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Number One.

Truths for the Times.

THE

REASONABLENESS

OF

FUTURE, ENDLESS PUNISHMENT.

BY

NEHEMIAH ADAMS, D.D.,

PASTOR OF THE ESSEX STREET CHURCH, BOSTON.

BOSTON:

GOULD AND LINCOLN,

59 WASHINGTON STREET.

NEW YORK: SHELDON, BLAKEMAN & CO.

CINCINNATI: GEORGE S. BLANCHARD.

1858.

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59 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON.

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1858.

CORRESPONDENCE.

12 Burroughs Place, April 21, 1858.

Rev. Dr. Adams: — *Dear Sir.* It was my privilege to be one of your auditors, last Sunday evening, when you delivered the discourse, listened to with great interest by a large assembly, on the "Reasonableness of Eternal Punishment."

I take the liberty to address you, with the request that you will repeat the discourse in the Hollis Street Church next Sunday evening. Members of the committee of my society, and many others of the parishioners, express to me the hope that you may find it consistent with your engagements and in accordance with your sense of duty to accept this invitation. Our church is very spacious; on such an occasion I doubt not that it would be crowded with an audience of "Liberal Christians." I am sure that they would eagerly embrace an opportunity to hear so able an advocate of "Orthodoxy" upon a theme so important as the eternal punishment, by the Infinite Father, of all who fail to comply with the terms of grace which He has established for His children during this brief life.

Let me assure you that, if you accept this offer, the pulpit shall be entirely at your disposal, precisely as if it were your own. And let me say that I expect no such offer in return. If you consent, I shall simply urge my people to attend your service, and listen, as I shall listen a second time, with the respect your abilities deserve, and with the earnestness which the momentous question you discuss — about which we differ so widely — should inspire in us all.

In the hope of an early reply, I am respectfully yours,

T. S. KING.

4 Boylston Place, April 22, 1858.

Rev. T. S. King: — *My Dear Sir.* Your note of the 21st inst. reached me this morning, and I need not say that it has greatly surprised and deeply interested me. The sermon was written in 1852, and was then preached to my own people on a Sabbath morning, in the ordinary course of ministerial labor. The subject has weighed much on my own mind during the present religious interest, and this alone induced me to present it at my lecture last Sabbath evening. That it did not strike you and others as an unfeeling exhibition of mere theological opinion upon an infinitely important and very trying subject, is truly gratifying to me.

Your invitation to repeat the sermon in your church, next Sabbath evening, is conveyed in such terms that I feel impelled to accept it, and I will therefore comply with your request. It is due to you as well as to myself to say, that parts of the discourse, as originally written, were omitted last Sabbath evening, and their place was supplied from brief notes, and by a few extemporaneous remarks. All this I will endeavor to repeat; and I infer from the tenor of your note that should I further explain and reenforce some of my statements, it will but accord with your wishes. I ought, moreover, to add that none but myself can properly be held responsible for my sentiments and expressions on this subject, however much I may suppose my views to agree with theirs. With sincere regard, I am, dear sir, very truly yours,

N. ADAMS.

At the request of parishioners I had concluded to publish, in a tract form, several discourses recently prepared with reference to the present religious interest. The subjects of two of these tracts, which were nearly ready for the press, are

I. Conversion and its Relation to Piety; and
II. Justification and its Consequences.

Without any reference to these intended publications, I preached, on Sabbath evening, April 18, at my stated lecture, the discourse referred to above. Owing to the peculiar circumstances connected with this discourse, I have concluded to make it the first in this series of tracts. Others will appear without delay. N. A.

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THE

REASONABLENESS

OF

FUTURE, ENDLESS PUNISHMENT.

FOR THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH.
—Rom. vi. 23.

Let us endeavor to think how it would be with us, should it come to pass, as the fool in his heart wishes it to be, that there is no God; that God is dethroned. Some disaster has happened in the universe, and rival spirits, we will suppose, have triumphed. Malignity has supplanted benevolence; wickedness is enthroned over virtue; chance does not rule, but the government of all worlds is in the hands of the enemies of God. Prayer now is useless; public worship may as well cease. Bibles are like old books of history, and nothing more, for the promises of the Bible are now like irredeemable bills. Repentance and faith are useless. The deity to whom this world has fallen by lot is Mammon, or Moloch; or it may be that Satan himself, out of spite for all which he has suffered here, takes it under his charge. Every thing now is perverted; darkness is put for light, evil for good, bitter for sweet. The strongest must rule; to get all he can, by all means, is the governing principle of every man; no rights are respected; Virtue is driven out of the world; her defences and her great reward have perished. Every where we are assailed with the sight of these words, and with this cry: No God! No God! Whether the

devils have power to control the elements and rule the heavenly bodies, or whether all things will rush to ruin, is a fearful question, which every day and hour appals the stoutest heart. For, instead of One, Almighty, Supreme Being, who can say, as formerly, "I am God, and there is none else," and instead of that unity of purpose, and independent will, and unrivalled might, which governed the universe safely and happily, a band of devils, we suppose, is at the head of affairs, the superior demon holding his sway by force over the rest, or by their assent; but no unity of purpose, or permanence, can be expected in things controlled by hateful and hating creatures. We look up to the heavens; they no longer "declare the glory of God," but telegraph his discomfiture. As one says, —

> "What were the universe without a God?
> A mob of worlds, careering round the sky."

