they neglected to make 'their calling and election *sure*;' and finally, like Esau of old, they cast away '*their birthright*,' never again to find it, even though it should be sought 'carefully and with tears' (Heb. xii. 17).

Spiritually indeed, and in relation to individuals,—for then, as now, 'all' were 'not Israel' who were 'of Israel' (Rom. ix. 6),—the covenant was unchangeable, and so, one after another, the holy men of old 'died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off,' and assured that in 'the better country,' to which they were hastening, every word of God would find a glorious fulfilment. But, *as a whole*, and in relation to the purpose for which it was designed, the Jewish election must be termed a failure,—so

far at least as we may venture, without irreverence, thus to speak of a transaction in which God, to our short-sighted conceptions, appears to allow His intentions to be thwarted by human perversity.

The *third and final election*,—that under the Gospel, which, be it observed, proceeds on precisely the same principle as the earlier ones,—viz., the setting apart of the noblest and the best for special service,—dates from the advent of the Redeemer, and, like the Jewish, has a twofold character; *externally*, embracing all professors of Christianity, however feeble their faith, or however inconsistent their conduct; but *spiritually*, and in a deeper sense, including only the highest and purest among the children of men.

St. Paul clearly indicates this when he addresses as ‘elect,’ *all* the members of a Church which contained, at that very time, in its fellowship, some who denied the resurrection of the dead, and others who lived in flagrant sin (1 Cor. v.); St. Peter, when he tells us that ‘election’ is a ‘calling’ which has to be made ‘sure’ (2 Pet. i. 10); and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, when he speaks of the falling away of persons whom it is ‘impossible’ to ‘renew again unto repentance’ (Heb. vi. 6).

In no case, however, as some have thought, is the Divine choice represented as proceeding on the

assumption that the persons elected *merit* distinction, or are chosen on account of *foreseen* goodness; *in all* the choice is regarded as made for reasons which are *reserved* in the Divine mind. Hence we very properly speak of it as *sovereign*,—not meaning by that term anything arbitrary or capricious, but simply using the phrase as descriptive of an act commenced and completed for reasons which are concealed from us.

Yet, *not altogether so*; for while nothing is told us which explains, or is intended to explain, *why* this individual is taken, and that left, the general principle embodied is, as we are distinctly informed, the ultimate elevation of the many, through the agency of the few. On this point Scripture is explicit,—‘Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,’ says St. Paul, who hath ‘predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,’—‘*that in the dispensation*’ (“economy,” so Alford) ‘*of the fulness of times*’ He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him’ (Ephes. i. 3—10).

Election, then, regarded in its twofold character, is visible and invisible; *visible*, in so far as it externally embraces all who ‘profess and call themselves’ Christians; *invisible*, so far as it relates to the truly regenerate,—to those who, in the words

of the Apostle John, are born, 'not of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.'

It is in this *latter* sense alone that the elect Church is the 'Bride of Christ;' for none but the 'regenerate,'—and we should clearly distinguish these from the merely 'converted,'—can share in the throne and the priesthood of the risen Saviour. *Who* these are it is not for us to inquire. Hidden at present from mortal eye, they will one day be owned and made manifest before an assembled world, as the best, the noblest, the most Christ-like souls earth, with all its discipline, and heaven, with all its love, can fashion and bring forth.

Lawful enough it may be for us, in our ignorance, to *hope* that we ourselves, and those whom we see around us in the daily Christian intercourse of life,—with whose prayers we mingle our own, and with whom we share the fellowship alike of Christian effort and of Church communion—*all* belong to that blessed company, for, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, it is not fitting that we should form any other judgment. But it is not really so. Only a part are chosen to honour. For God's elect, did we know them, would be found even now *worthy of their name*, and very different from those who only perplex by their inconsistencies, or plague by their folly.

Loving, trustful, and unselfish; broad in their sympathies, candid in their judgments, honourable

in their lives, and humble in the estimate they form of themselves, *these*, the true sons and daughters of the Highest, will one day issue from the obscurity in which it pleases God as yet to hide them, and '*they shall walk in white, for they are worthy.*' From deepest poverty and peasants' huts—with here and there, it may be, one from the palaces of princes; from lonely prisons, and from martyrdoms severer than those of the axe or the stake; cultured, or rude of speech; great souls, of whom the world knows nothing, will then come forth,—‘a multitude which no man can number,’ and stand confessed God's own nobility, the aristocracy of the skies.

That the rest of the professing Church will be *saved*, need not be doubted. For to be ‘saved’ is one thing, but to be honoured of God and of Christ is quite another thing. To be ‘forgiven’ is *much*; but to hold rank among the sanctified is far more. The one is not unfrequently found in combination with the ambitions of this world; the other, *even now*, has no heartfelt affinities with anything that does not more or less bear on the world that is to come.

Diversities of condition, we are also distinctly taught (1 Cor. xv. 41), will be as characteristic of the world (or age) that is to come, as they are of this; yet then, as now, each will receive, not less, but far more than he deserves; and each, whatever

he may have to lose or to suffer, as the just penalty of folly or of sin, will be obliged to admit that 'the Judge of the whole earth' does '*right*.'

Looking forward to that glorious period—the day of Christ, and the resurrection of the body—the elect, under the symbolic title of Elders, are presented to us in the apocalyptic vision as already exercising priestly functions—holding censers full of odours—and filling heaven with anticipative praise. 'And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and *we shall REIGN on the earth.*'

Without the recognition of the twofold salvation—that of the elect, the 'kings' who are to 'reign with Christ,' and that of 'the world,' who are to be subjects in the kingdom, it seems impossible to reconcile the 'strait gate,' the 'narrow way,' and the 'few there be that find it,' with the various promises which speak of the kingdoms of this world becoming 'the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.'

Regarded as these passages usually are—all alike made to apply to the same class, they leave the impression of a *total contrast*, if not of inexplicable contradiction. Viewed, as they should be,

separately and apart ; the *former* regarded as relating to the elect alone—the *special result* of this dispensation ; the *latter*, as referring to the ultimate condition of *the race as a whole*, they fully harmonize ; for they then intimate that “the completed salvation of the elect Church, instead of closing the fountains of Divine love, only introduces a wider and fuller display of it ;” that, for aught we know, “there may be a thousand stages and varieties of union with Christ distinguishable from the glory of the elect Church ;”¹ that as God, ‘*at the first*, visited the Gentiles, *to take out of them a people* for His name’ (Acts xv. 14), so, at last, through that visitation of mercy, will Christ eventually secure ‘the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession ;’ that as by the fall of the chosen people the Gentiles were enriched, so, in their fulness, shall ‘all Israel be saved ;’ and the cross, so long ‘a stumbling-block to the Jew,’ and ‘folly to the Greek,’ shall become at length the centre of the world’s attraction, and the word of the Redeemer be verified—‘*I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.*’

¹ Rev. Edw. Bickersteth. See also, Birks’s “Outlines of Prophecy,” pp. 141, 143, 147.

NOTE.

It will probably be said that certain texts of Scripture are distinctly *opposed* to the view I have taken, since they clearly assert that the Divine sovereignty is exercised, not with regard to office or service merely, but in relation to acceptance or rejection, salvation or damnation, love or hate.

I cannot, of course, determine what particular texts any one thus arguing might think fit to bring forward, nor would it be possible *here* to deal with them controversially. But it may not be unsuitable to notice, however briefly, two or three of the more prominent ones, which are generally regarded as conclusive. They are the following:—

(1). Rom. ix. 13, '*Jacob have I loved*' (lit., *preferred*, as in Luke xvi. 13) '*and Esau have I hated*' (lit., *disregarded*, as in Luke xiv. 26). These words, let it be observed, are avowedly a quotation from Mal. i, 2, 3, where they clearly refer, not to individuals, but to Edom and Israel, and the respective conditions in which it pleased God to place them. To say, as Mr. Robert Haldane does, that '*Esau was justly the object of hatred before he was born, because he was viewed in Adam as a sinner*;' that '*Jacob was justly the object of God's love before he was born, because he was viewed in Christ as righteous*;' and that '*the whole of the context proves that the declaration has reference to their spiritual and eternal state*,' is to *travesty* the Word of God, and to libel the Divine character.

(2). Rom. ix. 18, '*Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy.*' This passage is grossly misread by those who imagine that mercy is here used in the sense of *saving from punishment*. Such is not the case. The Apostle uses it in the sense of *conferring benefit*. It is as if he had said, '*All the Lord's mercies are sovereign. He blesseth whom He will, and in the way that seems best to Him.*' St. Paul uses the same word when he says, in this very Epistle (xi. 31), '*Through your mercy*,'—*i.e.*, favour. So also in the Second Epistle to Timothy (i. 16), '*The Lord give mercy to the house of Onesiphorus.*' So Luke uses it (xviii. 38), where the blind man cries for *mercy*—*i.e.*, the favour of receiving sight. How very absurd, then, to read, as most persons do, '*He saveth from hell whom He will*!'

(3). Rom. ix. 21—33, ‘*Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?*’ These words are used in reply to a supposed objector, who practically says, ‘Why does God disapprove of any, if all alike are but clay, and moulded as He will?’ ‘*Why then doth He yet find fault?*’ The Apostle retorts, ‘Who art thou that repliest against God?’ Is it reasonable to suppose that *you*—a creature—have a mind comprehensive enough to judge the Creator’s conduct? What says Jeremiah? (xviii. 6)—‘Behold, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel,’—an illustration, be it observed, used by the prophet to exhibit God’s right to change the position or condition of His people by degrading them, as He was about to do, in the sight of all the nations (ver. 7—21). It is in this sense St. Paul uses it in the passage on which we are remarking, for he practically goes on to say, ‘Have not these words of Jeremiah all been fulfilled, and are not we ourselves evidences thereof?’ For, ‘if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering (our fathers the Jews) vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:’ and that He might make known the riches of His glory, *rejected* them, and called us (of the new election, Jew and Gentile), what shall we say, or how explain such sovereign grace? (ver. 22—30). The passage does *not* teach that election is to salvation as opposed to damnation, but to honour; to blessing and service, without doubt; but in contradistinction only to dishonour, and in no case to the prejudice in the slightest degree of others.

(4). One passage—the parable of the Marriage Feast,—as recorded by St. Matthew (xxii. 2—14), seems distinctly to teach that ‘the kingdom of God,’ properly so termed, is *not* for the many, but for the few. This parable, it is admitted, represents “*the great marriage supper of the Son of God*, i. e., His full and complete union to His Bride, the Church, in glory”—(so Alford). The guests form the Church (Ephes. v. 27.) But two things must be noticed; *first*, that the feast is neither *provided* nor *intended* for all the king’s subjects. The invitation is only given to a certain part of them; and it is not till the first invited (the Jewish, as the elect nation) refused to come, that the servants are sent out to the highways and hedges (the Gentile world). *Secondly*, that even when the call becomes indiscriminate as to class, it is still limited as to number; *all* are not to be brought in, only as many as were

required, that 'the house might be filled' (Luke xiv. 23) ; or, as St. Matthew expresses it, that 'the wedding' might be 'furnished with guests.' One of these guests, represented as wanting the 'wedding garment,' is cast from the brilliancy of the bridal hall, into the outer (outside) darkness, deepened by contrast with the glory he has lost ; and there, with others similarly disappointed, in ineffectual vexation he weeps and gnashes his teeth,—the Jewish mode of manifesting sorrow and rage.

The teaching of the parable can scarcely be mistaken. It is that God has on earth a people who, in distinction from others, are called, as the Bride of Christ, to honour and glory ; that these are gradually being gathered in ; but that even among them will be found some who have failed to make their calling and election sure. It *implies*,—since the number of guests is limited, while the invitations of the Gospel are universal,—that *beyond* those who are thus specially honoured will be found redeemed persons, saved equally by grace, yet not in the same sense, or with the same result, as 'the Church of the Firstborn, whose names are written in heaven ;' saved from the captivity of Satan, and brought under the blessed rule of the Deliverer, yet not partakers of that higher glory which is to be the peculiar privilege of the elect.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE GOSPEL AS PREACHED BY ST. PAUL.

THE first thing that strikes us in relation to the publication of the Gospel is, that while certain events which have taken place under it are *the subject of Old Testament prophecy*, the true character of the age or period, as a whole, was evidently either concealed from, or misunderstood by, the prophets.

Nothing startles a careful observer more than the discovery of the fact that, in the eyes of all the Old Testament seers, the humiliation and the glorification of Messiah on the earth *seem to touch each other*. His advent is always regarded as the immediate harbinger of the world's subjection. Not a hint is given of *delay*; not a suspicion seems to have entered their minds that eighteen hundred years and more, of struggle and persecution, should intervene, at the end of which five-sixths of the human race should be found even historically unacquainted with the fact of Christ's existence.

Who can wonder that, under these circumstances, the apostles, reverencing the prophets as they did,

should expect the glory of Messiah to follow immediately on His humiliation, and ask, even at the last moment, 'Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' Who can wonder that, after the ascension of their Lord, both they and their followers should, *for some years*, have lived in daily expectation of His second and glorious coming in the clouds of heaven?

It was not, probably, till Paul received, by special revelation, a knowledge of 'the mystery which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men,' that *just views* began to prevail relative to the true character of the dispensation under which they were placed.

The statement that such a revelation had been given appears first in the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians (iii. 1—11), in which the Apostle speaks of that which had been specially committed to him. And as this passage has generally been interpreted as teaching, *either* simply that the Gentiles should be 'fellow-heirs' with the Jews, *or* else the kindred truth that, in becoming 'heirs,' Gentiles were *not to pass through* Judaism, it may be necessary to observe that the bringing in of the Gentiles was no 'mystery' at all, inasmuch as it had been from the beginning revealed to Abraham (Gal. iii. 8), and was fully recognized, in the plainest terms, by Isaiah and other prophets (Isa. ii. 2; xi. 10; Mal. i. 11); while the further truth that these

privileges were to be enjoyed without reference to Judaism, had been taught to Peter in a vision soon after Pentecost (Acts xi. 1—18; xv. 7—11).

In the Epistle to the Romans (xvi. 25, 26), the Apostle again refers to 'the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.' It is this preaching of Jesus Christ 'according to the revelation of the mystery,' which, by the power of God, is to establish them in the faith (ver. 25).

Now what *can* this be but the preaching of the great love of Christ to the Gentiles, manifested in His gathering out of *them* a people who shall share His crown, and be numbered among His chosen? That it cannot mean the entire subjugation of them under this dispensation, seems clear from another passage in the same Epistle (xiv. 11), where, quoting Isaiah (xlv. 23), the Apostle connects the fulfilment of the prophecy that 'unto God every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear,' and 'all the ends of the earth' look unto Christ to be saved, with that day when 'every one of us shall give account of himself to God.' 'We shall all stand,' he says, 'before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me' (Rom. xiv. 10, 11).

I scarcely see how, on any other hypothesis, the conduct of St. Paul—so different from our own—can be explained. Prince of missionaries as he was, he never seems to look forward to the conversion of the masses of mankind. His prayers, and tears, and efforts, are always for the few, rather than for the many. His supplications are not, as we might have expected they would have been, for the subjugation of the Empire to Christ, but always for ‘the saints;’ and especially for those who had been called under his own ministry, that they might ‘grow in grace,’ and that he might ‘present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.’

“It seems, indeed, impossible to deny the essentially limited nature of a dispensation that consists of a *Church*—a body of *called-out* ones—an election out of the mass. If it be an election, it cannot be universal; if it be universal, then there is no more Church or election.”

Further, that ‘the mystery’ spoken of as one ‘which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God,’ must have involved *much more* than ordinary interpretations suppose, is evident from the subsequent teaching of the apostles, which frequently relates, *on the one hand*, to the election of a chosen people out of all nations, who, like the Master, should be hated and rejected of men, yet honoured to be under Him kings and priests for ever; and *on the other*, to a ‘mystery of iniquity,’

then at work, *soon* to bring forth 'ravenous wolves,' who should 'traffic in the Word,' make 'booty' of the flock, account 'godliness a means of gain,' and finally culminate in a 'man of sin,' and 'son of perdition,' whom the Lord should 'consume with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming.' All this clearly indicates that the light received by this special revelation fell on the entire economy, and was intended to guide the expectations of believers into a right channel.

This view is confirmed by the Second Epistle to Timothy (chap. iii.), in which Paul enlarges on the character of the 'last days;' and still more, perhaps, by the way in which St. Peter, in the third chapter of his Second Epistle, treats the entire subject. Without at all withdrawing the assertion in his first letter, that 'the end of all things' was at hand (1 Eph. iv. 7)—for this is ever true—he now warns them that great delay will take place before Christ's return; a delay so great, that scoffers will arise, ridiculing the very thought of His Second Advent, and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation' (2 Ephes. iii. 4). The *fact* of the Deluge, regarded as a Divine judgment, will, he tells us, first be denied (ver. 5, 6), and then the prophecy of the future destruction of the world

by fire will be rejected as a similar exaggeration. He assures us, however, that the Word of God will stand ; that 'the Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness,' but that mercy is involved in the delay ; that the 'long-suffering' of God arises only from His unwillingness 'that any should perish ;' that it means 'salvation,' *even as Paul had taught them*, 'according to the wisdom given unto him,' revealing in his Epistles some things 'hard to be understood,' which the unlearned (or rather, unteachable) and unstable wrest, as they do the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction (iii. 15, 16).