Law every where would be likely to be mob law. If we could, by armies and any sacrifice of treasure and blood, reinstate Jehovah in his throne, our own self-interest, and sense of justice, and outraged feelings, would impel us to any and every effort to drive Satan and his hosts from heaven, and shut them up in hell as long as they should continue rebellious; and the return of the day when God Almighty should resume his peaceful reign in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, would be a jubilee. But alas! if the almighty arm, so called, could not prevail against his enemies, how could mortals help him? Let it once be that usurpers have the throne of God, and annihilation would be coveted by every one of us more eagerly than any despairing suicide ever yet longed to prove or to find it true.

Every one of us has done his part to bring about this state of things. Should the natural feelings and conduct of each

of us be extended indefinitely, all this would virtually happen. There might be more refinement in wickedness in some places than in others, to suit the tastes and habits of different people; but Greece and Rome, the models of ancient cultivation and refinement, are, with "the whole world lying in wickedness," described by an unerring pen in the first chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and in terms which make every reader blush with shame at human nature. Its degeneracy and corruption, from Cain to the days of the Canaanites, and ever since, when unrestrained by the grace of God, have been such that nation after nation made it necessary for God to wipe them out of existence, "as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down."[1] Volney surveys the "ruins of empires," and mourns, saying, "To what purpose is this waste?" and he impeaches the wisdom of his God. He will not consider that sin is the procuring cause of national, as it is of individual ruin, and that God has but fulfilled the threatening, "The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted."[2] "Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."[3]

Sin is the antagonist of God. If sin prevails, there is "no God." For wherever, even upon a small scale, sin prevails, God is banished. Let its power be supreme, and practically there is no God.

Where is sin? Who ever saw it? Where is its habitation? Sin exists nowhere but in free, intelligent creatures. There is no sin separate from a sinner. Whoever, therefore, is a sinner, is sin impersonated. In the greatest measure, we suppose, sin exists in Satan; then in his companions; then in lost men; then in living men. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." If we say, The Asiatic cholera is in Boston,

[1] 2 Kings xxi. 13. [2] Is. lx. 12. [3] Ps. ii. 9.

we mean that there are those here who have the cholera. There is no sin but in the hearts of fallen spirits and men.

There is not one of us who, when placed in circumstances where God and his requirements or prohibitions came in conflict with our wishes, has not fought against God. This is no more than the powers of hell would do on a larger scale, if they had the opportunity.

The difference is this: There is a plague, we will say, in London, which is cutting down a thousand in a day. Men think and speak of it as an awful scourge. But you are at Bath, or Carlisle, sick with the plague, alone, and you are ready to die. There is no difference between your plague and the plague in London. All the symptoms which the thousand victims in London have, you exhibit; but you are not in a community where the disease is triumphant. But it is killing you; it does no more in London, only that it has gained the upper hand, and puts the inhabitants to flight.

In like manner, sin, disobedience to God, and the dislike of him from which it springs, is the same in substance every where. If we dislike God, his attributes, his requirements, his prohibitions, and if infinite mischief is not the consequence, it is because our influence is hemmed in and overruled; just as we might have a contagious disorder, and yet such preventives be employed as would keep it from doing much harm.

Though sin has not extended in the universe so far as to dethrone God, we have most perfect illustrations of its awful power.

There was a time when all the sin which was in the world was enclosed in one sinful wish in the breast of one woman. She had permission to eat of every tree but one, and that one God prohibited, saying, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." A transient thought, immediately repressed

or disapproved, would not have been sin; for, as Milton says,

> "Evil into the mind of God or man
> May come and go, so unapproved, and leave
> No spot or blame behind;" [1]

but she indulged that wish, and hankered after that fruit; and in that sinful wish all the sin of earth once lay. That wish became an act; and now let him who would write the sins and woes of earth first count for us the snow flakes of five thousand winters, and tell us the number of drops in all the rivers and oceans. "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners;" and their history is the history of wars, lust, intemperance, violence. O sin! what hast thou done? What canst thou not do?

There is another illustration still more affecting. We see a company of evil spirits whom Christ is casting out of two men. They hold a conversation with the Saviour. If they are mere diseases, and not intelligent creatures capable of reasoning, but are only personified maladies, who are making a truce with Christ, and if he countenances the delusion that this scene is not even so real a thing as a masquerade, but a fiction throughout, while questions are put and answers given, requests made and permission granted, there is an end to all confidence in language, and indeed the reality of every thing may be questioned. "And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep." [2] They did not mean the sea, for thither they soon went of their own choice. The same word, in Rev. xx. 3, is translated "bottomless pit." They are called "evil spirits." But if they were intelligent creatures, they were fallen creatures; for we suppose that God would not create a demon; and allowing even that they were the souls of lost men, or an order of beings who came

[1] Par. Lost, B. v. l. 117.