What the 'things hard to be understood' may precisely be, we know not ; but it is worth notice that the Apostle Paul often uses the phrase '*my Gospel*' as if his message to mankind included matters directly and specially revealed to himself. In the Epistle to the Galatian Church (ii. 2) he says that, seventeen years after his conversion, he went up to Jerusalem 'by revelation,' in order that he might communicate to the Church in that city, and to the other apostles, the Gospel which he preached among the Gentiles.

Judging by what is said in that Epistle alone, we should naturally come to the conclusion that its sole peculiarity was that it asserted the liberty of Gentile converts to abstain from the observances of the Mosaic law. But it is by no means probable

that this was all; for, as we have before seen, Gentile freedom had not only been directly taught to Peter soon after Pentecost, but, *in consequence of his testimony*, had been formally and officially recognized as the revealed will of God by the apostles and brethren in Judea (Acts x. and xi.) In his Second Epistle to Timothy, after saying to him, ‘Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead *according to my Gospel*’ (ii. 8), the Apostle adds, ‘*Therefore* I endure all things *for the elect’s sakes*, that they may also obtain the *salvation* which is in Christ Jesus *with eternal glory*’ (ver. 10). Here he would seem to say that he suffered for preaching a special salvation for the elect.

If we ask, What more did Paul’s revelation or Gospel include? what else could it embrace that was in any way peculiar to him? we must look for an answer to the First Epistle to the Corinthians (chap. xv.), in which we find the doctrine of *the resurrection of the body* first clearly set forth as a necessary consequence of Christ’s having raised His own body. This particular doctrine he declares to be ‘*the Gospel*’ which he had ‘preached’ unto them—*that* wherein they ‘stood,’ and by which they were ‘saved’ from the power of this present evil world (ver. 1, 2).

But again it may be asked,—What is there in the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, as

taught by this Apostle, which makes it so peculiarly his own?

One is certainly at a loss to see what it can be, *unless* the resurrection be connected—as it always is by St. Paul—with the fulfilment of those glorious promises of *a new moral world* which abound in the writings of the Old Testament. Other apostles had *taught* this to the Jews (Acts iii. 21); but Paul seems to have been specially called to open up the doctrine, and to impress upon the Gentiles that the dispensation of the fulness of times must be a result of the resurrection.

Such I believe it to be; and I cannot but think that if Scripture be carefully searched, and its various announcements relative to the resurrection be thoughtfully examined, it will become evident, that while glorious days may be expected after the return of Christ and the binding of Satan, it is not till mortality is merged in life that the restoration of the race will be effected.

Dr. Arnold, when lecturing in Oxford, after taking a survey of the field of modern history, once asked whether there were, in the existing resources of the nations of mankind, any materials for a new epoch distinct from those which have gone before? and he answered—None.

Dr. Stanley, meditating on this conclusion, which he does not dispute, observes:—"We cannot hesitate to say, that if the Christian Church be draw-

ing to its end, or if it continue to its end with no other objects than those which it has hitherto sought, it will end with its acknowledged resources confessedly undeveloped, its finest hopes of usefulness almost untried and unattempted. It will have been like an ungenial spring, cut short in full view of the summer—a stately vessel wrecked within the very sight of shore.”¹

St. Paul seems to remove this difficulty, and to reconcile the apparent discrepancy which exists between things as they are, and what we are assured they shall be, when he expounds inspired prophecy (as no other man does), teaching that it is not till ‘death is swallowed up in victory,’ that ‘the veil that is spread over all nations’ shall be removed (comp. 1 Cor. xv. 54, with Isa. xxv. 6—8). If so, *then* it is that Israel, though she has destroyed herself, shall be ransomed from the power of the grave (Hosea xiii. 9—14); and as *this dispensation* is the one in which God visits the Gentiles, ‘to take out of them a people for His name’ (Acts xv. 14), so, when that period is ended, and the decisions of the last day have been made known, will the Church enter upon its great mission, as the ruler and teacher of the nations. May not St. Paul point to this when he says, ‘Flesh and blood’

¹ “Advantages of Ecclesiastical History.” Introduction to Eastern Church, page 79.

—men in their present condition—cannot inherit the kingdom of God’ (1 Cor. xv. 50)?

If this be the true view, the “stately vessel” is not “wrecked;” it but disappears for a season in the narrow straits of death, soon to emerge in new splendour on the ocean of unclouded felicity.

This doctrine is by no means *confined* to Paul. The very first teaching of Peter and John relates to ‘times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord’ (Acts iii. 19); to ‘the times of restitution of all things’—predicted by the Old Testament prophets—‘which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began’ (ver. 21). *Then*, in effect, say they to the Jews, will ‘the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed,’ be enjoyed in its fulness (ver. 25); the *preparatory* work being the first advent of Christ, to turn men away from their iniquities (ver. 26). It was ‘*as they spake*’ unto the people these words, ‘the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus *the resurrection from the dead*’ (iv. 1, 2).

Nothing can be clearer, from these concluding words, than that, by Peter and John, ‘the times of restitution,’ which ‘all the prophets, from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken,

have foretold,' had been connected with the 'resurrection from the dead.' *Their crime* was that they had taught that this great and expected national blessing was to come through Jesus, whom the Jews had crucified.

The peculiarity of Paul's 'Gospel,' or teaching, appears to have been, that it was *received*, *not* through any other apostle, but by *direct* revelation from the Lord Jesus (Gal. i. 12), and that it *comprised*, so far as we can ascertain, six distinct particulars.

(1). That idolatrous Gentiles, when converted, should be received into the Church without being subjected to Mosaic law, or in any sense passing through Judaism (Ephes. iii. 3—7).

(2). That God had cast off the Jews as the elect nation (Rom. xi. 1—10).

(3). That in place of this national calling, an 'election of grace,' consisting both of Gentiles and believing Jews, should be accomplished (Rom. xi. 5).

(4). That while this process was going on, a 'mystery of iniquity' and a 'son of perdition' should arise, and remain till the second advent of the Lord (2 Thess. ii.).

(5). That when this work was completed, and 'the fulness of the Gentiles' should arrive, the Jews, *as a nation*, would again be 'grafted in' (Rom. xi. 24); those on earth in the latter day,—during

the Millennium ; those that had died in unbelief,—after the resurrection.

(6). That the last generation of saints should not die (1 Cor. xv. 51).

These seem to have been the topics *specially* constituting St. Paul's Gospel ; they mark his teaching out as distinct from that of the other apostles, and constitute, without doubt, 'the mystery hid from ages and generations' (Col. i. 26 ; Rom. xvi. 25), which he was 'to make all men see' (Ephes. iii. 9) ; and it was in connection with these truths that he preached everywhere the resurrection of the dead, as the perfected triumph of Messiah, and the great time of restitution.

The Apocalypse of St. John, as we think, completes the lesson by the presentation of what may almost be termed a prophetic history of the fortunes of the Church during the period that is to intervene between the first and second advents of the Redeemer.

PART IV.

THE RESURRECTION.

CHAP. I. THE REVEALED FACT OF A RESURRECTION.

II. THE GLORIOUS RESULT OF IT.

III. THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

CHAPTER I.

THE RESURRECTION,—A REVEALED FACT.

THE first distinct notice in the New Testament of the Resurrection occurs, in the question put by the Sadducees to our Lord touching the supposed relationship in that state of a woman who had, in conformity with the Mosaic law, successively married seven men (Mark xii. 18).

The question seems to imply, *first*, that Jesus had been teaching the doctrine of the Resurrection; *secondly*, that He had spoken of it as a restoration or renewal of social life; and, *thirdly*, that the objectors denied the doctrine altogether—the form of the query being intended ironically to express their contempt for it.

The reply of the Saviour, therefore, *first*, re-asserts the *fact*—men *shall* rise from the dead; *secondly*, charges the objectors with ignorance of Scripture in misconceiving its nature; and, *thirdly*, reminds them that the doctrine He taught was by no means new, but one that was involved in the very earliest records of their history, God having said to Moses, that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, although dead in the flesh, were even then living.

The misconception into which they had fallen, and which the study of their own Prophets ought to have corrected, was this :—they imagined that the resurrection would be but the repetition of the earthly life, the rebinding of its broken ties, the renewal of relations which were adapted only to a world of perpetual waste—a world in which generation succeeds generation, and life and death are ever tracking each other's footsteps.

Scripture (the Law and the Prophets) might have taught them that the next world was *the complement* rather than the repetition of this—reconciling its discrepancies, supplementing its deficiencies, completing its imperfect probations, retributively rectifying the respective conditions of the righteous and the wicked, and, above all revealing the glory and the grace which the prophets had invariably declared should follow the humiliation and sufferings of Messiah.

It should, however, here be noticed that the question had reference exclusively to the condition of one supposed to be among the chosen people of God, and our Lord answers it accordingly. He speaks of those only who are accounted *worthy to obtain* the resurrection from the dead, in the highest sense—who shall die no more, be equal to the angels, and be called 'the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.'

The one truth here distinctly taught us in rela-

tion to the world that is to come, is simply this :— It will not, like the present one, be a world of *reproduction*. The spirit of the objection was, ‘How can the body be raised, since from it earthly relations are inseparable?’ The spirit of the answer is, ‘The body *will* be raised; but those relations which have exclusive reference to a world like the present, which is always passing away, and therefore always in process of renewal, will cease.’

It is, however, impossible to deny that the resurrection of *the body*, whatever that term may properly imply, seems almost necessarily to suppose our return to a *sensuous life upon earth*, however pure or glorious our state may be.

The body, it should be remembered, is not an *essential* part of us, since we can both live and be happy without it, as the blessed spirits in the invisible world now are. It is but our tent or tabernacle, and here our temporary dwelling (2 Pet. i. 14; 2 Cor. v. 4). “But it is,” as has been well said,¹ “the medium of communication between the immaterial spirit and sensible things; the instrument by which we receive impressions from a sensuous world, and produce impressions on that world in return; and therefore it is the indispensable condition of our intercourse *on earth* with the things and the persons of earth.” Individually,

¹ Griffith on the Apostles’ Creed, a book to which, in this and the succeeding chapter, I have been more than once indebted.

we might, perhaps, be to some extent independent of it ; but it is essential to social intercourse in a material world. It is not essential to a spiritual world, to mental life, to consciousness, or to sympathy, for all these may be, and probably are, exercised without it in Paradise, even though the spirit *there* is probably not altogether *unclothed* ; but it is essential to material intercourse.

Is it not, then, reasonable to suppose that if *the body* is to be raised, it is in order to fulfil some at least of the purposes for which it was so wonderfully and curiously framed ? Is there any other supposition beyond that of the perpetual humanity of man which is sufficient to explain the incarnation of the Redeemer, when we are distinctly told that, ‘forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, Christ also Himself likewise took part of the same ; that *through death* He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil’ ? (Heb. ii. 14). Is there any other way in which we can account for the fact that He took this very body to heaven with Him, or for the kindred fact that the resurrection of the material frame, and the renovation of the world, are always spoken of in Scripture as coincident ? True, the body of the saint is to be a glorified body, but “even a glorified body must still possess those inseparable qualities of natural bodies by which they are *limited in regard to time and place*, and become

OBJECTS OF SENSE ; or the doctrine of a resurrection after death would be reduced to unmeaning sounds.”¹

The Sadducee, denying both angel and spirit, looked for the triumph of Messiah *in this world*, to be enjoyed then and there, and apart altogether from moral excellence. The Pharisee, encased in the mere forms of a dead ritualism, although indulging different expectations, had scarcely reached loftier conceptions. But the devout and thoughtful among the people, then as now, lived in the future, and looked forward to the morning of the resurrection as the dawn of a day brighter than any that earth could furnish—the true day of consolation for all the troubles of this mortal life.

Peter, when first announcing the resurrection of *Christ*, felt that he might confidently appeal to this event as evidence of his Messiahship, since, in their own sacred books, David had declared of this Prophet, that ‘His soul should not be left in Hades, nor his flesh see corruption.’

The *denial* of a resurrection was, however, in all probability, not peculiar to the Sadducees. All through the Gospel history sceptics on this subject make their appearance. Paul says to the Corinthians, ‘How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?’ (1 Cor. xv. 12); and

¹ Prof. Miller to Dr. Pusey, quoted by Mr. Griffith.

Timothy is warned of men who teach that 'the resurrection is past already,' and, in so doing, 'overthrow the faith of some' (2 Tim. ii. 18). The Church of Christ in every age has had those among its members who have endeavoured so to spiritualize this great event as to make it rather a subjective change than an outward reality; and probably there never was a time when such notions prevailed more widely among professing Christians than they do at the present day.

And yet a belief in *the fact* of a resurrection of the body lies at the very basis of the Gospel; for 'if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen;' and if Christ be not risen, then is preaching and faith alike 'vain' (1 Cor. xv. 13, 14). The event itself is declared, on inspired authority, to be the fulfilment of the prophecy regarding Messiah, in which God says of Him, 'Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee' (Psa. ii. 7; Acts xiii. 33). It is the proclamation by God himself that Christ is His only Son, clothed 'with power, according to the spirit of holiness' (Rom. i. 4); and the reception of it as a truth is regarded in Scripture, not as a late attainment, or as 'wisdom for the perfect,' but as one of the very first elements of the Christian life (Heb. vi. 2).

Of *the nature* of the resurrection little is revealed; of its *results* much. The passages which relate to its nature are chiefly the following:—

(1). Luke xiv. 14—‘*Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just*’—for feeding ‘the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind.’

Here future reward for kindness shown to the needy on earth is distinctly recognized. The promise, be it observed, is made, not to the disciples, but to one of the Pharisees that bade Him to a feast (xiv. 1). May it not, then, fairly be asked whether such a passage does not seem *naturally* to refer to a dispensation of rewards and punishments to be entered upon at the resurrection, differing, *both in kind and in degree*, from the blessedness which awaits the elect?

(2). John v. 28, 29—‘*The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of condemnation.*’

Here the retributive character of the world (or age) to come, is again clearly stated, although in this case it is rather with reference to the general course and character of the life than to any particular act.

(3). Matt. xii. 31, 32—‘*It shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.*’

This text is properly regarded as in itself *conclusive* against universalism. Be it so; but is it not, then, equally conclusive in favour of the supposition that *some sins*, not forgiven in this world, will

be forgiven in the world to come? Dean Alford says, "No *sure* inference can be drawn from these words with regard to forgiveness of sins in a future state." I admit this, for all inferences, *deduced from* Scripture, however necessary they may seem to us, introduce a *human* element, and should therefore never be placed side by side with a *Divine* statement. Olshausen understands the passage (as many others have done) to imply forgiveness on repentance *in the imperfect state of the dead* before the judgment.

(4). Matt. xix. 28—30 (compared with Luke xxii. 28—30)—*'Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.'*

This text is commonly expounded as referring to "a renewing work of grace." The apostles, it is said, "entered, *while on earth*, upon the royalty referred to, in their own persons, and continue it in their writings." If this be not rationalistic interpretation, it is hard to say what is. The word *παλιγγενεσία* (regeneration) is construed, at the public schools and the universities, "in the resurrection," and there is no doubt as to that being its true meaning. Why not, then, take it as it stands, and regard it as teaching that at the resurrection the apostles will literally be rulers, under Christ, of their nation?

(5). Phil. iii. 11—*'If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.'*

Is it possible to imagine that St. Paul only refers here to that resurrection which is common to all? Is it reasonable to separate this from what is said elsewhere about 'the *first* resurrection'? (1 Thess. iv. 16; Rev. xx. 5),—that prior *judgment of saints* which is to take place before the rest of the dead are raised, and which is so closely associated with *their taking part* in the judgment of the world (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3); a judgment which is *not* to decide whether they (the saints) are Christ's or not, but to allot to them rewards or deprivations, 'according to their works.'

The resurrection to which St. Paul aspired was evidently one which implied, *to him*, the reception of the unfading crown (1 Cor. ix. 25; 2 Tim. iv. 8). It is very remarkable that in the Apocalypse (chap. xx.), after a symbolic vision of thrones of judgment (ver. 4), there follows a distinct explanatory assertion,—'*This is the first resurrection*,' just as we are told, after the casting of death and hell into the lake of fire,—'*This is the second death*' (Rev. xx. 14).

After the actual resurrection of the Redeemer, *the doctrine* seems to assume a new form. It is now preached, not in the old form, as taught by the prophets, but as inseparable from the work of the Lord Jesus. The vexation of the Jews at the apostles is not that the mere fact of the resurrec-

tion is taught, but that they preached *through Jesus* the resurrection from the dead (Acts iv. 2). 'With great power,' we are told, 'gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus : and great grace was upon them all' (ver. 33).

This topic, it is evident, occupied a very prominent place in the ministrations of St. Paul. To the heathen his message seems to have been very much summed up in this,—'He preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection' (Acts xvii. 18). It was when they heard 'of the resurrection of the dead' that 'some mocked' and others pondered.

In relation to the Jews, the Apostle's teaching often took a similar shape. On any other supposition, it seems difficult to see *how* he could say, when before the Council, 'Of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question' (Acts xxiii. 6); for he was certainly not accused of preaching the resurrection as any other Pharisee would have done.

Shortly after, when before Felix, he repeats his belief, in common with the Jew, 'that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust,' and says, 'For this one voice, Touching the resurrection of the dead, I am called in question' (Acts xxiv. 15, 21).