[2] Luke viii. 31.

into existence, as we did, with a fallen nature, probation must have been allotted to them — a chance to be saved; for we shall agree that no infant, nor any other being, can be lost merely for having a fallen nature. These fallen spirits, then, were once surrounded by virtuous influences; they may have been angels; and if they were, nay, even if they sang together with other morning stars, and shouted for joy with all the sons of God, at the birth of the world, they fell no further, comparatively, than the sons or daughters of men have fallen here, from homes of purity and circles of refinement, from pulpits and the table of Christ. "So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine."[1] O sin, what hast thou done? This whole legion of devils, moreover, had taken possession of two poor creatures, and made them maniacs "exceeding fierce." Why should more than one malignant spirit wish to possess one human body? What mysteries there are in sin, and "depths of Satan"!

The difference between sin as it existed in these demons and as it exists in our breasts, is the same as between the loathsome victim of the plague, and the man who is just taken sick with it. There was a time when angels in heaven, who, the Bible tells us, were "cast down to hell, and delivered into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment,"[2] were but just infected with this malady of sin. There was a time when Eve was but just attacked with it. We are in the early stage of the disorder; but we have it, and if no remedy be applied, time only is wanted to make us desperate. If placed in circumstances where we could communicate the infection to unfallen creatures, like Eve to Adam, and thus to a race, God only can measure the consequences. Many a human spirit, if not redeemed from its

[1] Matt. viii. 31. [2] 2 Peter ii. 4.

sins, the child now sleeping in its cradle, is capable, in the progress of its being, of going forth to tempt and ruin some fair world, and to become the "prince of the power of the air" to that fallen province of God's empire, and to rival the arch apostate angel in his direful history.

Is this tremendous thing in us — this antagonism to God? this enemy to the universe? If so, what is it?

"Sin is a want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God."[1] The sum of all which God requires of man, and prohibits, is comprehended in the ten commandments, every one of which, in thought, word, or deed, we have broken. The Saviour gives us a still more simple summary of our duty: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength;" and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."[2] We have failed to do this; we love and serve the creature more than the Creator. Do we avoid that which God disapproves? Do we study to do that which he loves? If we have a family, do we call them together morning and night, and read to them out of God's word, and before them bow the knee to God? Is it natural to do this? If not, do we give evidence that we love God? His blessings we highly prize; his natural attributes we are ready to adore; but God, with the moral attributes which the Bible ascribes to him, we do not love. On the contrary, we have feelings and thoughts, and we do things, which are "enmity against God,"[3] and, carried out into other situations, and exasperated by opposition to our wills, and their influence being sufficiently extended, they would supplant his throne.

If we were in the place of God, we may imagine how we would regard sin. He comprehends the interests of all intel-

[1] Westminster Assembly's Shorter Catechism, 14.

[2] Mark xii. 30, 31.

[3] Rom. viii. 7.

ligent beings, and sees that sin is fatal to his government over them, so that, wherever sin reigns, there, and in that proportion, there is no God. It would be better that the universe should perish than that harm should come to the infinite God; but sin would not only destroy the universe; for, if it could prevail, it would dethrone God. Let us place ourselves where we could see and feel what sin would do if it were aimed against us, and our authority, and the happiness of a universe for whose welfare we were responsible. How would we legislate about that which would inevitably ruin other worlds and races, as it has ours? What would we do to prevent it, and to reform and save the rebellious? Should we do any thing? We will take it for granted that we would.

But human wisdom and earthly love could not do more than God has done to save sinners. In the threefold distinction of the divine nature, we hold there is that which is called "the Word," which "was in the beginning with God," and which "was God."[1] Then, seemingly guarding against the Sabellian theory of "manifestation," it is said again, "The same was in the beginning with God;" not therefore God filling a human body and soul with influence, and so making a mere demonstration of divinity, but it was the Word, who was not only God, but ("great is the mystery") "with God," indicating both union and distinctness. He became flesh, and dwelt among us.

His great object was to take the sinner's place as a sacrifice for sins. He did not interpose between a wrathful being and his victims. For the sake, perhaps, of keeping up in the human mind the idea of Deity unmixed with our nature, the Father is familiarly called "God," and yet as often "God the Father," which word "Father" would be, in numerous instances, an unwarrantable pleonasm, if "our heavenly Father,"

[1] John i. 1.

and not a person in the Trinity, were intended. "The Word," by union with human nature, it is supposed, was constituted "Son," and so acted in a subordinate capacity; and so we are told, without further explanation of the mystery in the Godhead, that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." That he died, we know; that he did not die for his own sins, we know;[1] that "in due time Christ died for the ungodly," we know.[2] "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed."[3] It is said of him, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."[4] The terms of salvation for every penitent sinner are, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."[5] "He that believeth on him is not condemned." "Being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."[6] "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."[7] All are invited to accept pardon and salvation by pleading the sufferings and death of this Redeemer; and it is then said, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."[8]

To enforce these offers of mercy, and to supply all needful help in being saved, there is One, equal in his nature with

[1] Dan. ix. 26. [2] Rom. v. 6. [3] Is. liii. 5. [4] Rom. iii. 25. [5] Acts xvi. 31. [6] Rom. v. 9. [7] 1 John ii. 1, 2. [8] Rom. viii. 1.

the Father and the Son, to whom is committed the work of carrying redemption into effect in the hearts of men. The Holy Ghost, by the plan of salvation, succeeds Christ, and strives with men. The Bible is put into their hands; an order of men is appointed for the special purpose of being "ambassadors for Christ," "as though God did beseech them," and they pray them "in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." [1] One day in seven is set apart by divine authority for special attention to this subject. A most touching ordinance is divinely appointed, which every month or two appeals to their senses, and most powerfully to their hearts. It is no less than a simple representation, by two appropriate symbols, of the body and blood of the Redeemer pleading with man, "This do in remembrance of me." [2] Frequently one and another is converted from his sins, and accepts this offered mercy; others confess the reality and beauty of the change, but they continue in their own chosen ways. Members of their families experience this change, and God thus draws them "by the cords of a man, with bands of love;" "but," he is compelled to add, "they knew not that I healed them." [3] And now the angel of death comes into their dwellings; all the softening influences of sickness, and the benign influences of sorrow, persuade them to be reconciled to God, and all in vain. From lips soon to close in death, appeals are made to them with all the love of a wife, or child, or pastor; or, it may be, a partner in business sends word from his dying pillow, and asks them, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" [4]

God in his word has told them that he will confine his efforts for their salvation within the limits of their natural life,

[1] 2 Cor. v. 20. [2] Luke xxii. 19. [3] Hosea xi. 4, 3. [4] Matt. xvi. 26.

and with urgent love he says, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest."[1]

Among the closing words of the Bible these accents fall on their ears like the last notes of a bell that calls to the house of prayer: "He that is unjust let him be unjust still, and he that is filthy let him be filthy still, and he that is righteous let him be righteous still, and he that is holy let him be holy still."[2] The vast majority of all who receive the Bible as the word of God write and testify "how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures;"[3] that there is pardon through his blood; that he "delivered us from the wrath to come;"[4] and that no probation after death is intimated in the Bible.

But notwithstanding all this, men refuse to repent of their sins, and they persist in their repugnance to God. They go into the next world from amidst these influences of mercy, in total disregard of all which has been done to save them.

The question is, What is it reasonable for them to expect? Only two things can take place. Further measures will be used to reclaim them, or, They must be forever given up to sin and its consequences.

It is not for man to say what shall now take place. Will he insist that the sinner shall have no further trial? He must not prescribe limits to the mercy of God. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord."[5] Will man insist that the sinner ought to have another period of probation? He is equally at fault if he dictates to the justice of God. Revelation is the only source of knowledge upon this subject. Those of our race who have received the word of God implicitly, and have

[1] Ecc. ix. 10.
[2] Rev. xxii. 11.
[3] 1 Cor. xv. 3.
[4] 1 Thess. i. 10.
[5] Is. lv. 8.

interpreted that book, as they do all writings, according to its most obvious import, have, with inconsiderable exceptions, believed that eternal punishment is revealed. But it is with the reasonableness of the doctrine that we are now concerned. There is not a doctrine of revelation — God forbid! — which is against reason. It may be above reason in many things, but it never contradicts either the known and established principles of the human conscience and understanding, nor the palpable truths of human experience and observation. Now, upon this ground we plant ourselves, and say, that, so far as we can judge, endless future punishment is reasonable. He who disbelieves the evangelical system cannot prove the doctrine to be reasonable. Finding future, eternal punishment disclosed in the Bible, it commends itself to our understanding and conscience as a reasonable truth.

One objection to it is this. It is said, —

"*Eternal punishment is too long as a penalty for the sins of a short life.*"

None but God can judge here. The important question is, Was the transgressor duly notified? He is in a foreign land, and is made fully acquainted with a law and its penalty, which he thinks is exceedingly severe. The government, however, have special reasons for the enactment; but he prefers the risk of the penalty to the loss of a certain benefit, and is without excuse, for he transgressed with his eyes open.

Is it just for one to lose so much in consequence of so brief a period of transgression? This depends on the information possessed beforehand. A passenger by the steamer does not expect that, if notice of the hour of departure is communicated to him, the bell will toll a whole day, or even an hour, for his dilatoriness. He may, by losing the voyage, change the prospect of life, and one half minute can decide whether it shall be so.

Forgery, arson, manslaughter, conceived and executed in the briefest space of time, have no valid defence in the shortness of the time occupied by the deed. A day is not too short in which to commit a crime which will be punished by imprisonment for life. We take away a man's whole life, and he a young man, for an act committed within one hour.

If a note has matured, bankruptcy is not arrested because the promissor received only one notice.

We probably never heard it objected to eternal *salvation*, that it is too long to be the consequence and reward of this brief life. That heaven is promised to the righteous, and that it will be without end, no one doubts. But what if we should say, as we might with as good reason as in objecting to endless punishment, 'Life is too short in which to merit heaven; we ought to be subjected after death to a longer probation, be placed in new circumstances of trial for a period that should bear some proportion to the greatness of the reward.' What period of trial would be thought an equivalent for measureless felicity, it would be hard indeed to say; and we are therefore led to the principle that the length of time in which good or evil actions take place is no proper measure of their desert. We act upon this principle in every thing.

Much use is made of this objection to endless punishment as urged by the late Rev. John Foster, an evangelical Baptist, of England. He writes a letter to a young ministerial friend who had asked his views on the subject of endless punishment. Mr. Foster says that he has made much less research into this subject than his young friend had probably done, and that he had been "too content, perhaps, to let an opinion or impression admitted in early life dispense with protracted inquiry and various reading." He then says, "The general, not very far short of universal, judgment of divines in affirmation of the doctrine of eternal punishment,

must be acknowledged a weighty consideration. It is a fair question. Is it likely that so many thousands of able, learned, benevolent, and pious men should all have been in error? And the language of Scripture is formidably strong; so strong that it must be an argument of extreme cogency that would authorize a limited interpretation."