Before Agrippa he puts the matter somewhat differently, but still involving the same thought; 'I stand and am judged for the hope of the pro-

mise made of God unto our fathers : unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead ?' (Acts xxvi. 6—8).

The resurrection from the dead, and the happy consummation of the hopes and prayers of the twelve tribes, day and night, in the invisible world, are here regarded as one event. The triumphs of Messiah,—the fulfilment of all the promises to Abraham, and the glorious prospects held out in the Prophets, are one and all linked to the resurrection from the dead.

In later days, difficulties of another class presented themselves. They are embodied in the sceptical inquiry of the Corinthians relative to the possibility of such an event.

' *With what body do they come ?*' (1 Cor. xv. 35). What is this but the question, so often put now in forms like these,—How is it possible *so* to unite the present world and the next, as to consider the latter in any sense *the complement* of the former ? The body will have dissolved in the grave. With it will have disappeared all the countless influences it exercised over the spirit. How is it possible so to bridge the great gulf which separates time from eternity, that anything corresponding to this life can be *carried on* in another world ? *With what*

body do they come? Discipline, and therefore probation, *must* terminate on earth, for the natural body and the spiritual body can have little or nothing in common.

To all which Paul replies,—Thou fool, didst thou never *sow* wheat and reap wheat? Is the wheat thou didst reap so different from the wheat thou didst sow? Is it not rather, in spite of the primal decay, though not the same, yet *the very same* wheat? So will it be at the resurrection.

There is little reason to suppose that the Athenians would have ‘mocked’ as they did when Paul, standing on Mars’ Hill, preached to them ‘the resurrection,’ if he had only represented by that term a spiritual judgment of all mankind, to take place in some distant locality; *for the immortality and judgment of the soul was a common belief.* A modern writer says, “The ‘book of the dead,’ which we can now decipher from Egyptian records, does not seem to differ much from our popular views, when it describes the passage of the soul, after judgment by Osiris, to the realms of light; nor is the heathen notion of eternal punishment in Tartarus very unlike that of many modern Christians.”

It was the *earthly* part of the doctrine,—the resurrection of *the body*,—of *all* dead bodies, and the judgment of men *by a man* ordained to that office, and himself already raised from the dead,

that caused the scorn of the Athenians ; and it was this same doctrine, viewed in another aspect, which excited the hatred of the Jew.

It is very questionable whether *this portion of truth* is now so preached amongst us, as to produce resistance, either in the mind of the sceptic or of the Israelite. Both admit the immortality of the soul ; and neither are offended by anything we say or write regarding the resurrection.

To the inquiry, 'With *what* body do they come?' St. Paul gives an answer, a portion of which seems, to a great extent, hitherto to have escaped notice. He says, in fact, that at the resurrection *bodies will differ*—'to every seed his own body.' As 'all flesh is not the same flesh,' so all bodies, in the future world, will not be alike. Just as the sun, moon, and stars differ in glory, and one star differeth from another, so in that world will it be at the resurrection from the dead. We shall all die, or be 'changed.' But the dead in Christ will be raised incorruptible, and the mortal put on immortality ; for of *their* bodies only can it be said, they are 'sown in dishonour,' but 'raised in glory.' What other changes will take place on that day, we can only infer from the words of the Prophet, 'He will swallow up death in victory ;' He 'will destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations' (Isa. xxv. 7, 8.)

CHAPTER II.

THE GLORIOUS RESULT OF THE RESURRECTION.

THE *results* of the last and general resurrection, *as distinguished from the first*, seem, so far as they can be gathered from the Bible, to be embodied in statements which indicate to us, with more or less clearness, what may be expected to follow as a consequence of that great event. I shall take them as they stand in the order of Scripture.

Before doing so, however, the reader must be reminded that certain passages—whether they are to be fulfilled at the resurrection or not—embody promises which are as yet unaccomplished. I refer, however, only to one, since it will be sufficient to serve as a specimen of *the class* in question :—
‘ Fear not : for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord ’ (Luke ii. 10, 11).

No one, I presume, will affirm that the joy here spoken of has ever yet been universally or even generally experienced ; for the great mass of earth’s inhabitants, in every age, have certainly lived and

died without having heard even of the Saviour's name; while of those to whom He has been announced, few comparatively have spiritually received Him.

Yet the word and promise of God cannot pass away unaccomplished.

If, as many hold, *the great mass of mankind*—the myriads of the ages—are eternally lost, it is impossible to see how the news of the advent could be called 'good tidings of great joy to all people.'

We seem forced, therefore, to look forward to the resurrection as the only period capable of throwing light on the announcement.

Three texts bearing somewhat on the foregoing may now be noticed.

(1). 'That (the Incarnate Word) was the true Light, which lighteth *every man that cometh into the world*' (John i. 9), an assertion—as plain as it was possible to make it—that Christ (at one period or other of human existence) affords to *all* sufficient light to make the absence of faith in Himself inexcusable; for the light is said to be given 'that all men through Him might believe' (ver. 7).

(2). 'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth (put to death by crucifixion), will *draw all men unto me*' (John xii. 32).

(3). 'The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you,

Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone : but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit ' (John xii. 23, 24) ; indicating that what the work of the sower was to the work of the gatherer in of the harvest, the death of the Redeemer would be to the abundant glory that should follow.

On these passages I simply remark,—

That there is no *evidence* whatever that, in this dispensation, Christ is or ever has been, such a light to the world at large, that *every man* has had anything like an opportunity to believe on Him. It has been said, indeed, that “a moral sense of right and wrong, *accompanied with a portion of quickening and redeeming power*, is implanted universally ;”¹ but even if this were true (although no missionary has ever yet been able to detect traces of it), the difficulty would still remain, for the Apostle is not speaking of any light which men had *before* Christ came into the world, but of an illumination *leading to belief*.

Further,—On the supposition that the *drawing* of all men means, as some tell us, no more than *invitation*, we seem forced to apply the same gloss to the kindred declaration, ‘No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me *draw* him,’ a process which few would regard as allowable.

¹ “Religious Peculiarities of Friends,” by Jos. John Gurney.

The true reconciliation of the whole is to be found in accepting the assurance that the solemn prelude to the harvest of the Redeemer is *death*; and that, in some way or other, however difficult it may be for us to explain it, *Christ* will be found eventually to be the Saviour of the race, and *we* be forced to acknowledge, in spite of all our blunderings, the intense reality and truthfulness of every word inspired by God.

We now proceed to inquire for the more direct teachings of Holy Writ relative to the great event in question. We shall find them, if anywhere, in the discourses and epistles of the apostles, speaking or writing under the inspiration of the Divine Spirit.

One of the earliest addresses on record is that of Peter and John, found in the third chapter of the Acts (19—26). Here we have the most elementary of all doctrines, that of repentance, enforced chiefly, if not exclusively, in connection with its bearing on ‘the times of refreshment,’ ‘that great season of joy and rest which it was understood the coming of the Messiah *in His glory* was to bring with it,’ (so Alford)—‘the times of restitution of all things.’ That the resurrection is the period referred to, may, I think, be regarded as evident not only from what immediately follows, —‘And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain (ruler) of the temple, and the Sad-

ducees, came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus *the resurrection from the dead*,—but also from the later and clearer discourses of St. Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles.

The Acts of the Apostles furnishes us with the only specimens we have of St. Paul's preaching. So far as it related to the resurrection, it seems to be embodied in the following words :—‘ That Christ should suffer, and that *He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles* ’ (Acts xxvi. 23).

Such, says St. Paul to Festus, has been my teaching—viz., that *through the resurrection from the dead*, Christ should enlighten both Jew and Gentile. In all this, he says, I have done nothing more than witness to things ‘ which the prophets and Moses did say should come ’ (ver. 22).

The question is, does the Apostle mean the *doctrine* of Christ's resurrection, or that of the resurrection generally, should be preached as a light to the Gentiles, or that *in the resurrection* the light would be shown to them ?

For an answer we must go back to what Moses and the prophets had taught, for Paul assures us that his teaching is in harmony with their predictions.

One instance at present can only be quoted. Isaiah, speaking of Christ as given ‘ for a light of

the Gentiles,' regards Him as called 'to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house' (Isa. xlii. 6, 7)—or, as he expresses it elsewhere, 'to establish (marg., raise up) the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves.' Then, says he, 'They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for He that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall He guide them' (Isa. xlix. 8—10).

It is impossible not to be struck by the identity of this language with that used in the Apocalypse (Rev. vii. 16, 17), which is admitted by all to apply to persons in the invisible world, who have been redeemed from the earth, who 'have come out of great tribulation,' who 'have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.' Is it not, then, at least probable that the teaching of Isaiah here—harmonizing, as it does, with that of the other prophets—implies, that the final and glorious fulfilment of the predictions of Moses and the prophets should take place *at the resurrection*?

The Epistle to the Romans has at least three passages which seem to me to have a bearing in the same direction as the one quoted from the

Acts. The first will be found in the fourth chapter (ver. 13—17). ‘The promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. * * * It is of faith, that it might be by grace ; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed. * * * (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations), before him whom he believed, even God, *who quickeneth the dead*, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.’

Here we have a distinct reference to the promise made to Abraham, that he should be heir of the world.¹ But of *what world* was he the heir? Not of the world as it then was. Not of any world that has existed since. Manifestly it is of a world yet to come, and most probably at the resurrection ; when, through Messiah, as his seed, he will fully enter into its possession. In some such light the promise was surely shadowed forth to the patriarch by the birth of Isaac, after he and Sara were, so to speak, *both dead*.

The second passage is in the fifth chapter of the

¹ “The actual promise (Gen. xii. 2, 3 ; xiii. 14—17 ; xv. 18 ; xvii. 8) was the possession of the *land of Canaan*. But more was intended in the words which accompany this promise, ‘In thee (or, in thy seed) shall all families of the earth be blessed,’ than the mere possession of Canaan. The inheritance of the world is not the possession of Canaan merely (so that *κόσμον* should = *γης*), either *literally*, or as a *type* of a better possession.”—*Alford*.

Epistle (ver. 15—19)—‘But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. * * * The judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. * * * *As by one man’s disobedience many (the many) were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall (the many) be made righteous.*’ Connect with this assertion another statement by the same Apostle (1 Cor. xv. 22), ‘*As in Adam ALL die (i. e., the race, allowing for exceptions, such as Enoch and Elias), so in Christ (allowing, as a similar exception, for the wilfully impenitent) shall ALL be made alive.*’ Not, be it observed, made alive with a view to a deeper condemnation, for *here* the Apostle is referring to the resurrection only *as a blessing*. He is speaking of Christ as “the bringer-in of LIFE,” in contrast with Adam, as “the bringer-in of death.”

On these texts I would only observe, that while every scholar assures us that ‘many,’ as used by the Apostle, means ‘*the many*’—the mass, the race,—and that his words are perfectly clear, as by one (Adam) the race were made sinners, so by one (Christ) the race shall be made righteous,—no evangelical commentator, that I am aware of, is disposed to admit such a truth, excepting in some

non-natural sense. It is both curious and distressing to observe how one after another *labours* to explain away what would at first sight appear to bid defiance to any such process.

We must not even say, if we would be orthodox, that *now* no one is under the wrath of God, *simply because he is a child of Adam*, since the death of 'the second Adam' has, in this aspect, removed the consequences of the disobedience of the first. *That* is to be accounted unsound. How much greater the heresy to maintain, with the Apostle, that as *the race* was lost in Adam, so *the race* will be saved by Christ! How frightful to affirm that it will *ever* be said *with truth*, 'Where sin abounded, grace did *much more* abound' (Rom. v. 20). "The design of the Apostle here," says Professor Hodge, "is *not* to show that the blessings procured by Christ are greater than the evils caused by Adam, but to illustrate and confirm the prominent doctrine of the Epistle—that we are justified on the ground of the righteousness of Christ."

What can we say to such teaching? Must we suppose that salvation on any large scale is news too good to be believed by sinful man? or shall we imagine (the thought is too horrible) that the doctrine of an extension of salvation to the many, is rejected by the elect because it seems to detract something from their exclusive blessedness?

The true cause of scepticism on this matter is, I

believe, not to be explained on either supposition. It arises, without doubt, *chiefly* from an unbelieving fear that any announcement of a salvation for the race would tend to render men more careless than they now are, and so hinder the progress of the Gospel. It is the old story over again; man thinks himself wiser than God. The ancient Church thought so, when she *corrupted* the Gospel in order to extend it. The modern Church thinks so, when she *exaggerates* that which is written regarding the wrath of God, lest men should not come to the Saviour. The world at large thinks so, when by natural reaction, it *ignores* the justice of the Almighty altogether, and regards its Maker as too merciful finally to condemn any one.

All parties might learn wisdom, if they would but accept the plain teachings of Divine Revelation, without regard to supposed consequences, or concern for theological systems. They would then perceive that a salvation of the many is as certain as the election of the few; that the death of Christ is fraught with blessing, not to His Church only, but to the race; that the grace received through the second Adam far exceeds the evil introduced by the first; and yet that it is wretched folly to be impenitent—a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God; misery to live in sin, and deeper misery to die in wilful unbelief. Is it too much to affirm, that until the Gospel is thus preached, in its

entireness and in its integrity, its power over the world will be but partial, and its strength but as weakness? Truly has it been said, "Our interpretation of Christianity may be pure enough for private use; it may be good in the closet, good as the source of the motives of common life, and good as the ground of hope in death, and yet may be altogether unfit for conquest and triumph. That *it is* so unfit *should be assumed*, as the only pious and becoming explanation we can give of the almost universal ignorance and irreligion of mankind." ¹

The last text to which I shall refer occurs in the eighth chapter (ver. 19, 25)—*'The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.'*

The varieties of opinion advanced by commentators in explaining this text are utterly confounding. Mr. Haldane—and in the main Scott and Hodge take the same view—says that "creature does not apply to *men*, all of whom are either the children of God or the children of the wicked one. It cannot," he argues, "refer to the children of God, for they are here expressly distinguished from the creation, of which the Apostle speaks; nor can it apply to wicked men, for they have no desire for the manifestation of the sons of God, whom they hate; nor will they ever be delivered from the bondage of corruption, but cast into the

¹ "Fanaticism," by Isaac Taylor.

lake of fire. It remains, then, that the *creatures* destitute of intelligence, animate and inanimate, the heavens and the earth, the elements, the plants and animals, are here referred to."

How absurd to suppose that the "inanimate creation," or, as Adam Clarke and others suppose, "*animals*," are, to the exclusion of men, to be brought into 'the glorious liberty (or the liberty of glory) of the children of God' (ver. 21)! But nothing is too absurd for theologians, when interpreting in accordance with a preconceived theory. Where, too, is the justification of such a course? Is it not certain that *πᾶσα κτίσις*—'the whole creation,' or 'every creature,' as it may be rendered—signifies in Scripture the nations of the world, the heathen, in distinction from the Jews? (Mark xvi. 15; Col. i. 23). Why, then, should we refuse to believe that in the resurrection, and in connection with the manifestation of the elect sons of God, *the race* of man, so long 'subject to vanity,'—shall be delivered from 'the bondage of corruption,' and share (although in an inferior sense) in the glorious liberty of the children of the Highest? If it be so, one can understand how 'the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in (or, with regard to) us' (ver. 18). But if it be otherwise, all around and about us is utterly incomprehensible—a riddle or a torment, darkness or despair.

The distinction really drawn by the Apostle is between 'the creature'—the ignorant masses, and 'the sons of God;' the former *waits* for the glory which shall be revealed in the latter. All creation, animate and inanimate, is, indeed, by a bold figure of speech, represented as, with outstretched neck, longing for and anticipating this great event; but certainly not to the exclusion of man, the head of that creation.

The Epistle to the Ephesians furnishes its full share of testimony in favour of the same great expectation.

In the first chapter of this Epistle, God is said to have chosen the elect in Christ 'before the foundation of the world,' and 'made known' to them 'the mystery of His will,' *that 'in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ,* both which are in heaven, and which are on earth.' I can see no reason whatever for supposing that it can justly be interpreted of the present dispensation.

In that magnificent doxology with which the third chapter concludes, the Apostle ascribes unto the Father '*glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages.*' It is generally admitted that the Church is here regarded as the theatre on which that glory must be recognized or rendered before men, to 'all the generations of the age of the ages.' If this be so—and it is difficult to see

how it can be questioned—men capable of recognizing the glory—which lost spirits can never do—must exist, through all the ages, as saved men, and yet altogether distinct from the Church.

In the Epistle to Timothy, St. Paul is more explicit. Here—after having spoken of Christ as a ransom *for all*—a testimony to be made known ‘in due time,’ since God would ‘have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth’ (1 Tim. ii. 4—6), he exclaims with delight, ‘This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation. We both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, *specially* of those that believe’ (iv. 9, 10).

Few Christians would probably deny that *rank* in the next world is connected with conduct and character in this; but it is by no means going too far to say that *many act* as if they believed that salvation by grace was altogether inconsistent with a judgment of works; and that many more so spiritualize the resurrection and the world to come, as practically to deprive it of all power over the human heart.

The testimony of the Epistle to the Hebrews is not less striking. Take, first (Heb. ii. 14)—‘Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; *that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.*’

The destruction referred to here is obviously not of the person, but of *the works* of the devil. The passage is usually regarded as parallel to Rom. xvi. 20, '*And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.*' The point to be observed is, that the great agency for the destruction of Satanic power is *death*. It is through death, through mortality, that the immortal is to be reached.

That the primary meaning is—through Christ's own sacrificial death, may be freely admitted, without at all affecting the result. For the question is *not how* Satan's works shall be destroyed—Christ, all admit, can alone accomplish that result, but *what* is included in such destruction? Can Satan or Satanic works be said to be destroyed, if only an elect Church be snatched from his hold? It is hard to see how this can be the case; for, if ordinary views be correct, death, so far at least as the great proportion of the race is concerned, but consummates *the triumph of Satan*, since it passes an overwhelming majority of all who have ever lived, into his kingdom for ever.

Bishop Beveridge, interpreting a similar passage, viz., 1 John iii. 8, '*The Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil,*' explains it to mean simply this, that "Christ was manifested to undo all that the devil had done, by recovering *mankind* out of that sinful state to

which the devil had brought them." But may it not well be asked, Is this the case now? Has it been the case during the 1,800 years that have elapsed since the words were penned? Can it *ever* be the case, if almost all mankind since the fall of Adam are irrecoverably lost and given over to Satan? Let us believe the Apostle when he says, 'We see not yet all things put under Him' (Heb. ii. 8), and not think it extravagant to look for such a consummation at the resurrection. It is vain to deny that if, *as the fruit of Satan's work*, the myriads of the heathen and of the unconverted of all ages go on sinning against God to all eternity, Christ cannot truthfully be said to *destroy* the works of the devil.

Connect with this the succeeding verses in the second chapter of the Hebrews (9, 10), 'We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; *that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man*,' and the argument is much strengthened. For here it is distinctly asserted that Christ (as the result of Divine love) tasted death *for every man*.

The question is, in what sense, and with what results?

Stuart reads, "for Jew and Gentile;" Alford understands the phrase to refer to *the applicability* of Christ's death to each individual man. Guyse,

Owen, and Gill, in effect say, "Every man *means* the Church—all who savingly believe." My only reply is, What does the text say? Certainly the very reverse of these interpretations. Which, then, are we to believe, God or man? Further—and I say it with deep reverence—where, to human eye, at least, is the grace or goodness of God to the race seen in allowing Christ to taste death for every man, if the great, the overwhelming majority of mankind, never *hear* of His death, and never profit by it?

The next passage to which I would draw attention is of a somewhat different character; it is one in which believers are reminded, that in accepting the Gospel, they come to 'the general assembly and Church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to the spirits of just men made perfect' (Heb. xii. 23).

The question naturally arises here, Who are intended by the Church of the firstborn?

The phrase has usually been explained by the analogy of the firstborn of Israel, who were dedicated to God specially as His priests (Exod. xxii. 29), a primogeniture which belongs to Christians as such. This, which seems the only reasonable interpretation, makes it include the whole elect Church.

"The title of the firstborn, however," as Mr. Birks has remarked, "loses all its proper force if

the results of redemption are *limited* to these alone. The whole emphasis of the phrase depends on the supposition that there are *younger brethren* of the same family, who do not share in the privileges of birthright. Thus our Lord himself is said to be 'the firstborn among many brethren.' He is *one* with His people, but eminent in privilege and honour above them all."

The analogy betwixt these firstborn ones and the firstborn of Israel is indeed striking. They (the firstborn) were *pecially* dedicated to God (Exod. xiii. 11—15); but the other children were not the less 'of Israel;' they, too, were the Lord's. The apostle James (i. 18), in the same spirit, speaks of Christians as 'begotten with the word of truth,' that they 'should be a kind of *firstfruits* of His creatures.' By St. Paul (Rom. xi. 16) we are told that 'if the firstfruit be holy, *the lump* is also holy.' What can either statement mean, if the redemption of others to God's service, *besides* those who are here new-born by the word of truth in the Gospel, be altogether excluded?

The Apostle Peter, on this as on every other subject, teaches the same doctrine as St. Paul, and therefore, like him, speaks of a salvation not yet published to the world, a '*salvation ready to be revealed in the last time*' (1 Pet. i. 5—12).

The salvation he speaks of is clearly the deliverance into which the redeemed should enter at the

coming of Christ, for the words are addressed to men who had already passed from death unto life (ver. 2), and who were waiting only for the full fruition of their joy at the coming of the Redeemer (ver. 8).

Yet it has, apparently, a wider bearing. For, again, it is the salvation respecting which the prophets 'inquired and searched diligently,' when the Spirit of Christ within them testified to His sufferings, and to 'the glory that should follow' (ver. 10, 11). And this would appear to be connected with the preaching of Christ to 'the spirits in prison' (iii. 19, 20), and the proclamation of the Gospel to 'them that are dead' (iv. 6); for the word translated, the dead (*νεκρός*), is the same as in ver. 5, and clearly means, *not* men dead in trespasses and sins, but men who had lived and died in the flesh, as those antediluvians had to whom the Apostle seems to refer.

Now it was to these dead men—whoever they may be—that the apostle says 'the Gospel was preached,' and *for a reason*; viz., that though judged according to men in the flesh, they might yet '*live according to God in the spirit*' (iv. 6).

In his Second Epistle (iii. 13), Peter, after speaking of the coming of the Lord as an event near and yet distant; of the scepticism that would lead men, in the latter day, to deny its reality; and of the terrors by which it would be accompanied,

adds, '*Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*'

The point to be noticed is, that he regards this expectation as implying a blessing ; he asserts that the longsuffering of God with the world as it is, *means* salvation ; and he refers to the Epistles of St. Paul as confirming this view, although he admits that its revelation involves things hard to be understood, and is a doctrine which the unstable wrest, as they do other scriptures, to their own destruction.

We can, of course, only *conjecture* what he may refer to in the writings of St. Paul, but it seems difficult to select any portions as more probable than those to which attention has already been called. They are, many of them, 'hard to be understood' in all their bearings, and, like other scriptures, liable to be abused by the unteachable and unsettled. But they are not therefore either to be rejected or neglected.

From other passages found in the prophets we may see that at the same period (that of the Resurrection) both Israel and other nations are also to be blessed. Sodom is to return to her former state (Ezek. xvi. 55), and to be given to Israel for a daughter, but not by covenant, when the Lord shall be pacified towards her (ver. 60—63). Egypt is to have her altar to God, and 'the Lord shall

send them a saviour and a great one,' and 'the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and He shall heal them' (Isa. xix. 19—22). Assyria, too, is to have her blessing—for 'the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel Mine inheritance' (ver. 23—25).

To such *contrasts* as are found in texts which speak of Christ's flock as being to the end of the age 'a little flock,' and others which tell us that, 'from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, the name of the Lord shall be great among the Gentiles' (Mal. i. 11), I have already drawn attention; and now sum up all, by expressing my conviction that these apparent contradictions are only to be explained on the supposition that THE DAY OF THE RESURRECTION is the great day of restitution; and that this consummation is 'the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God' (Ephes. iii. 9; Col. i. 27); for "all past analogy, as well as the direct revelations of prophecy, *forbid* us to look for absolute and unmingled judgment without any further revelation of forbearance and grace."

Nor should it be unnoticed that in the concluding portion of the apocalyptic prophecy—after the vision of the white throne; after the dead, small and great, have stood before God; after the sea has given up her dead; when all have been judged

according to their works; and death and Hades cast into the lake of fire—we behold ‘*saved nations*,’ not, indeed, *in* the New Jerusalem, yet ‘walking in the light of it,’ a tree of life being there, which yields *fruits* for those within the city, and *leaves* for the healing of those that are without.

Once more, I say, these things, though hard to be understood, and liable to be abused, are not therefore to be set aside as either erroneous or unmeaning.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE 'KINGDOM OF GOD.'

THE term 'kingdom of God' occurs in the New Testament about seventy times; 'kingdom of heaven' about twenty times; and other references to this same kingdom probably thirty times more.

The signification of the term is not, however, always the same.

Sometimes it implies that which is *subjective*—a moral and spiritual condition. It does so when our Lord says to the Pharisees, who demanded *when* the kingdom of God should come,—'The kingdom of God is *within* you' (ἐντὸς ὑμῶν)—rather *among you* (as in marg.), for the kingdom could not be said to be *within* the Pharisees, to whom He was speaking. The expression probably means, that the kingdom was embodied in Himself. St. Paul, when viewing this kingdom subjectively, speaks of it as consisting in *doing* right, and *being* happy; or, as he expresses it, in 'righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost' (Rom. xiv. 17).

More frequently, however, the term indicates

that which is also *objective*,—a *reign* of God, announced as approaching; a promised kingdom, in which the saints should rule; a government, of which ‘the poor of this world, rich in faith,’ are, under Christ, the ‘heirs’ (Jas. ii. 5). It is to the passages that speak of it in this latter aspect that I am chiefly desirous of directing attention, in order to ascertain whether or no they point only to a further and fuller development of good at the Millennium, or whether they refer to a dispensation yet to come—that of the resurrection.

Before doing so, however, it may be well to inquire what idea this phrase, ‘kingdom of God’—for it was eminently a Jewish one,—conveyed to the Israelitish people.

In order to ascertain the truth on this point, we must carefully bear in mind that the universal expectation of the devout and thoughtful amongst them was, that there remained for the nation “*an inheritance in reversion*,”—a national kingship over other peoples,—the fulfilment, in short, of the promise to Abraham and to his seed, that he should be ‘the heir of the world,’ a promise repeated through Moses in those remarkable words, ‘Ye shall be a peculiar treasure to me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And ye shall be unto Me A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS, and an holy nation’ (Exod. xix. 5, 6).

The certainty of the fulfilment of these high ex-

pectations was the continual theme of the Hebrew prophets, and formed the basis of the national belief—carnal or otherwise—in the coming Messiah. And so, when our Lord was upon earth, no one thought of asking what ‘the kingdom’ *meant*, although He was continually discoursing about it.

The disciples, we are told, were always thinking ‘that the kingdom of God should immediately appear’ (Luke xix. 11); one of their latest inquiries was, ‘Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?’ and throughout, they indicate what appears to us a very carnal expectation regarding it. Yet in no instance are they rebuked for apparent materialism; in no case are they told that they were under a delusion; nowhere are they taught that the kingdom was a purely spiritual thing. How strange, if their views were *essentially* wrong! How unlike is silence, in such a case, to the conduct of their kind Master on other occasions!

Right or wrong, however, there can be no question that the kingdom of God meant to the Jew, Messiah’s kingship, and *his own kingship*. To enter into that kingdom was not, *to him*, to be saved from hell; it was to be a member of that kingly company who, as priests of God, should rule and teach all other nations. It was always to him identical with the enjoyment of his covenanted inheritance (Psa. cv. 8—11; Isa. lxii. 1, 2).

I am perfectly satisfied that this idea was a right one, and therefore sanctioned by the Saviour. I am equally convinced that it is the *only true idea* of the Church of God in all ages, and that it is, as such, sustained throughout the New Testament by such phrases as '*reigning* in life by Jesus Christ' (Rom. v. 17); 'If we suffer, we shall also *reign* with Him' (2 Tim. ii. 12); 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me *in My throne*' (Rev. iii. 21); 'Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall REIGN on the earth' (Rev. v. 10).

Throughout the New Testament, the 'kingdom' is invariably associated with the blessings of the world to come, and often used as a synonym for eternal life. Take, for instance, the conversation between our Lord and the young ruler, as recorded by St. Matthew (xix.). In the narrative, the phrase first used is 'eternal life' (ver. 16); soon after, it is simply 'life' (ver. 17); it then becomes the 'kingdom of heaven' (ver. 23); and finally, the 'kingdom of God' (ver. 24); one and the same thing being unquestionably intended by these various appellations. At the close of the conversation, all are alike connected with the period of this world's regeneration (ver. 28).

In similar variety of phrase, the apostle Peter speaks of the 'lively hope' of the Church as the salvation 'ready to be revealed in the last time;'

as 'an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away;' as the salvation of the soul; as that respecting which 'the prophets have inquired and searched diligently;' as 'the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ' (1 Pet. i. 3—13).

And all this is to be eternal. The elect are to '*reign for ever and ever*' (Rev. xxii. 5); the kingdom is one 'which cannot be moved' (Heb. xii. 28); it is 'the kingdom of Christ and of God' (Ephes. v. 5); it is 'the inheritance of the saints in light' (Col. i. 12); it is an 'eternal inheritance' (Heb. ix. 15).

It is difficult to see how it could be possible to indicate more clearly that the kingdom of God is the last great manifestation of Christ's triumph, and of the everlasting blessedness of His Church.

I do not at this time propose to enter into any discussion of the various opinions that have at different periods been set forth, advocated, and controverted, as to the precise *time* when this kingdom ought to be regarded as commencing, or when it may be supposed to come to a termination. Neither shall I deal with vexed questions, such as the exact meaning of that difficult passage in St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xv. 28), in which he speaks of Christ as finally delivering the kingdom up to the Father, that God may be 'all in all,' beyond observing that as the *essential*

dominion of God never had beginning or limit, and never will have increase or end, the passage *can* only refer to that mediatorial kingdom of the Redeemer which will cease when all the ends for which it was set up are accomplished.

Of this kingdom it has been well said, that the great characteristics *at present* are, "mystery and forbearance;" and those of the future, "manifestation and triumph." It is for that which is revealed regarding the full manifestation and final triumph of the kingdom that I propose, in this chapter, to make diligent search.

In doing so, we shall find it advantageous to divide the inquiry into two parts; to confine ourselves, first, to an examination of those passages in the Gospels which refer to the advent, progress, and nature of the kingdom? and to reserve for later consideration, the fuller developments furnished in the Acts and the Epistles.

The former,—the testimony of the Gospels,—is very comprehensive; embracing, first, the *message* of John, 'Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand' (Matt. iii. 2); then, the *prolongation* of that message by Christ,—first, personally (Matt. iv. 23), and afterwards by the agency of the apostles (Matt. x. 7): then the *characteristics* of those who should enter the kingdom—viz., humility (Mark x. 14); poverty of spirit (Matt. v. 3); perseverance (Luke ix. 62); open profession by baptism (John

iii. 5) ; consequent tribulation (Acts xiv. 22) ; and independence of all human authority (Matt. xi. 12, and x. 32) ; then the *hindrances* to its attainment, —viz., riches (Matt. xix. 24) ; self-righteousness (Matt. xxi. 31) ; self-indulgence (Mark ix. 47) ; injustice, impurity, dishonesty, covetousness, drunkenness, and reviling (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10) : and finally, its *realization* in a judgment both of quick and dead (Matt. xiii. 39—43) ; in various forms of honour and dignity, such as—brilliant attire (Matt. xiii. 43) ; eating and drinking with Christ (Matt. xxvi. 29 ; Luke xiv. 15 ; xxii. 18 and 30) ; and royal rule and dominion (Luke xxii. 29). The whole being *described* as—glad tidings (Luke viii. 1) ; and a free gift (Luke xii. 32) ; but not of this world (John xviii. 36) ; and therefore retributive (Luke xiv. 13, 14) ; compensative (Luke xviii. 29) ; and restorative (Acts i. 6) ; to be introduced at Pentecost (Matt. xvi. 28 ; Luke ix. 27) ; yet an inheritance to be enjoyed after death, and everlasting in duration (Matt. xxv. 34—46 ; Rev. xxii. 5).

As I am not writing for the indolent or the careless, I stop here to request, that before going further, my readers will take the trouble to examine all these texts of Scripture in their connection ; and then, with the impression made by a consideration of the whole fresh on the mind, to ask themselves whether it is possible to imagine

these various particulars can find a fulfilment in the *present state* of the world and the Church ;—or at the *Millennium*, taking the term in its popular acceptance, as simply implying the general or universal spread of the Gospel ; or, finally, on the supposition that at death, *every individual* of mankind proceeds at once either to heaven or to hell, —using these words also in their popular acceptance ? I cannot see *how*, in their entirety, these various representations *can* be intelligently received, and become the object of our faith, apart from the expectation of a dispensation yet to come.

Keeping these general statements in view, let us now proceed to the investigation of ten passages in particular, as *preliminary* to the consideration of the more explicit teaching of the apostles after Pentecost.

(1) Matt. v. 5—‘*Blessed are the meek : for they shall inherit the earth.*’

This promise repeatedly occurs in the Old Testament (Psa. xxii. ; xxxvii. ; lxix. ; Isa. xi. 4 ; xxix. 19). The question is, *when and how* does it find its fulfilment ? The popular idea is, that *all* the beatitudes, and this, therefore, among the number, are but so many aspects or phases of the man who is new-born in Christ ; that he who is ‘meek,’ in the sense here spoken of, is a renewed man, and that through the renewal he has expe-

rienced, he is at once 'poor in spirit,' a 'mourner' (for sin), 'merciful,' 'pure,' and so forth: and therefore that the inheritance of the earth referred to, *is entered upon* when such persons get, as they often do, more enjoyment of the real good of this world than the proud and contentious. But this interpretation is far from being satisfactory; for, first, the beatitude in question, like the other beatitudes, is clearly spoken of as a *future* gift; it is not said, the meek *do* inherit the earth, but *shall* do so; and, next, there is no reason whatever for merging all the blessed characteristics referred to by our Lord in one new life following conversion. It is as perverse to deny that a man may be meek and yet not spiritual, as to assert that all spiritual men are meek. As a fact, it is certainly not so. Why not, then, accept *this class* of texts as they stand, and allow, that in the age to come, it is as certain that the meek will inherit the earth, as that 'a cup of cold water given to a disciple, in the name of a disciple,' will not 'lose its reward'?