But his answer to all this is, in his own words, — "the stupendous idea of eternity," — upon which he proceeds to dwell with great power.

To this, one reply may be, that the great and good men of all evangelical denominations, as capable as Mr. Foster of appreciating the awful idea of eternity, "have generally," and, as he himself says, "not very far short of universally," received this doctrine. Almost every believer in it has, at some time, had some relation or friend whose condition at death excited fearful thoughts, and clothed the grave with more than midnight darkness. The very strongest temptations have thus been presented to believers in the doctrine to find or create insuperable objections to it; yet the vast majority of Christian believers who have lost friends concerning whose condition they entertain but little hope, remain persuaded that the doctrine is revealed. Mr. Foster had no knowledge or penetration which they did not possess; he also "was formed out of the clay;" he could substantiate no claim to have his feelings of repugnance regarded as paramount to the feelings of submission and faith with which his Christian brethren, in the hour of their sorrow, have deliberately declared their belief in this doctrine.

But we are furnished with another reply, in a letter of Mr. Foster himself to Rev. Dr. Harris, on another subject and at a different time, in which he describes this world as he thinks it would strike the inhabitants of another planet. These few words will show the tenor of his remarks: "To me it appears

a most mysteriously awful economy, overspread by a lurid shade. I pray for the piety to maintain a humble submission to the wise and righteous Disposer of all existence. But to see a nature, created in purity, ruined at the very origin, &c., the grand remedial visitation, Christianity, laboring in a difficult progress — soon perverted — at the present hour known and even nominally acknowledged by very greatly the minority of the race — its progress distanced by the increase of the population — thousands every day passing out of the world in no state of fitness for a pure and happy state elsewhere, — O, it is a most confounding and appalling contemplation." So he describes this world in very much the same way in which he has depicted future, endless retributions; and we may say that had he been told of such a world as ours, under the government of a good God, he would have had misgivings and objections not unlike those which he has expressed on the subject of future punishment. He excites distrust and fear in our minds with regard to the government of the world. We should not feel happy in the thought that God reigns, nor could we see how the multitude of the isles should be glad thereof, should we live under the influence of such views as those of this truly able and excellent man.

It is objected again that "*a mere mortal cannot, by any sins which he can commit, merit endless punishment.*"

Whether he actually does incur it, we say again, must be assertained from revelation. In reply to this objection, we are to remember that it is not one single transgression which God is called upon to punish — a sudden, unpremeditated, or even one deliberate act, for which act the sinner is sorry; but it is continued disobedience, in opposition to all the methods of divine love and wisdom employed to turn us from our sins. Conscience has faithfully done her work until she was seared; warnings and threatenings have exhausted their strength; the

cross of Christ and the influences of the Holy Spirit, have proved of no avail.

There may be little sins against some of the gods of heathenism, but there can be no little sin against Jehovah. But how is man "little"? He has competent knowledge of the character of God; he is only "a little lower than the angels,"[1] and has dominion over all the works of God. He can comprehend the starry heavens; he is Godlike in his original nature, for "in the image of God made he him." The sublime truths which God has revealed to man show what estimate God has of man's capacity and responsibility. A finite creature can insult the majesty of heaven as deliberately and intelligently as the archangel; he can annihilate the authority of God in his own soul, and wherever he has influence: if all finite creatures should do this, — and there are no creatures who are not finite, — there would be no moral universe, no divine government.

It is said, "It is a libel on the character of God to believe that he can bear to punish his children forever."

Had we known beforehand that God was to create offspring whom he would teach to call him by the endearing name of Father, and then should see four hundred of these his children in such a scene of indescribable agony and destruction as was recently witnessed on board the "Central America," we should say, the analogy between divine and human parentage surely is imperfect. God is something besides a "Father;" he is King and Judge. Men never discipline their children by drowning them, and burning them, and tearing them in pieces. The destruction of the Canaanites for their iniquity is so terrible, that some, for that reason, reject the Old Testament, which approves it. God's judgments are a great deep. True, "he

[1] Psalm viii.

made birds and flowers;" all the exquisite sensibilities of the human system are his gift; the natural and moral world are, by his love and skill, most beautifully adapted to each other; and will he hide his face forever from a single child? No, not unless that child persists to hide his face and withhold his heart from God. "For he will not lay on man more than is right, that he should enter into judgment with God."[1] He is seeking continually to make his children love him. The Sabbath day perpetually reminds every one of them of God. Church spires every where point to heaven. Church-going bells call men to prayer, and to hear the gospel. Friends, by their words and example, persuade men to love and serve God. How many people are there, probably, in this city, for example, who have not had, and do not have, not only opportunity, but persuasion of some kind, within and without, to fear God? There are few, if any, who see the lightning or hear the thunder, without having the thought of their accountableness flash through their minds. If but a hearse appears in the streets, all who see it are left without excuse should they die in their sins. "By the things which are made" God is so "clearly seen," that even idolaters are "without excuse;" much more they who, to say no more, live where the Christian Sabbath, like the quiet moon, at short and regular intervals, arrests and turns the mighty tide of human affairs, so that even the prisoner in his cell feels it lifting and bearing him heavenward, and the Sabbath-breaker himself, by the very increase of his gains on that day, or by the opportunity for sloth, or by the feeling which leads him to hasten or delay his drive, to avoid the church-going people, has conviction of sin and admonition of duty sufficient to bar excuses and to make him speechless in the day when God rises up to judgment.