We are too apt to speak of the beatitudes generally as if they involved rewards which *naturally* follow of themselves. But this is not so. Length of life does not now, and probably never did, *naturally* follow obedience to parents; nor do any of the blessings which Christ gives come in that form. As, therefore, 'meekness' and 'poverty of spirit' are very nearly, if not quite, identical, so 'the

kingdom of heaven,' and the inheritance of the earth, imply the same blessing. Both are future, and both were, doubtless, by the more spiritual of the Jews, applied to the long expected kingdom of Messiah. From other passages, we have seen that this kingdom was always spoken of by the prophets as one which should be enjoyed *in the land of Judea*, and *after the resurrection*. The very words before us are in that wonderful Messianic Psalm, to which our Lord recalled the attention of His disciples even in the agonies of death, clearly connected with the time of the Saviour's triumph. '*The meek shall eat and be satisfied.*' But when? When 'all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord,' when 'all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Him' (Psa. xxii. 26, 27).

(2) Matt. vi. 10—'*Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*'

That this prayer implies a promise few will be inclined to dispute. That it indicates a time *will* come when the will of God shall be *universally* obeyed—done as promptly, as unreservedly, and as certainly *on earth* as it is now done in heaven—can scarcely be doubted. The question presents itself, *When* shall this be? and the ordinary reply is, At the Millennium.

I have already explained why this interpretation cannot be accepted, either in the sense of a

future universal spread of the Gospel under this dispensation, or in the binding of Satan for a thousand years at the first resurrection—for that, too, is followed by an apostacy. It conveyed no such impression to those who were first taught to use the words. *To them* it necessarily meant the coming of that kingdom which from childhood they had been led to expect—which the prophets had foreshadowed—and to which alone all their hopes and wishes pointed—the triumph of Messiah on the earth.

It is impossible to suppose that the Lord would teach them to pray for the coming of a kingdom the very notion of which was delusive; and yet it could be nothing else, if they used the words, *as He knew they did*, in connection with hopes and expectations which were never to find a fulfilment. That they failed to see that this blessed consummation could only be arrived at through death; that they fancied it would be more or less carnal, and so far consistent with human pride, is but too probable; but in so doing, they only showed how partial was their acquaintance with their own Scriptures. Yet this is surely no reason why *we* should refuse to receive the revelations of Scripture regarding it. Everywhere else the kingdom of God is connected with 'eternal life'—'the world [or age] to come'—the 'times of restitution,' and such like. Why, then, should we find it hard to admit that it is so here?

(3) Matt. vii. 21—23—‘*Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.*’

That in this passage ‘the kingdom’ is spoken of as a future thing, *to be enjoyed after death*, no one disputes. Further, it will be admitted that all the parties introduced are *professed* disciples; although some are unrecognised by the Judge,—‘I never knew you!’ But observe, they are not spoken of as persons who shall be cast into the lake of fire. They are in the position of the ‘foolish virgins,’ *shut out* from the honour and dignity which they had made sure was their own; for had they not eaten and drunk in the presence of the Lord?—had He not taught in ‘their streets’?—they, of course, being His supporters and approving listeners; and were they not, therefore, fully entitled to rank among the best? To say that Christ can bestow no mercy on those who are not, in the highest sense, *one with Him*, is practically to deny all gradation, either of reward or punishment.

(4) Matt. viii. 12—‘*The children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness.*’

This is usually interpreted as signifying that the Jews, ‘the children of the kingdom,’ in consequence of their rejection of Christ, shall be *cast into hell*, while believing Gentiles enter heaven. But this cannot be sustained. The figure, which is a remarkably striking one, is based on an allusion to

the lustre of the brilliantly illuminated rooms in which bridal feasts are generally held, and to the darkness without, which would seem so very deep to any one ejected from within. The reference is plainly to the bridal union of Christ and the elect Church, from which high dignity *the Jewish nation*, as such, was by its unbelief shut out ; being superseded by that election of grace which includes both Jews and Gentiles from every tongue and tribe under heaven. The weeping and gnashing of teeth, the tears and anger, consequent on so bitter a disappointment, fitly represent the *mixed* feelings by which the Jews now, and at the resurrection, will be affected when they awake to the consciousness of having cast away their birthright.

(5). Matt. xii. 28—‘ *The kingdom of God is come unto you.*’

It is come, says Christ, inasmuch as I ‘cast out devils by the Spirit of God.’ The *essential idea* of the kingdom then is, the overthrow of Satan, and this not merely in the sense of delivering souls from sin, but *bodies* from ‘possession,’ whatever that term might imply. It is, therefore, the undoing of all that Satan has done ; the removal of *past consequences* arising out of his long-submitted usurpation, as well as of evils connected with his present continuance. In this sense the kingdom of God has been, more or less, *coming* during the past 1,800 years ; its ‘coming’ has been seen, not

only in the destruction of Jerusalem (Matt. xvi. 28), and in the fall of paganism in the Roman empire, but in every alleviation of human suffering produced by the spread of the benevolent principles of the Gospel. These things, however, are but the precursors of that complete and triumphant coming which will be witnessed in the day of the resurrection, when, in the clouds of heaven, and surrounded by His holy angels, the feet of Jesus shall once more stand on Mount Olivet (Acts i. 11, compared with Zech. xiv. 4).

(6). Matt. xxi. 43—‘*The kingdom of God shall be taken from you.*’

In what sense? Not, certainly, in the sense of all offers of mercy being withdrawn. Not that they were never more to hear of Christ or His Gospel; but taken from them so far as *headship* was concerned. The *root-idea* of the kingdom from the first was the calling out and separation of an elect Church, through whom the blessings of reconciliation and restoration might be subsequently extended. That Church was originally the Jewish nation, and it was because they despised this, their birthright, that it was taken from them, and transferred to an elect people, Jews and Gentiles, selected out of every nation under heaven.

(7) Matt. xxvi. 29—‘*I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.*’

Nothing is more certain, as we have seen, than that the apostles had, *to the last* day of Christ's being with them, what we should call carnal notions of the coming kingdom. The idea of an actual, visible reign, never seems to be out of their minds for a moment; and the most anxious question they put to Him *after* the resurrection is, 'Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?'

Now, if our views of the future are right, how strange it seems that to such men, with such prejudices and tendencies, our Lord should simply say,—As to *the times* and seasons, these are with God alone (Acts i. 7); but as to *the nature* of the kingdom, I have already told you that, as, in the time of My humiliation, I drank of the fruit of the vine with you, so I will 'drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom;' I have justified the saying, that 'Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God' (Luke xiv. 15); and I have assured you that 'I have appointed unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me; that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel' (Luke xxii. 29, 30). Let *that* satisfy you.

If all this is merely intended to indicate the spiritual triumphs of the Gospel—as we are so frequently told it is—such teaching to *such* men is altogether *unlike* the conduct of Him who on one

occasion said, '*If it were not so, I would have told you,*'—a mode of speaking which certainly implies, I would never have allowed you to continue under a delusion.

(8) Luke xii. 32—'*It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*'

Surely this must mean the *rule*, or *reign*, as elsewhere promised,—the object of their constant hope, and to which they were continually looking forward. One can scarcely conceive of any other sense in which the kingdom itself could be spoken of as a gift. To give a man a kingdom is not to permit him to live under the rule of another; it is to make him *the ruler*.

Further, it is a kingdom in which it is possible even now to be laying up treasure; yet it is a gift only to be actually received at the coming of the Lord (ver. 32—40). It is a kingdom in which every man will receive according to his deserts (ver. 41—48). It is emphatically a day of reward for those who have, by love and kindness, shared the burdens of the poor and the afflicted: 'Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just' (xiv. 14).

(9) Luke xix. 11—27—'*They thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.*'

Observe how the Lord deals with this misapprehension. He does not say, 'This notion of yours about a visible kingdom is *altogether wrong*;' but

He simply recites a parable, the object of which is to show that the manifestation of it is *deferred*. If their notion of the kingdom was fundamentally erroneous, He certainly leaves them in their error, a course which He never pursued. He does not even say, 'Ye are not able to bear' the truth yet; He directly and distinctly *confirms*, while *purifying* their expectations.

(10) John xviii. 36—' *My kingdom is not of this world*' (worldly, like that of Cæsar).

The Romanist practically says, *it is*; and, on the strength of that belief, *unites in one man*, as the vicar and representative of Christ on earth, both priestly and regal functions. So does the Russian Czar, when, blending in himself the same offices, he becomes, like the old Roman Emperor, the *Pontifex Maximus* of his people, and consents to be regarded by the vulgar in the light of a God. So *dreams* the Antichrist which is yet to come, hoping that by such a union, universal monarchy will finally be established, and the rival claims of the Redeemer be, by fraud or violence, crushed out.

The *controversial* use of this text, as if it were aimed at modern religious establishments, which, whatever may be their excellences or defects, certainly proceed on the principle that Christ's kingdom *is not* of this world, and that, therefore, spiritual power should be subordinated to temporal,

has led to its *true* meaning dropping out of sight. The words clearly imply that Christ's kingdom, though not opposed to that of the Roman Emperor, was nevertheless a real one. Hence the inscription on the cross, 'The King of the Jews,' must not be altered to, 'He said I am' so; for He actually *was* their monarch, although not yet manifested as such.

But what force would the expression have, if the kingship and kingdom referred to were purely spiritual? if it involved no kingship *as man*, and no kingdom over man, except that which God from the creation has exercised over all His creatures? Had the case been put thus before Pilate, there can be little doubt but that he, with his previous disposition to release Christ, would have replied, 'This is a question of religious creed, with which I do not intermeddle.' But he could not withstand the cry, 'If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend; whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar.' If, therefore, it be true, as it certainly is, that Christ was put to death for alleged blasphemy—for making Himself the Son of God,—it is equally true that He died for making Himself a king, *in a sense which was supposed to involve* treason against Cæsar.

The fact that the earliest apostasy consisted in the setting up of a claim, on the part of the Church, *to rule* over men in the affairs of this world as

Christ's vicegerent, *is in itself proof* that the expectations of primitive Christians, in the second and third centuries, pointed in that direction; and there is little doubt but that the men of the fourth century regarded the downfall of paganism only as introductory to the full development of this cherished hope. The Church was then big with a false expectation (compare Rev. xii. 2 with Isa. xxvi. 18) that Christians would now be kings on earth, and the Church the seat of universal empire. The almost immediate *rise* of a power, called 'the devil, and Satan, which *deceiveth* the whole world,' and which is subsequently exhibited to us as the great persecutor of the saints, was the consequence of this perversion (Rev. xii. 1—8). It is certain that it was before this Antichrist, and not before paganism, that the true Church fled 'into the wilderness.'

The existence of the false, however, *supposes* the existence of the true; just as hypocrisy supposes virtue, and falsehood, verity. That which Rome merely affects, Christ realizes; the government which priests falsely claim *in this age*, Christ bestows on the elect in the age that is to come.

From the Acts and the Epistles I have selected the following passages as *illustrative* of those already quoted from the Gospels.

(1) Acts xix. 8, 9—' *Three months disputing and*

persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.'

The point to be noticed here is, that apparently the one topic of St. Paul's ministry at Ephesus—first for three months in the synagogue, and afterwards for two years in daily disputations 'in the school of Tyrannus'—was 'the kingdom of God,' and the things concerning it. On this subject the apostle had most probably been instructed by special revelation, either at the time when God made known to him the mystery 'which had been kept secret since the world began' (Ephes. iii. 3), or when he was informed as to the nature and permanence of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. xi. 23—28); for Paul was not among the apostles with whom Christ, during the forty days that elapsed between the resurrection and ascension, so often conversed, 'speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God' (Acts i. 3).

Whether these communications related *exclusively* to the final triumph of the Redeemer, as the King of His people, and the subduer of Satan, may fairly be doubted; but that they involved the interpretation of all those passages in the Law and the Prophets which speak of Messiah—His advent, life, death, and final victory—can scarcely admit of question. Whatever this particular teaching, however, might be, it seems now to be in great measure lost; for scarcely on any point do real Christians

differ more widely than in the views they take of that kingdom which is yet the object of their common hope. Many of us have come to account those portions of Divine revelation, which speak most distinctly about it, as too obscure to be clearly understood ; many number them among the secret things that belong to God alone ; and many more merge all other hopes in one glorious expectation, that by the preaching of the Cross, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the world will eventually be brought into subjection to Christ. Any spiritual excitement, therefore, which ends in the conversion of an unusual number of individuals, is hailed as the precursor, and welcomed as the pledge, of greater blessings yet to be vouchsafed.

The question is, Was this supposed ultimate triumph of the Gospel the truth which the apostle taught under the appellation of 'things concerning the kingdom' ? I am constrained to say, *I think not*. It is indeed quite true that, in the touching interview he had with the elders at Ephesus before his departure for Jerusalem (Acts xx. 25), he speaks as if the doctrine of the kingdom embraced in its capacious arms everything else. But it is equally true that at Lystra, at Iconium, and at Antioch, he treats 'the faith' and 'the kingdom' as if they were distinct : for when he confirms the souls of the disciples, and exhorts them *to continue in* 'the faith,' he reminds them that it is only through

‘much tribulation’ we can ‘*enter into* the kingdom’ (Acts xiv. 22). He speaks of the one (the faith) as a thing already possessed, and in which they were to remain steadfast; he regards the other (the kingdom) as a future inheritance, which could only be attained through sorrow, *i.e.*, in connection with a lengthened course of discipline.

There is, undoubtedly, an important sense in which Christ is reigning *now* as the monarch of the Church; but it is equally clear, also, that He *waits* for ‘the kingdom,’ properly so called. So David writes, ‘The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at My right hand, *until* I make Thine enemies Thy footstool’ (Psa. cx. 1). When this is done, and not till then, will Christ leave the right hand of the Father, and be *enthroned* over the riches of the universe. At present He ‘rules’ only ‘in the midst of His enemies’ (ver. 2). This predictive statement, which is three times quoted in the New Testament (Luke xx. 42; Acts ii. 34; Heb. i. 13), finds its explanation in our Lord’s own parable, delivered to the disciples ‘because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear,’ in which He speaks of Himself under the figure of the nobleman who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and who would in due time return to take possession (Luke xix. 12—27).

St. Paul, in his Epistle to Timothy (2 Ep. iv. 1),

unites 'the kingdom' with 'the appearing' of Christ, and the judgment of 'quick and dead;' and in the Hebrews (xii. 26, 27) he distinctly teaches that the reception of 'the kingdom' which cannot be moved, will be amid shakings, both of earth and heaven, compared with which the coming down of God on Mount Sinai, terrible as it was, will sink into insignificance. *Then* will the promise made to Abraham find its complete fulfilment *in the precise way in which he looked for it*, viz., in the possession of 'a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God' (Heb. xi. 10). *Then* will his descendants, 'so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable,' receive the promises which on earth they saw 'afar off,' and in the faith of which they died (xi. 12—16). *Then*, and not till then, will it be seen that in Abraham, not the elect only, but 'all families of the earth,' 'all nations,' are indeed 'blessed' (Gen. xii. 3; xxii. 18).

Many judicious commentators argue that the phrase, '*these all*' (Heb. xi. 13), should be referred, *not* to the descendants of Abraham, as the immediate context would seem to imply, but to the patriarchs enumerated in the preceding verses. This cannot, however, be admitted, since no promise of inheriting Canaan (the object of the faith in question) was made either to Abel, to Enoch, or to Noah. On the other hand, as Whitby remarks, it

is obvious enough that *all* the descendants of Abraham did not die, in any spiritual sense of the term, in faith. How then, it will be said, can the words apply to them?

The true answer probably is, that, allowing for individual exceptions, *which is always done in general statements*, the Israelites *did* all die in the firm faith that the promises made to Abraham would be fulfilled. It is most remarkable, that in the darkest periods of their history, however personally immoral or corrupt they might be,—amid prevailing carnality, and the most erroneous views of the *nature* of the kingdom promised them, the Jews as a nation never lost sight of the promise made to their great ancestor; they lived, day by day, in hope of its accomplishment, and they died in the belief that whatever calamities might befall them or their children, the Israelite could not be lost, nor the promise of God be made of none effect. Such being the prevailing expectation of the Jew everywhere, it need excite no surprise that 'the things concerning the kingdom,' its true character and certain approach, should be the perpetual theme of the apostolic ministry.

(2) Acts xxiii. 6, and xxvi. 6—8—'*Of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question,*' compared with, '*I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers.*'

I have already referred to these two texts, in

order to show how Paul preached. Let us turn to them again. The two passages throw light on each other, the *second*, in fact, explaining the first. 'I stand,' he says, 'and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. *'For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?'* Here the apostle evidently connects two things together which are usually treated of as if they had no connection with each other,—'the hope of Israel,' or 'the kingdom,' and the 'resurrection of the dead;'—the risen Christ, and 'the things which the prophets and Moses did say should come' (xxvi. 6, and 22, 23).

Now the theme of all the prophets unquestionably was *a triumphant Messiah*, and the fulfilment, in and by Him, of all those glorious predictions of a golden age which so enrich their discourses. Paul *implies*, by what he says, that he looked for this blessed period at the resurrection; or why does he refer, immediately after speaking of 'the hope,' to the scepticism of Agrippa as to the *possibility* of such an event?

Alford says, "The promise spoken of (ver. 6) is that of a Messiah and His kingdom, *involving the resurrection.*" Very true. But *how* involving it?

The difference between Paul and the Jews really consisted in this,—they (the Jews) looked for the kingdom in their own age, and apart from any special moral and spiritual preparation for it; Paul looked for it at the resurrection. If this be admitted, I ask no more.

Except on the supposition that *the Jewish race* is, in some sense or other, to enter into this promise in the world to come, it is very difficult to see how ‘the twelve tribes’—the entire Jewish nation, those on earth and those in the invisible world—can, even by a bold figure of speech, be spoken of as ‘instantly serving God day and night, in hope’ of its fulfilment (ver. 7). Nor is it easy to perceive—except on the hypothesis that ‘the resurrection’ and ‘the kingdom’ are synchronous—*where* ‘Moses and the prophets’ predict a rising from the dead; since they do so only inferentially, in proclaiming the advent of ‘the new heavens and the new earth,’ or in passages which speak of the restoration of Israel,—the glory which is to follow as the consequence of the sufferings and death of Messiah (Isa. liii. 4—12, and lxxv. 17—25). The most direct, perhaps the only *direct*, prediction of the resurrection of the Redeemer, in the Old Testament, is that which occurs in the sixteenth Psalm; but how dim that light must have been felt to be, is evident from the inability of the apostles to comprehend the Lord, when He referred to the certainty of His

own rising again. It is not till the Psalm is expounded by Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii.) that its meaning is made plain.

(3) 1 Cor. xv. 25—‘*For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet.*’

The reference here is, of course, to the mediatorial reign of Christ; for, *as God*, the rule of the Redeemer can have neither commencement nor termination. What, then, can the words imply but that, before the mediatorial reign terminates, Satan will be thoroughly subdued? The reply of many, I am quite aware, will be that no one doubts this conclusion; that the prophets clearly predict such a triumph; and that the victory in question may be fairly anticipated in the Millennium, when the spread of truth will be universal.

But how does this affect *the past*? Can it be truthfully asserted that Christ has ‘put all enemies under His feet’ (*lit.*, brought to nought, not hostile power only, but *all* power,—*Alford*) if His great enemy, Satan, has succeeded in ruining for ever the myriads who have lived in ignorance and sin *between* the creation and the Millennium? I profess an utter inability to see how this *can* be. I am satisfied that Scripture teaches it never *will* be. Christ came to *destroy* the works of the devil, and that blessed result He will assuredly accomplish. When He has done this, and not till then, will the kingdom, properly speaking, ‘come.’

(4) 1 Cor. xv. 50—‘*Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.*’

A plain statement that ‘the kingdom’ cannot be fully and properly inherited until flesh and blood have been exchanged for the spiritual body. That this is the meaning of the apostle is clear from what follows. He tells us that, although those who are alive when Christ returns ‘shall not all sleep’ (*i. e.*, die), they must ‘*all be changed*,’—a process which will be accomplished ‘in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.’

(5) 2 Thess. i. 5—‘*That ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer.*’

Here, again, the question arises,—*When* was this kingdom of God, for which, or with a view to which, they were suffering, to be manifested? From the context, clearly at the second coming of Christ, which here also seems to be distinctly associated with the first resurrection from the dead, and with final ‘salvation [from sin] through sanctification and belief of the truth’ (ii. 13). This,—the time of retribution (i. 6—9), and of the reappearance of the Lord (ver. 10), is the period of recompence and exaltation to the righteous, and of the consumption of ‘that wicked one, whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of His coming’ (ii. 8). It is the day when the great impediment to the progress of the Gospel—the permissive power of Satan to oppose Christ—will be removed.

(6) Heb. ii. 5—‘*For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come* [τὴν οἰκουμένην, inhabited world,] *whereof we speak.*’

The first question suggested is, What world? Commentators generally reply, “The last and best dispensation,” by which they mean the present one. Connecting the verse with the preceding ones, which speak of ‘a word [λόγος] spoken by angels,’ they infer that the teaching of the apostle is that, under the Gospel, angels are not invested with the authority they exercised under the Law.

That this is true, as far as it goes, few will dispute; but it is far from being the whole truth. The contrast (ver. 5—8) is not between the Law and the Gospel, but between angels and men; between *angels*, as administrators of the old economy, and *redeemed men*, who are to be, under Christ, the sole administrators of the new, both now and in the world or age to come; which world is but *the complement* of this, as the theatre of Christ’s salvation.

Under the Law, angels were clearly employed as messengers of God’s will, and, in a certain sense, as *revealers* (Dan. viii. 16; ix. 21; Luke i. 19—26; Heb. ii. 2). Under the Gospel they have never been so employed. They are ‘ministering spirits,’ but not teachers or revealers. Hence, when Paul was to be converted by miracle, the Lord himself meets him, and not an angel. Under the Gospel,

angels are *never* spoken of as ‘co-workers with God and with Christ’ in the salvation of men; *that* dignity is reserved for the redeemed.

(7) Heb. ii. 6—8—‘*We see not yet all things put under him.*’

That is, *under man*, for the quotation (6—8) is from the eighth Psalm, where the subjection of the world to man is plainly spoken of. “All exegesis,” says Dean Alford, “which loses sight of this general import, and attempts to force the Psalm into a direct and exclusive prophecy of the personal Messiah, goes to conceal its true prophetic sense, and to obscure the force and beauty of its reference to Him. It is MAN who, in the Psalm, is spoken of, in the common and most general sense. The care taken by God of *him*, the lordship given to *him*, the subjection of God’s works to *him*,—this high dignity he lost, but it is regained for him by one of his own race—the MAN Christ Jesus.”

All this is plainly set forth in the text (9—11). It follows, then, that *one day* all things are to be put under the dominion of man—*i. e.*, of Christ, as the head of redeemed humanity, and of the elect as His brethren (ver. 11). But how can this ever come to pass, if our world, till its termination, is to continue more or less under the bondage of the prince of darkness, and if, in the next state, the only living beings will be the redeemed (the elect kings and priests) and the hopelessly lost—wicked

men and wicked spirits? In such a state of things, who are 'put under'? The only reply must be—animals, if they re-exist, and the wicked who are in 'the lake of fire.' But is it credible, that the *triumph* of Christ and of His redeemed Church will consist of nothing more than the trampling under foot, or rather the eternal contemplation of the hopeless misery of the myriads of myriads who, since the creation, have lived and died ignorant and impenitent?

(8) Heb. viii. 8—13—'*I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.*'

The entire passage from which these words are taken is a quotation from the prophet Jeremiah (xxxi. 31—34). It is repeated in the tenth chapter of the Epistle (16, 17). The circumstances under which it was originally uttered are explained to us in the course of the prophecy. After the sack of Jerusalem, Jeremiah, with the other captives, was brought in chains to Ramah, where Nebuchadnezzar had his head-quarters. There it was, at God's special command, that he prophesied regarding the future restoration of Israel; of a risen David (Jer. xxx. 9); and of the New Covenant, resting on absolute and veritable forgiveness of sins (xxx. 34).

Admitting, as we imagine most persons will do, that the prophet, as quoted in the Epistle, speaks of the covenant of which Christ is the Mediator,

the question arises,—What does it involve? Does it mean that *a day would come* when the men who were living in the time of Jeremiah would be forgiven?—that God would be merciful to *their* unrighteousness, and remember *their* iniquities no more? (Heb. viii. 12, and x. 17); *or*, is it merely intended to teach that, at some distant period—more than 2,500 years after—for that period has already passed since the words were uttered,—God would be merciful to the unrighteousness of an Israel *then living* on the earth, but that all the countless generations between would be left, *as they have been*, in unbelief, and therefore irrecoverably lost?

No one pretends that a period has ever yet been seen when the Jews, no longer broken down or afflicted, could be spoken of as ‘forgiven,’ either in the sense of their sins being forgotten, or by their having nationally ‘looked unto Him whom they pierced.’ The prediction, therefore, remains yet to be accomplished.

On the supposition that it will be fulfilled in the race who may be living upon the earth in the times of the Millennium, and in them alone,—generations past being all lost,—I can only say, *such* a fulfilment is not like the dealings of Him who is both able and willing to do ‘exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think’ (Ephes. iii. 20). On the supposition that it will be fulfilled in the

resurrection, and embrace all who have ever lived, the grandeur of the promise is obvious ; the joy of Paul at the thought that ‘all Israel shall be saved’ becomes explicable ; and we exclaim, in wonder, ‘His ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts.’

If the promise merely related to *national* blessing, it might indeed be supposed to find its fulfilment in the conversion of the Israel of the latter day ; for nations, *as such*, having a corporate existence, may be rewarded or punished ages after the performance of the acts thus judged ; but *here* it is individual men who are spoken of—men whose *personal* sins are to be forgiven and forgotten—sins committed during the time of their impenitence ; persons who are to be brought under a new covenant, in which God will put His law ‘in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts ;’ when He ‘will forgive their iniquity, and will remember their sin no more.’

It is supposed by many that in addition to forgiveness, the Israelitish nation will enjoy pre-eminence over the other ‘saved nations.’ This is quite possible. First, because Israel is the only *nation* that has ever been taken into covenant with God,—a peculiarity which was not temporary, but permanent ; and, secondly, because the Jews are the only people that, *as a nation*, have ever recognised the earthly sovereignty of Messiah.

All truly Christian men hold, of course, that Christ is their king; that His claim to reign over them is a real and rightful claim; and that while the kingdoms of the world are already Christ's *in fact*, to the extent that individual believers are multiplied, they are so *by right*, in the largest and most comprehensive sense. But not a single Christian *nation* has retained the belief that it is the will of God ultimately to give "a human, perfect, universal monarch, to direct and head the world in that contest against evil which they all know and own to be going on."

But it is otherwise with the Jews. *They* could not exist *as a State* without the clearest and most distinct recognition of a heavenly Ruler. The Messiah they wait for,—amid whatever carnality and scepticism,—is an earthly as well as a heavenly King, acting directly under the authority, and sustained by the wisdom and strength, of God. Hence they never expect the revival of their *national life* apart from their *national supremacy*.

The veil is indeed over their eyes, both as to the person and character of Messiah, the time of His appearance, and the nature of His rule; but the *root-idea* is a true one, viz., that He will be a perfect ruler, on earth, and over men who will be submitted to His government.

It is, perhaps, not too much to affirm, that *if* the

God-man, Jesus of Nazareth, *were* now to be manifested as the ruler of the world, the Jews would be more ready to receive Him than any Christian people. And this simply because they are the only nation that, *as such*, has not lost the idea of a Divine-human King. For these reasons, it is by no means improbable that they will be the first people *nationally* to turn to Christ.

PART V.

DIFFICULTIES AND SOLUTIONS.

CHAP. I. OBJECTION AND REPLY.

II. ON MODERN THOUGHT.

III. ON APOSTOLIC EXPECTATIONS.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE OBJECTION THAT A DOCTRINE OF RESTITUTION AFTER THE RESURRECTION, IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE REVELATIONS OF SCRIPTURE REGARDING THE ETERNITY OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT, AND LIKELY TO INCREASE PREVAILING INDIFFERENCE TO RELIGION.

TO this objection it might first of all fairly be replied, that the question we are examining has really nothing whatever to do either with the character or duration of the punishment which may be inflicted on the irreclaimably wicked. The inquiry relates neither to the temporary nor to the eternal character of the judgments of the last day ; but to the fact whether or no *all mankind*, excepting only the regenerate, are, notwithstanding the sacrificial life and death of the Saviour, doomed to eternal ruin.

The point we are examining is *not* whether the finally lost will be for ever miserable, but whether Christ's sufferings have, in any intelligible sense, really and practically benefited *the unconverted world* ; whether He is the 'propitiation' for the

sins of all, or whether He died only to *render it possible* for every man to be saved who should, on earth, be renewed by the Holy Ghost ?

To this question it is no reply to say, "The Redeemer has always had an Elect Church, and there is yet to come, before this dispensation closes, an era of light and love and triumph which, when it arrives, will so enlarge the Church as abundantly to compensate the losses and miseries of the past ;" for were this blessed period to stretch—as some think it possibly may—through three hundred and sixty-five thousand years, we should be still left to conclude that the plans and purposes of God have, with limited exceptions, been *effectually* thwarted by Satan for four thousand years prior to the Incarnation, and for nearly two thousand years after it.

This can never be. Granting, for the sake of argument, that the expected Millennium is about to dawn,—that it may last as long as the wildest fancy can imagine, or the most devout heart desire,—that it comes, as many say, to close in glory this, the last dispensation ; or, as others affirm, that it *follows* the second advent of the Lord, and consists in the indefinite multiplication of a *remnant* left on earth after the terrific judgments which accompany His return, the result is the same. In either case *an absolute impossibility* is supposed, viz., that Christ has suffered a long and disastrous

defeat at the hand of the great enemy. For it proceeds on the assumption that, during nearly six thousand years, the countless myriads of earth, repeating themselves generation after generation, have, with comparatively few exceptions, been secured by Satan for ever.

It is of no use shutting the eye to this consequence, or stopping the ear when we are reminded of it. *There it is* ; and it can never be got rid of. True, we may be told—as we often are—that the loss of the adult population of the world will be made up by the salvation of its innumerable infants. But who does not see that such a supposition only renders the failure still more complete ; since, on this showing, the victories of Satan are over beings reasonable, intelligent, and responsible, while the majority of those whom Christ wins never knew good or evil ; have therefore been subjected to no probation ; are, in fact, as incapable of choice as the beasts of the field or the clods of the valley ? How near such conclusions approach to blasphemy it is hard to say.

Nor is the case at all relieved by adding, We are content to leave the matter with God. For what right have we, first to take up a theory inconsistent with, if not altogether opposed to, the intimations of the Bible, and then to throw the difficulties we have created on our heavenly Father ?

Equally vain is it to say that universality is the

aim and intention of the Gospel,—that limitation arises only from the perversity of man. If men had *not* been depraved and perverse, there would have been no need for the Gospel. But of what use can any Gospel be to a sinner, which is invariably made of none effect by the very disease it comes to cure, and which can never *do anything for him* beyond aggravating his guilt, *unless* it be accompanied by another and distinct gift, which is special and sovereign,—and *not for all*?

The only reply that can be given is this,—God is a sovereign : man, every man, is *by nature* so depraved and rebellious as *to deserve* eternal misery. Salvation is, in every case, an exercise of free grace, the limitation of which no man has a right to complain of. If the Creator thinks fit to call into being myriads of men and women, each one as sensitive as ourselves, *knowing well* that the only result of their creation will be their eternal wickedness and misery, who or what are we that we should question His doings?

If it be so,—if God does, indeed, under such conditions give life to the great masses of mankind,—*silence* alone becomes us. But may it not be as well to ask, whether He *does* anything of the kind? Certainly nothing short of the clearest testimony of His Word should lead us for a moment to admit even the possibility of a course so opposed to all that He has revealed to us of His infinite compas-

sion, of His tender mercy, and of His pitifulness towards the children of men. When Abraham ventured to remonstrate with God, under the supposition that He was about to destroy the innocent with the guilty, saying, ‘Shall not the Judge of all the earth *do right*?’ the Lord *justifies* his state of mind, by saying that such a thing shall not be. When Jonah, in anger and in insolence, *reproaches* God for being merciful (iv. 2), because Nineveh was not destroyed in accordance with the threatening he had been commissioned to deliver, it is God who deigns to reason on the side of mercy,—‘Should not I spare Nineveh, that great city?’ (ver. 11). When James and John (the tender and loving John) desire that fire from heaven should fall on those who rejected their Lord, it is Christ who says, ‘The Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them’ (Luke ix. 56). Scripture invariably represents God as *more merciful* than man, and tells us that it is *better*, in any case and in all worlds, to be in the hands of God than in the hands of our fellow-mortals. Yet even *man’s* moral instincts, when purified by Divine love, revolt against the conception of eternal misery and eternal sin. And since no interpretation of Scripture *can* be correct which sets the *work of God* in the heart, and the *word of God*, as expressed in the Bible, in opposition the one to the other, it surely becomes us to pause

before we commit Divine Revelation to such a controversy.

But I again say, This is not the subject of our present inquiry. We are not asking whether the millions—if millions there were—of the antediluvians who perished in the Deluge are, after the judgment day, to be tormented *for ever*? or whether, after a given number of thousands of years shall have elapsed, they will be either annihilated or restored? but whether they may not, in that mysterious world in which they now dwell, or at the resurrection, be made acquainted with those later revelations of God's character and will which we possess, and which, for aught we can tell, may with them, as with us, be made powerful to the pulling down of strongholds, and to the bringing into subjection of every thought to the obedience of Christ?

It is absurd to call this universalism. The restoration of the race, whether existing before or *since* the Deluge, is far from involving of necessity the restoration of every individual; and it is but trifling with a serious subject to assert that if it once be allowed that *any man*, not converted on earth, may hope for mercy in the next world, *then* the doctrine of the universalist cannot be either denied or disputed. Yet such is the ground continually taken by persons who think that God is dishonoured, and the teachings of Scripture denied,

if a ray of hope is allowed to enter the invisible world.