But at last the day of life is over — the period within which

[1] Job xxxiv. 23.

God told us that his efforts for our conversion would be limited, and after which, he warned us, would be the judgment, and endless retribution. Some said that this was impossible in the nature of things. They were told that the Bible literally declared it. They said that it was figurative, or a parable. They were reminded of the words of Jesus, the final Judge, relating the very words of the last sentence upon the wicked. They said that the God who made spring, and birds, and flowers, and human affections, and who is himself a Father, could not see men suffer without end. But the love of God, they are told, is not seen in spring, and birds, and flowers, and human happiness, so much as in this, that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."[1] But all this proves of no avail; they go to "the judgment seat of Christ," "every one," to "receive the things done in the body, whether it be good or bad."[2]

Shall God now violate the fundamental characteristic of their constitution, that is, free agency, and instead of governing them by motives, treat them like moulded clay, which, when it does not suit him, the potter presses together again on the wheel, and makes of it another vessel? That is not such a government as God chooses to administer, but a government of motives, addressed to free and accountable creatures. What shall now be done with those whom God has failed in his efforts to turn and save? Some reply, "He ought to punish them till they do repent."

And yet they who say thus, many of them, tell us, as one great argument against future, endless punishment, that "we have misery enough in this world, without being punished in

[1] John iv. 10. [2] 2 Cor. v. 10.

the next." Therefore, by their own acknowledgment, God has already used dreadful methods of chastisement with them; so great that they say there cannot be any future punishment of sin. Yet these mortal agonies of body and mind, these life-long trials and sorrows, have failed to make them love and serve God. Will it be useful that he should proceed and punish them further? Can God heap upon them sorrows more bitter than they have felt at the graves of their loved ones, and at their return from those graves to their desolated dwellings? Are there other strokes of his lightnings better fitted to rive and consume their spirits than those with which they have already been struck? It is not reasonable. The wrath of God is not "the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation."[1] We have a different opinion respecting our Maker from that which leads one to believe that anger, fury, vengeance are the perfection of his governmental influences; as they surely are, if they are more efficacious than the love which he has manifested in the Son of his love.

God himself says, "What more could be done to my vineyard that I have not done in it?"

We suppose, therefore, — and we think it is reasonable, — that if we do not repent of our sins, and are not willing to accept Christ, and all the efforts of mercy to save us, God will suffer us to sin against him forever. He will not hinder us from having our own chosen way. Shall we rebel against this? Will we say, "This is cruel; it is tyrannical, unworthy of God, our heavenly Father, to let us have our own choice? That choice, we know, is not good; but he ought to make us good. What! suffer us to sin against him forever!" We chose to sin against him as long as we could; and now it is not unreasonable to give us the desire of our hearts. But God may say, This I will do. I will place all of you who

[1] Rom. i. 16; 1 Cor. i. 18, 24.

sin, in a world by yourselves, from which I and my friends will forever withdraw. Perhaps we secretly say, "If this be all, we do not so much object. This is not hell." But suppose that when God withdraws from us, he takes every thing away with him. This present world cannot be a pattern of a world where all is sin. For this world was made for an upright race, and when they fell, nature itself, in most things, survived the fall. We are not to suppose that the wicked will find themselves in a world of beauty, where they may reconstruct society after the model of the present life, and where they shall enjoy liberty and all the blessings of God's providence. But if God departs from them, it is reasonable to suppose that he will leave them no proofs of his love to them whatever; for he says, "Woe also unto them when I depart from them."[1] He would take away, we must suppose, all their domestic relations, friendships, social pleasures, books, every pursuit of knowledge, music, travels, quiet sleep, morning and evening salutations of loved ones, and change the whole face of nature; for God would not have made so many things just to give pleasure, had he made this world for the permanent abode of rebels; and when we leave this world, if we have shut God out of it by our sins, we cannot expect to find a beautiful world like this prepared for our abode. It is of great use to us to see good people here; we feel safer to think that there are churches and meetings for prayer, and the Lord's supper, though we decline any part in them. These things are for our profit; and the good and the bad share alike, because this is a state of probation, not of reward. But if we refuse to be won by these things, then it may be as though a certain vision of Jeremiah were, in some sense, fulfilled in our future abode. He describes Jerusalem wasted, and all her people gone into captivity. "I beheld the

[1] Hosea ix. 12.

earth, and lo, it was without form and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and lo, there was no man, and all the birds of heaven were fled."[1] When God tells us what heaven is,[2] he describes the population of them that are "without — dogs, sorcerers," and others; as though he said, "I will gather sinners together in one place, bring together all the obscene, liars, murderers, pirates, idolaters, into one community with you whose tastes have been cultivated; for why should I discriminate between those who have together rebelled against me, and rejected my Son?" If to any, by reason of their great accomplishments of mind and manners, this will be specially intolerable, they must remember that in those endowments they have special motives and helps towards being saved, and to save others. "Thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things;" but "thou mayst be no longer steward."