Would to God it were possible to make such reasoners see that their rash assertions on this subject, however well intended, are, when taken in connection with the views they hold on eternal punishment, to be numbered "among the most effective of all the causes which are, at present, inducing among us that virtual abandonment of Christianity which assigns a mythic sense to almost every part of the sacred oracles."¹ Would that it were but felt that all this risk is run for a doctrine, "the evidence for which," says one of the most orthodox of divines, "is by no means to be compared to that which establishes our common Christianity."²

Were it, indeed, indisputably true that the unconverted pass at death into the miseries of hell; and that Dr. Chalmers's estimate of their number be accepted, when he tells us that "spiritual renovation" is "an event of exceeding rarity,"—that those who are thus renewed are but "a handful out of the untouched mass,"—it would be hard indeed to avoid the conclusion that men ought, above all things, to shrink from becoming parents; that the fondest hope of woman should be that her children might die in infancy; and that all classes alike

¹ Sir James Stephen.

² Rev. Robert Hall.

should unite with one of our ablest modern writers—a devout and earnest Christian minister—when he says, “For my part, I fancy I should not grieve if the whole race of mankind died in its fourth year. As far as *we* can see, I do not know that it would be a thing much to be lamented.”¹ *A theology which can lead to such a conclusion must surely be defective somewhere.*

To the further objection that prevailing indifference to divine things would be increased, it might, and it *ought to be* sufficient to reply, that where our inquiries relate simply to *what* God has revealed to us in the Bible, or, in other words, to ‘*what is Truth,*’ we have nothing whatever to do with supposed consequences. The one and sole question with us, as humble and devout inquirers, should be, *What does the Book say?*

The opposite course,—that which proceeds on the assumption that we are *able* to judge beforehand as to what will be the practical tendency of any doctrine, and therefore *warranted* in neglecting or rejecting what we may imagine likely to act injuriously on mankind,—cannot be sustained for a moment, either by reason or from Scripture.

Yet how often is it acted upon. How many once both rejected and denounced the doctrine of

¹ Prof. Henry Rogers, in Greyson's Letters.

justification by Faith alone, simply because *it appeared to them* to be unfavourable to holiness of life. How many others, on precisely the same ground, still speak of the doctrine of Election as “a delusion of Satan.” How many more—some of whom may justly be numbered among the excellent of the earth—are utterly inaccessible to any evidence that may be presented in favour of a pre-millennial advent ; since they are fully persuaded that such a view of the future *must* be fraught with mischief, and, if generally adopted, prove destructive to all missionary zeal. But who, among them all, will deliberately venture to argue that such fears or suppositions *ought* either to override or to interfere with just conclusions in regard to the evidence by which any of the doctrines in question are either to be rejected or sustained ?

This, however, is not the position on which I propose to fall back. On the contrary, I desire to meet the objector on his own ground, and to maintain that the general reception of the views we have gathered (on the supposition of their being, as I firmly believe they are, revealed truths) would be every way beneficial ; stimulating the believer to seek after higher attainments in holiness, impressing the careless with a greater sense of the *certainty* of future retribution, and removing hindrances from the path of honest but sceptical inquirers.

In our present teaching *relative to the future*, no man can find much that is calculated to promote spiritual *growth*. He is told, indeed, that this world is not his home; but of that which is to follow he learns nothing. He is led to believe that, apart from the direct and eternal consequences of faith and its opposite, this world and the next have but little in common; that death, like a great gulf, separates men for ever from the particular training and discipline they have undergone on earth, from their knowledge and their ignorance, from their vices and their virtues, from their peculiar beliefs or unbeliefs; that one unspeakably awful alternative—heaven or hell—swallows up everything else, and practically annihilates those shades of character which so remarkably distinguish man from man while here.

To the popular mind, heaven, supposed to be immediately entered upon at death, is simply and exclusively perpetual worship; hell, eternal torment in material flame. The great mass, even of instructed Christians, think little either of an intermediate world of spirits, or of a subsequent resurrection of the body; nor does it seem to them *profitable* to meditate on the fact, that since our Lord carried with Him to the Father *all* that constitutes a human being—all the varied affections and feelings of humanity—and since He exercised every one of these capacities on earth without a

stain of sin, it is at least reasonable to suppose that His saints, when again in the body, will find employment as practical, and yet as spiritual, as that which engaged their Redeemer while in the flesh.

Hence it is that, in the absence of these thoughts, so few Christians are ambitious of *distinction* in the world to come—ever think about the ‘crown’ that is to be lost or won ; or remember that their ‘calling and election’ is one that has to be ‘*made sure*.’ How *can* they do so, while under the delusion—for such it is—that the spirits of the just at death mingle with the angels, and, in the enjoyment of a common felicity, are for ever employed in vocal and instrumental praise ?

Equally defective are the views generally inculcated relative to the condition of the departed saint *at Christ’s coming*. So little, indeed, is now thought of this great event, or of the consequent earlier resurrection of the sainted dead, that it is not too much to say that, in the great majority of instances, these twin subjects of deep and ever-living interest to the early Church—these indivisible truths of the New Testament, on which the sacred writers linger with delight—have little appreciable influence *over us*, either as joy or strength. They are not the thoughts that either fill us with satisfaction, or modify our conduct and character. They are *believed*, in some sense or other, without

doubt ; they form no unimportant part of our creed ; but they are superseded, for all practical purposes, by the notion, that when the spirit of a man leaves earth, it enters at once upon its final joy or irreparable woe.

So, in our modes of doing good, that which we value most is immediate and strong impression ; conversion, or rather that which appears to us to be such, is often supposed to include everything else ; safety, instead of sanctification, too frequently becomes the end of our religion ; Christianity is diffused, without being deepened ; the ‘ form of sound words ’ rises in value as the force of an elevated moral life diminishes in esteem ; profession outruns practice ; union to *the Church*, whether it be by outward rite or supposed inward change, is too often identified with union to Christ, until, as the result, living Christianity gradually retires before a Christianized population into secret places, and the life and power of the faith, as seen in a literal adherence to the precepts of the Saviour, is accounted little better than an extravagance. This state of things does not appear to me to be so particularly advantageous, that we should feel anything like regret at the possibility of its being disturbed.

Nor should it be forgotten that now, by all but universal consent, it is fully admitted that our present modes of thought and feeling relative to

the future misery of the unconverted, especially when regarded in connection with man's *moral inability* to repent and believe, have become the fruitful parents of the later forms of scepticism,—a circumstance which in itself alone should lead us, with the deepest anxiety, to inquire whether or no these modes of thought are scripturally correct.

What can be more striking or confounding than the words which have recently been uttered by a great Christian advocate,¹ eminent for his orthodoxy, when he tells us that “the same Gospel which penetrates our souls with warm emotions, dispersive of selfishness, brings in upon the heart a sympathy that tempts us often *to wish that itself were not true*, or that it had not taught us so to feel”? At these points, he goes on to say, “we come upon an interior antagonism, a deep, counter-active energy, *whence springs, almost with periodic regularity*, a DISBELIEF, of which Christianity is the immediate object, inasmuch as it is its incitative cause.”

Is it possible to pass a severer condemnation on some parts of our modern Evangelical theology, than to show, as is here done, that, on the supposition of its truth, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is *suicidal* in character ; that in proportion as Divine truth produces its intended and legitimate effect

¹ Isaac Taylor's “Restoration of Belief.”

on human hearts, it brings them, in certain points, into direct antagonism with itself?

Again, what can be more paralyzing than thoughts and feelings such as have been avowed by Dr. Albert Barnes as his own? He is speaking of the ordinary Evangelical theology, in its bearing on the unconverted, when these words are forced from him :—

“ These, and kindred difficulties, meet the mind when we think on this great subject ; and they meet us when we endeavour to urge our fellow-sinners to be reconciled to God, and to put confidence in Him. I confess, for one, that I feel them, and feel them more sensibly and powerfully the more I look at them, and the longer I live. I do not know that I have a ray of light on this subject which I had not when the subject first flashed across my soul. I have read, to some extent, what wise and good men have written. I have looked at their theories and explanations. I have endeavoured to weigh their arguments, for my whole soul pants for light and relief on these questions. But I get neither ; and in the distress and anguish of my own spirit, I confess that I see no light whatever. I see not one ray to disclose to me the reason why sin came into the world, why the earth is strewed with the dying and the dead, and why man must suffer to all eternity.

“ I have never seen a particle of light thrown on

these subjects that has given a moment's ease to my tortured mind ; nor have I an explanation to offer, or a thought to suggest, that would be of relief to you. I trust other men—as they profess to do—understand this better than I do, and that they have not the anguish of spirit which I have ; but I confess, when I look on a world of sinners and sufferers, upon death-beds and graveyards, upon the world of woe, filled with hosts to suffer for ever ; when I see my friends, my parents, my family, my people, my fellow-citizens,—when I look upon a whole race, all involved in this sin and danger, and when I see the great mass of them wholly unconcerned, and when I feel that God only can save them, and yet He does not do it, I am struck dumb. It is all dark, dark, dark, to my soul, and I cannot disguise it.”¹

How different would be our conclusions if we could but believe that the eternal justice and infinite mercy of our heavenly Father is “one and the same with His universal sympathy ; that the medicines of Christ are as manifold as our infirmities ; and that, as there are ‘many mansions’ in the ‘Father’s house’ (the redeemed congregation), so, to that house are many approaches.”

Need it excite wonder that, under existing con-

¹ Albert Barnes, “Practical Sermons,” pp. 123—5, quoted from “Hudson’s Debt and Grace,” 4th edit., Boston, U.S., 1858.

ditions, *doubt* spreads? It is easy to say that scepticism, of whatever kind, is but another name for sin,—that it is not honest,—that it arises simply and solely from hatred to truth. Such is not the fact. There *is* such a thing, whether men will allow it or not, as *honest doubt*. The Bible everywhere recognizes it. The Apostle Thomas is a striking example of it. And those who have read the sermon of the late Mr. Robertson, of Brighton, on the rationalism of this disciple, will enter into his meaning, when he speaks of men “whose reflective powers are stronger than their susceptible;” of “minds that must be convulsed with doubt before they can repose in faith;” of the evidence afforded by the Gospel narrative that “a sign may be given to the doubt of love which is refused to the doubt of indifference;” and of the lesson which is taught by that Divine forbearance which did not disdain to say to the one sceptic of His little band, ‘Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing.’

Never did the question, ‘How can *honest doubt* be best dealt with?’ more urgently demand a solution than it does in the present day. Never was it so necessary as it is now to separate earnest and active doubters—men who so *love truth* that they dare not *rest* in doubt—from men whose scepticism is but a chronic malady, characterized chiefly by

conceit. For the latter, *little or nothing* can be done ; for the former, *much*.

Nor should it surely be forgotten that "the real, though often unavowed, ground of the doubts which are thus overclouding the spirits of so many of the nominal disciples of Christ, is the hopeless dejection with which they contemplate that part of the Christian scheme which is supposed to consign the vast majority of our race to a future state in which woe, indescribable in amount, is also eternal in duration. From this doctrine the hearts of most men turn aside, not only with an instinctive horror, but with an invincible incredulity ; and of those who believe that it really proceeded from the lips of Christ himself, many are sorely tempted by it, either to doubt the Divine authority of His words, or to destroy their meaning by conjectural evasions of their force."¹

It is unquestionable, that in the Gospels the Redeemer is depicted as frequently turning away from the world, which then, as now, would be called *religious*, that He might more forcibly teach us that He has other sheep, not of this fold, sheep astray upon the mountains, despised and rejected of men. It is in these Gospels that "one by one we see and recognize them. The publican, who stands afar off, and will not lift up so much as his

¹ Sir James Stephen, "Ecc. Biog.," ii. 495, Epilogue.

eyes to heaven ; the woman who is a sinner, from whose touch Simon shrank back in horror ; the soldier, who would not venture to ask Him under his roof ; the heathen mother, whom His disciples would have driven away as a dog from His presence ; the rough sailor, who had been washing his nets on the shores of the lake ; the man of business, who sat all day long at the receipt of custom ; the stranger, who did his works of mercy, not following with the apostles ; the wild youth, who had wandered far from his father's house ; the savage robber, who hung on the accursed tree—to each and all He turns, and for each He has a blessing.”¹

Is it possible to imagine that love like this passed away for ever with the earthly life in which it was manifested ? These persons *came to Christ*, it is true ; but what evidence is there, in relation to some of them at least, that they discerned His true character, or sought more than temporal good ?

Is it conceivable, I say, that on the supposition of *such like* among ourselves not being truly regenerated here, there is, in the world that is to come, *for them* neither pity, nor mercy, nor hope ?

If it be so, *why* the consciousness, that lies so deep in the hearts of all men, that sin is separation from God, and peace, and blessedness ? Why the sadness and the thoughtfulness that all but invari-

¹ Stanley's "Canterbury Sermons."

ably accompany suffering and toil? Why the universal consent of humanity to the Law that it is good? Why the countless struggles that are continually going on, in the minds of the unregenerate, after ideals of excellence which are never reached? Why, if in vain and for nought, should the most real and deep of all human experiences be the sense of guilt, and the longing after deliverance from its chain? Why indeed, if earth be not the field in which the seed, at least, of reconciliation with God is sown with no niggard hand; if the world to come will see no richer harvest than that which *we* behold; if the multitude who now so darkly grope after God *never* find Him; if conscious helplessness leads to no helper, and life and death, and all the mystery of being, end only in one grand gigantic scene of all but universal desolation?

God forbid that I should, for a single moment, even *seem* to doubt that for *some*—for those of us, in particular, who have ‘tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come’—the solemn issues of eternity *do* hang on the few short years of our mortal existence; but it does not thence follow that this is the case with every man; that the possession, or the possibility of possessing, a copy of the Scriptures is equivalent to a full presentation of the Gospel; or that either tracts or sermons can in themselves so embody living truth, as to make the disregard *of them* equivalent to the

rejection of the Redeemer. I do not despise either tracts or sermons ; but I am quite sure that none of these things, however good in their place, will accomplish much, so long as the stumbling-blocks occasioned by the corruptions of the Church, and the inconsistencies of individual believers, are unremoved. Not till this is done will it be seen that the *moral superiority* of Christians, the winning excellence of those who love and imitate the Redeemer, is *the great agency* employed by God to draw men to Christ ; inasmuch as in this way *alone* can the teachings of Scripture be practically illustrated, and translated into action.

So far from imagining that teaching the *possibility* of this power being brought to bear on the unrenewed in other states of existence—the *probability*, I would rather say, of the redeemed Church being employed, in the world to come, in bringing to the knowledge and love of Christ multitudes of those who have never known Him here,—would have a tendency to promote religious indifference, I firmly believe that its effect would be precisely the reverse. For *then* future retribution, instead of being, as now, alternately dreaded and doubted, would come to be acknowledged a solemn reality, as little open to question as the great facts of physical existence ; while the exact apportioning of reward and punishment to every man according to his deeds, *now all but universally lost sight of*, would be found to har-

monize alike with the voice of conscience and the word of God. Virtue, of whatever kind, and by whomsoever displayed, would, as coming from the ‘Giver of every good and perfect gift,’ then be considered worthy of all honour and imitation; and the one great desire of the child of God would be to be ‘*preserved blameless*, body, soul, and spirit, to the coming of the Lord.’

There are persons I know who will say, If hell can be escaped, let us go on in sin; just as there were persons in a former day who said, ‘Let us sin that grace may abound.’ Of such, what more can be affirmed than this, ‘Their condemnation is just’? Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, church-going, prayer, almsgiving, all have been in like manner abused. But it is not on this account, nor yet because ‘things hard to be understood’ have, in all ages, been ‘wrested by the unteachable and unstable to their own destruction,’ that we are to regard any portion of the Divine Word either as dangerous or doubtful.

Dr. Norman McLeod observes—“It does appear to me that there exists a wide-spread callousness and indifference, an ease of mind, with reference to the fate hereafter of ungodly men, which cannot be accounted for except on the supposition that *all earnest faith is lost* in either the dread possibilities of future sin, or of its future punishment.”¹

¹ “ParishPapers;” chapter on Future Punishment.

Even of professed believers the truth must be told, that *few* attempt to *realize* the awful condition in which mankind are supposed to be placed ; that *many* shrink from even hinting danger to their nearest and dearest unconverted relatives ; and that *some*, it is to be feared, “compromise with conscience for the absence of a life in the spirit of their creed, by violent speculative denunciations on those who oppose it.” The great multitude, in the meantime, live on and pass into eternity, devoid of every sentiment of anxiety in reference to the world that is to come ; the popular theology being, I am afraid, but too truly expressed in an epitaph I have seen somewhere, written upon the tombstone of a notoriously abandoned man, who was killed by a fall while hunting,—

“ Between the stirrup and the ground
He mercy sought, and mercy found.”

This is the grand delusion we have to grapple with, and we shall do so most successfully by bringing under the notice of the impenitent, considerations which tend to attach *certainly* rather than horror to future retribution, and by avoiding exaggerated statements, which are only calculated to harden the hearer.

Dr. Norman McLeod again asks, “What if, instead of the wrath of God being poured upon them (the wicked) to the utmost, it will be inflicted in

the least possible measure, and only in the way of natural consequence? What if the sin which makes the hell hereafter is, in spite of all its suffering, loved, clung to, even as the sin is which makes the hell now? Nay, what if every gift of God, and every capacity for perverting His gifts, be retained, and if the sinner shall suffer only from that which he himself *chooses* for ever, and for ever determines to possess? I do not say that it must be so, but if it is so, then might a hell of unbridled self-indulgence *be preferred* then, as it is by many now, to a heaven whose blessedness consisted in perfect holiness, and the possession of the love of God in Christ for ever and ever.”¹ I can only say to this speculation, that a hell of this character (totally different from that which the Bible asserts it to be), would not assuredly be an object of much dread to the wicked; but that God should for ever sustain sinners in this *preference for evil*, and in the eternal indulgence of it, passes all rational belief.

That Christians enlightened from above, and themselves partakers of a salvation which they acknowledge to be a free and sovereign gift, irrespective altogether of their deserts, should be *unwilling to receive* the testimony of Scripture, when it points to possibilities for the race, brighter than any they could have conceived: that they should

¹ “Parish Papers,” p. 154.

be *indisposed to examine* such evidence as is presented to them in favour of its truth ; that they should *almost deem it wicked* to doubt the dogmas of past ages, or to question the validity of the inferences on which they rest, would be utterly unaccountable, were it not for the recollection that want of faith is want of courage, and that cowardice in the study of the Divine Word is but one of the many sad consequences which result from man's alienation from his Maker, and the tendency of his soul to *dread* rather than to love his heavenly Father.

CHAPTER II.

ON MODERN THOUGHT.

IN all that has been advanced relative to the bearing of the work of Christ on the world at large, it will be observed that I have carefully confined myself to one question,—‘What saith the Scriptures?’ I have done so advisedly, because I am satisfied that, on the answer given by the Divine oracle to that question, the reception or rejection of the doctrine of an extended future restoration must and *ought* ultimately to depend. I should be sorry, however, for it to be supposed that because I have abstained from those more general considerations which belong to the province of reason and conscience, I deliberately set aside all such testimony as worthless. This is not the case.

I am far indeed from disputing the authority, either in morals or religion, of the reason with which God has endowed us, or of the conscience—that ‘candle of the Lord’—which shines within us. Scripture itself teaches us a different lesson. For it tells us most distinctly that the same God who has revealed Himself in the Bible reveals Himself

also in nature, in providence, and in the heart of man. No mistake can be much greater than that which leads certain devout persons to imagine they exalt Scripture by abasing reason, and magnify the light that comes to us *from without* by denying or attempting to extinguish the light that is *within*. No course can be more perilous than one which brings *the facts of the world* into collision with *the facts of Scripture*, or admits for an instant that conscience and reason—the moral sense, properly so termed—can ever be really and truly in opposition to the Bible, if only conscience be living and healthy, and Scripture be properly understood. To suppose that God has given us faculties which are utterly *untrustworthy*, is to make Him precisely what Christ says He is not,—a Father who, when asked for ‘bread,’ gives ‘a stone;’ or, solicited for ‘a fish,’ presents ‘a serpent.’

The New Testament abounds with instances in which reason is both appealed to, and counted trustworthy. The Pharisees taught that external ceremonies purified the soul before God. But our Lord rebuked His disciples sternly for not at once contradicting and disbelieving the doctrines of these their appointed teachers. And on what ground? On the ground of the clear utterance of *their understandings*,—‘Are ye also without understanding, and perceive not that this cannot be?’ (Matt. xv. 1—20; Mark vii. 1—23).

When the Baptist preached, all the people, by the light of conscience,—for it could be nothing else,—‘counted John as a prophet.’ St. Paul prevails, not by contradicting the inner sense, but ‘by manifestation of the truth commending himself to every man’s conscience in the sight of God’ (2 Cor. iv. 2). When our Lord says, in relation to false prophets, ‘By their fruits shall ye know them,’ what can He be supposed to mean, but that the true was to be discerned by that inward sense of right and wrong, of good and evil, given us by our Creator as our light and guide in such matters? And if these things be true in relation to man regarded in his natural condition, how much more true must they be in relation to those of whom it is said, ‘Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things.’ That we are charged to cultivate *childlike submission* is indisputable; but in connection therewith it can assuredly do us no harm to remember another charge,—‘Be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men’ (1 Cor. xiv. 20).¹

It is in the light of these considerations that I

¹ These texts, and many others equally applicable in their bearing on the testimony of Scripture to the authority of the conscience and reason, are brought forward in No. 12 of “Tracts for Priests and People,” by the Hon. and Rev. W. H. Lyttleton, M.A., Rector of Hagley, and Hon. Canon of Worcester.

am disposed to give just that amount of weight, and no more, to the moral argument against the ruin of the race, which, whether we will or not, perpetually forces itself upon our notice. For true as it undoubtedly is, that in searching the Bible the proper question for us to put is not, 'What thinkest thou?' but, 'How readest thou?' and true also as it may be, that the meaning of Scripture is to be ascertained, not by sentiment but by grammar, it is neither wise nor right to carry this principle so far as to disregard or exclude altogether that Divine instinct which God has Himself implanted in the renewed heart.

"There is a reasonable and Scriptural faith," says Mr. Goldwin Smith, "which reposes on the wisdom and goodness of God, trusts Him entirely, and believes that everything in the ways of His providence which is now dark will, in the end, be made clear.

"But there is also an ecclesiastical faith, neither reasonable nor Scriptural, which consists in wilfully shutting the eye of the mind; in putting force upon the conscience; in receiving insufficient evidence and pretending that it is sufficient; in embracing things unworthy of the Deity, and pretending that they are Divine. Those who practise this ecclesiastical faith, and think it meritorious, tacitly assume that the need of evidence is in an inverse ratio to the importance of the subject; and

that while they would be bound to demand full proof before believing that anything of a questionable character came from a good man, they perform an act of piety in believing, without full proof, and sometimes with no proof at all, that things of a questionable character come from God."

The result of handling Divine truth in this way is already beginning to manifest itself in a manner that will one day make the most thoughtless reflect.

It is seen in that *sense of uncertainty* which has come over us, in relation to so many of our religious convictions, and which contrasts so painfully with that perfect conviction which the first Christians had "of the certainty of that BODY OF FACTS which constituted, and in which consisted, their religious belief." It is seen in the absence of that high sense of the *virtue and duty of truthfulness* in our convictions which even heathens honoured; in the rarity of that spectacle, said to have been dear to the pagan gods, "where a brave man is seen struggling with facts which are too strong for him, his honesty exposed to temptations to shirk or evade them, yet his honesty conspicuous, and invariably triumphant."

It is seen, perhaps, most of all, among ourselves, in the preference which is now so widely shown by religious persons for that which is vague and inde-

finite in statement rather than for words that are clear and explicit. Preachers (some, at least) speak thus cloudily, not because they are unable to express themselves clearly, but because they think it most advisable to be vague on what are termed disputed subjects. They wish, if it be possible, to be regarded as, in the main, "sound," and therefore shrink from committing themselves to views, the promulgation of which, on various accounts, they deem it expedient to avoid. Hearers like to have it so. And for obvious reasons. So long as a man is allowed to suppose that it is much the same thing whether he believes a given truth, or *something like it*, he is in little danger of being disturbed. Clearly defined statements bring men to the test. The positive obligation to accept or reject, will often occasion *doubt*, and doubt is to most persons irksome; it compels inquiry, and occasions trouble. So the conclusion is a popular one, that to be indefinite is to be *safe*; that in a teacher vagueness is at least a proof of modesty and humility; while clear and definite assertion (unless indeed it be in support of some recognized opinion of a school or party,—in which case the teacher can never be too dogmatic for the disciple) is, however well sustained by Scripture, to be shunned as *dangerous*, chiefly because it is so unsettling.

Week after week books issue from the press on

'heaven,' and hell, and the world to come, in which the supposed social, intellectual, and even physical life of the departed is set forth in glowing colours, drawn, for the most part, simply from the imagination of the writers, and often without even the affectation of deriving support either from reason, analogy, or any statement of Scripture. All these productions, however numerous or however shallow, are greedily received in quarters where anything like a thoughtful inquiry into the teachings of revelation would be regarded as distasteful, if not perilous. Even so able and sober a writer as Dr. Norman McLeod is not free from this tendency to speculate on subjects which ask only for research. What can be more unsatisfactory from such a man, than to be told almost in the same breath, that while neither Christ nor the Apostles have "given us by one word the slightest ground for hoping that any man who leaves this world an enemy to God, will ever repent and become a friend of God in the next," yet "we may hope that the number of the lost may be, to those who are saved, *fewer far* than the number of those in penal settlements and prisons are to the inhabitants of a well-ordered and Christian kingdom"? And if we ask for the ground, Scriptural or otherwise, on which such hope is to be based, we are simply told (Laura Bridgman's case being regarded as an illustration) that "the living God, who alone

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knows each man, *may* be dealing, in ways beyond our comprehension, with the most lonely savage, whose inmost spirit He even sees, and who is of more awful value in His sight than all the stars of the sky." Dr. McLeod's *imagination* is, that, in some mysterious way, "God can teach that spirit *without the Gospel*, or the ordinary means of grace, so as to bring it under law to God."¹

I am aware it may be said, How can a man teach, *definitely*, anything on which his own mind is not quite made up? or be distinct and positive on matters which he believes to be but dimly and partially revealed?

To this objection there is but one answer. The uncertainty in question is *morbid*; it is the disease of the day, and it has become chronic. Indefiniteness is not a characteristic of Divine revelation. Certainty may, on almost all subjects, be reached, if we have but entire confidence in the Divine Record, and will take pains enough to search

¹ "Parish Papers," pp. 152, 153. Dr. Guthrie all but avows similar views in *Good Words* (Jan. 1863, p. 3). He thinks it monstrous to suppose that *half* the world will be lost, exclaiming, "If, at the close of the war, Satan retains *half* his kingdom, his head is not crushed." And yet both of these eminent men profess to accept "the Assembly's Larger Catechism," and through it teach *as truth* that the heathen "*cannot* be saved," and that God has "fore-ordained" all but the elect to eternal ruin (see Questions 13 and 60, with the answers and proofs). It is surely high time that men knew what divines *really believe*, as distinguished from that which they *profess to believe*.

minutely and fearlessly for *all that it says*. But how can we do so if we are embarrassed at every step by the traditions of centuries, and by the fear of man?

Is it needful to add that vagueness is always accompanied by a disposition to cling with a sort of dogged pertinacity to any view which has been long received and honoured among men, rather than to favour calm and serious inquiry into its precise truthfulness? Feeble convictions are commonly accompanied by *adhesive* tendencies in relation to all that is traditional, just as obstinacy is the ordinary characteristic of a mind unable to reason, or distrustful of its ability to come to any satisfactory conclusion. The great Apostle of the Gentiles teaches that believers receive wisdom *that they may know and comprehend* the things that are freely given to them of God, and he denounces the sincerest fervour of spirit as defective, where it does not likewise bring forth fruits in the UNDERSTANDING.

“To the modern mind, explain it as we may, there has come to belong an awful capacity of feeling, and a liability to intensities, both of suffering and of enjoyment (the one as well as the other intellectual, not sensuous), of which the bright, gay, *surface-loving* mind of antiquity seems to have known little or nothing. Then along with this power of feeling, striking, as it does, into the

roots of the soul, there are perceptions, and instinctive judgments, of which it must be said that they are altogether *modern* developments of humanity: they are *true* elements of our nature; but they have newly been brought from the subsoil. It is to the slow working of Christianity upon human nature that I attribute nearly the whole of this deeper vitality of the modern mind.”¹

Professor Goldwin Smith has expressed similar convictions to those of Mr. Taylor.

“The condition of mankind,” he says, “presses severely upon us in the present day, chiefly *because of the extension of our sympathies* beyond the pale of Christendom to the whole human race; and there arises to countervail, the healing conviction that *the community of mankind is a community indeed*, and that which is given to one member of it is, though as yet we know not how, given to all.”

“Why should we think that the way to a solution of Divine mysteries is inexorably closed, or that our efforts to solve them, if made in the sincerity of our hearts, are offences against God? If the relation between God and man is one of affection, it is quite natural (according to all we know or can imagine of such relations) that our knowledge of the Divine goodness should not be given

¹ “Restoration of Belief,” pp. 254 and 228.

to us at once, without exertion on our part, or without the interposition of difficulties and contrary appearances at the outset which we may be permitted, in some measure at least, ultimately to pierce through. For it is under these, and not under the opposite conditions, that affection, as we experience it, is best formed, and becomes intense and deep.”¹

Facts of the most mournful kind confront us at every turn, and refuse to be hidden from our eyes. A vast and overwhelming majority of the human race, we all well know, are not, and never have been, believers, either in God or in the Gospel. Myriads have never heard the name of the Redeemer. Myriads more live and die, the victims of the grossest superstitions. Even in our own land, and amid the most favoured portions of the community, few, very few comparatively, can, in any intelligible sense, be spoken of as having been ‘born again,’ or as having become ‘new creatures in Christ Jesus.’

And amid a strangely confused teaching, relative to the future condition of such persons, a generation is rising around us, “earnest and devout in a sense their fathers never were, who, however hopeful they may be as to their own safety, or that of their immediate relatives, can

¹ “Rational Religion,” by Goldwin Smith.

find no peace so long as they are forbidden to cherish hope in relation to the future condition of the human family." It is *among these* that a revived Romanism, carrying with it something like confidence in the saving efficacy of ritual observances, and a sort of half belief in the purifying character of purgatorial flames, carries off many a choice spirit; while thousands more, bewildered by theories of universal salvation, are rapidly embracing one or more of those modern forms of sceptical thought which, unlike the infidelity of former days, arise, not so much out of practical ungodliness, as from the pressure of sincere and heartfelt difficulties in relation to the supposed teachings of Divine revelation. Viewing the Gospel as an embodiment of the loving character of their heavenly Father, they cannot hear, *without a shock*, of God "passing by" the majority of His creatures, and (notwithstanding the redeeming work of Christ) abandoning them to eternal ruin. And if, under the influence of this horror, such persons sometimes madly attack revelation itself as false or delusive, we can only say that, in such cases, *theology wings the shaft that quivers in the heart of Christianity.*

CHAPTER III.

ON THE APPARENT CHARACTER OF APOSTOLIC
EXPECTATIONS.

IN endeavouring to ascertain what was the precise point of view from which the Apostles took their survey of the Church and the world,—of the present and the future of humanity,—it is necessary to bear distinctly in mind both the *truths* they admitted, and the *facts* by which they were surrounded.

The question is—In what aspect did they regard either the world or the Church?

I reply fearlessly, *As a great mystery*. Yet—and here it is they differ so widely from ourselves—not as a *painful* mystery. The mystery was indeed one which had been ‘kept secret since the world began,’ but it was also one which was ‘now made known to all nations for the obedience of faith’ (Rom. xvi. 25, 26). It was a mystery with which Paul had been made acquainted by special revelation (Ephes. iii. 3); and it was one which he regarded as *glorious riches*—‘the riches of God’s glory’ (Ephes. iii. 16; Col. i. 27); one which, far from bringing over his soul the profound gloom

that crushes us as with a darkness that may be felt, was a perennial source of joy and strength.

Nowhere do we find reason to conclude that St. Paul supposed, as we seem to do, that the Gospel has no work to accomplish on the earth beyond the *salvation* of the elect, and the *condemnation* of those who reject its offers of mercy. To me it seems plain that he looked much further; that while, on the one hand, he regarded the good news of the grace of God as *primarily* intended to 'separate a peculiar people,' and to make them 'zealous of good works,' he believed that ultimately this same Gospel would *bless the race*; not, indeed, every individual of it, for he always recognizes the eternal ruin of the wilfully impenitent, but the race *as a whole*; and that, consequently, everything a real Christian did and said in the spirit of his Master, tended to prepare multitudes of the unconverted for higher developments in the age that is to come.

In that great expectation I doubt not he included the heathen generally,—the myriads who have passed away in infancy,—the *hundred millions*¹ of human beings who, in consequence of a defective physical formation, have lived and died incapable of distinguishing right from wrong,—and, in short,

¹ It is now well known that one out of every thousand of our species is born in idiocy.

all, let them be found where they may, who, in consequence of their ignorance or weakness, or from other circumstances known only to God, have not *consciously* rejected Christ; who, though not conquerors, are yet not devils; sinners and sufferers through the temptations of Satan, but scarcely his conscious agents; men who have too often submitted to evil, who have never resisted it as they ought to have done, yet who are not fairly to be classed with those who love and choose iniquity.

Such and so magnificent, if I read aright, is the view that opens before us of THE MISSION FIELD OF THE CHURCH AFTER THE RESURRECTION.

Let us pause here, for a moment, to contemplate so glorious a termination of the miseries of earth, the malice of Satan, and the mysteries of Providence. What if it should indeed *be* so? What if, after all our stumbling, and rebellion, and questionings about Divine sovereignty, it should at length be made manifest that God has but chosen His elect under the Gospel, as he chose Israel of old under the Law, the more wonderfully to 'make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom?' that He who loved His people, and 'washed them from their sins in His own blood, and made them kings and priests unto God and His Father,' has done

this, only to make them, *in other states of existence* as well as in this, ‘co-workers’ with Him in elevating and blessing a multitude so vast, that the mind of man cannot conceive it, nor any human arithmetic calculate its number? What if *then* the words of Christ should find their plain and natural signification—‘He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations;’ and while to one it should be said, ‘Thou good servant, because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities;’ and to another, ‘Be thou also over five cities;’ *these*, and many other promises (then found to be not figuratively but literally true), should establish every word of the living God, and prove all alike to be marked by wisdom and by love? Will it not then be said of us, as it was of the Jews of old, ‘*O slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken*’?

Project: Theological Seminary, Springfield



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