Would there be any thing unreasonable in this? In view of all which God has done to save the soul, in view of the full notice which we have received that this life is our only period of probation, and the opportunities which we have had to secure eternal life, we cannot accuse the Almighty of injustice if we find that there is no opportunity after death to repent and believe the gospel. Above all, we cannot reasonably expect, from what we already know of God, that having expended upon us all which the gospel of his grace includes, he will, upon the failure of that which is "the brightness of his glory," put us into a prison, and wear out our spirits with suffering, and thus reduce us, like refractory culprits, to a state of mind in which we cannot refuse to love him. Such is not the Being whom many of us delight to call our heavenly Father. If any worship such a God as this, they have their

[1] Jer. iv. 23–25. [2] Rev. xxii. 14.

liberty to do so; but let them not complain to us of unreasonableness in our views of God.

It seems reasonable, therefore, to believe, in common with the vast majority in all ages of those who receive the Bible as the word of God, that all who fail to repent and accept the pardon of their sins through Jesus Christ in this life, will at death find those words to be literally true, which seem to be placed among the last words of the Bible by divine arrangement, for the solemn effect which they always have upon the human heart: "He that is unjust let him be unjust still, and he that is filthy let him be filthy still, and he that is righteous let him be righteous still, and he that is holy let him be holy still. And behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."[1]

As to the heathen, we are not their judge. The first and second chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, however, are very explicit with regard to them. "The invisible things of God," that is, "his eternal power and Godhead," "are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; so that they are without excuse."[2] We are told that "they hold the truth," but "in unrighteousness;" therefore it is said, "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against" them.[3] We sometimes hear a passage, in this connection, quoted thus: "For as many as have sinned without law shall also be *judged* without law." Not so. It reads, "For as many as have sinned without law shall also *perish* without law.[4] It is a common remark, but it will bear repetition, "We shall either find the heathen in heaven, if we ourselves are there, or see good and satisfactory reasons for their not being there."

Far too much is made of the question, and great injury has been done by it, whether or not there will be literal fire in

[1] Rev. xxii. 11, 12. [2] Rom. i. 20. [3] Rom. i. 18. [4] Rom. ii. 12.

the future punishment of the wicked. It is well to discourage such a discussion. We shall have bodies after the resurrection, for "all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." Our bodies will, of course, be of a less spiritual nature than the soul, otherwise two souls will be conjoined in one person. We naturally suppose that the object of the body will be to relate the soul to an external world; as glass, in the telescope, though a grosser object than the eye, helps vision, so the body will aid the soul hereafter, as here. This we all admit. Now, in what element, if any, the righteous or the wicked will live hereafter, is of no possible importance to us, seeing that the primary source of happiness or misery with intelligent creatures must be mental, and if there be external sources of pleasure or suffering, they are mere circumstances in their condition; they are not the substantive occasion of their joy or sorrow. To represent the Most High as inflicting tortures on the bodies of the wicked strikes us as unworthy of the conceptions concerning God with which the Bible inspires us. A world of sinners, unmitigated by the presence of a single good being, God himself and all his restraining influences forever withdrawn, needs no penal fires to increase our sense of its horror; indeed, they rather detract from our ideas of the most intense misery. If all that is personified by "death," and all the mental, moral, and social elements of what is called "hell" are to be "cast into a lake of fire," every intelligent person would suppose that the element containing them would be of little importance. They would be no more to the inhabitants than the element of water could be to Pontius Pilate, whom a great poet represents as in a flood, his hands above it, and he washing them,

"Which still unwashen strove,"

in memory of his taking water to wash those hands of a certain prisoner's blood. No one would suppose that living in the element of water could be a principal source of misery in such a punishment. But we read, "Then shall the King say also unto those on his left hand, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.'" Figurative language, it may justly be said, is out of place in a judicial sentence, for, of all utterances, this should be as strictly literal as justice itself.

If, now, we should believe, on this single passage, or for any other reason, that the element in which future retribution will be administered is declared to be fire, instead of air, or water, or earth, we should do vast injustice to the subject of divine retributions to intrude the idea. I refer to it, therefore, for a purpose, which seems to me important, of vindicating our belief in future, endless retributions from imputations of grossness and physical barbarity. We use the language of the Saviour and of his apostles without hesitation, and there we stop. Any details of the curse, and of the punishment, and of what is "prepared," would add nothing to our conceptions of the dread sentence from the lips of Him whose "left hand" was once nailed to the atoning cross, for those who "depart."

If the language of Christ in that last sentence, and in other places, relating to future punishment, be figurative, we remember that, by the laws of the human mind, figurative language is generally resorted to in consequence of insufficiency in literal terms. We do not cavil at the use of figurative speech, nor subtract from its intention, when we know that the speaker is serious and earnest. If a master in chancery informs a man that his property has proved "to be zero," the man will not remind his friends, nor insist with his creditors, that the expression is only metaphorical.

We believe that the threatening of future, endless punishment has been one great means of what little fear of God there has hitherto been in this world; and that it has been a powerful element in the causes which have led to the salvation of the "multitude which no man can number," who "fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them." We are not ashamed to say that we believe in, and we fear, the everlasting wrath of God, and that this has been a means of leading us to believe in "his Son from heaven, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." [1]

Nor is our doctrine one that narrows and enfeebles the mind. It is connected with a stupendous system of truths. It leads us to believe that this world, small as it is, is made use of by the Creator to illustrate principles in his government, "to the intent that now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places may be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." [2]

That this world is the smallest but two in the planetary system, is no more a valid objection to its being used for infinite purposes of wisdom, than it would be to object to the size of the slate on which La Place wrought out his logarithms for his Mecanique Celeste. God is solving problems in this world with sin; the results may enter into the practical knowledge of unnumbered worlds, as the answers to problems are transferred to books of navigation, and are the confidence of them that are afar off upon the sea. Our own Lexington and Bunker Hill were not too small for transactions which brought this nation into being; nor did one field in Waterloo prove too small to have the destiny of half of Europe decided there. The cross of a Redeemer has stood here; things are associated with it which we are told "angels desire to look into." [3] "All things were created by him and for him, and he is before

[1] 1 Thess. i. 10. [2] Eph. iii. 10. [3] 1 Peter i. 12.

all things, and by him all things consist."[1] "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man." So we believe in a sacrifice for sin, which is made infinitely efficacious by the presence in the person of Jesus of the Word, who was "with God," and "was God." In such a Redeemer and in such a redemption we see our infinite ruin. We believe that God will show, by means of those who reject this redemption, what sin is capable of doing, and then, by letting sinners eat of the fruit of their own ways, and filling them with their own devices, perhaps he will, by the help of it, so instruct and govern the universe of free, accountable beings, that it shall forever be said, "Dominion and fear are with him; he maketh peace in his high places."[2] An endless heaven is prepared, in which the righteous will have bodies "fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." Thus being associated most wonderfully with the incarnate Word, they will be the objects of love with all who worship at the throne of God and of the Lamb, and not only so, but with Him who will say of us, with more joy than that with which he regards the ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance, "I have found the sheep that was lost."

But, in the mean time, we read that "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ;" — such is the crime and the accusation; — "who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that be

[1] Col. i. 16, 17. [2] Job xxv. 2.

lieve (for our testimony among you was believed) in that day."[1]

The penalty annexed to a law is all that makes it a law; without a penalty, it is no more a law than an extract from a sermon. The penalty is the expression of the lawgiver's opinion of the crime. There is something in weak and insufficient penalties, and in bail far below the offence, which makes the heart faint and sick. It must inspire holy beings with confidence, who know what sin is, and what it deserves, and what it would do to them if it could triumph, to see and feel that there is a Supreme Being, who, with all his love, has no doting fondness, nor any weakness, but can bear to see the wicked suffer, if necessary and right. They consider his word, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," and they see in it the foundation of their confidence in God. How much evil is there in sin? It is itself evil; anti-governmental, subverting every form of happiness; its tendency, as we have seen, is to dethrone God. If God affixes less than an infinite punishment to sin, it shows that he considers it less than an infinite evil. If the penalty threatened against such a sin be less than infinite, the natural inference would be, To sin against God is not an infinite evil, for it has no infinite punishment. Men could say, and all races on probation could say, If we sin against God, our punishment will come to an end; and after that, there will be an eternity in heaven, in comparison with which our immense duration of punishment will become as a drop to the sea. Men, they would say, escaped at last, and are now universally and forever happy in heaven; and so world after world might become rebellious, and their histories be like those of earth. We think it reasonable to say, Far better that the comparatively few from earth should bear the consequences of their sin forever, than that, by an insufficient

[1] 2 Thess. i. 7–10.

punishment of sin, disaster should come upon realms we know not how many and great. I say this to meet the objection that the everlasting punishment of any, whether comparatively a few, or even of many, is to be a blot on the government of God. For the whole question may resolve itself into this: Is it best that God should have a moral government? If that involves the possibility of sin, some would say, No; others would say, Yes, provided the sinners might be as free in their sin as the righteous are in their righteousness; then, for the sake of the inconceivable bliss in a universe of intelligent creatures, let there be this government, by motives, and let 'the righteousness of the righteous be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked be upon him.' Angels, it appears, were placed on probation in heaven, and under the most favorable circumstances; man was placed in probation in paradise, with slight inducement to sin; man had a Redeemer in the person of his Creator; angels may have had an equivalent motive to obedience in the immediate presence of their Creator, and in full knowledge of what a forfeiture they would incur by sin. Angels sinned, notwithstanding all that Heaven had done to keep them upright; men perish, notwithstanding the redemption made by their God and Saviour. The illustrations which their eternal punishment will afford of the nature of sin, of the love of God, of divine justice, of free agency, of holiness and its infinite rewards, we say it is not unreasonable to believe, will outweigh the personal sufferings of those who voluntarily sin and perish. We say, voluntarily perish; for God will give to each one according to his deeds. Though there were an inconceivable multitude who should perish, yet in the immense variety of their individual cases, discriminating justice will be weighed out to them with a care and exactness unapproached by the exquisite balances in the mint, or with the apothecary. Could holy beings get the impression that

there is one soul from Christian, pagan, or heathen lands, with whom its Maker had dealt harshly, or laid upon him one stripe more than was his due, there would be sudden silence among them; they would look one upon another; and the seraphim who, in their worship, spread more of their six wings to cover themselves with than to fly, would spread them all to fly, — whither they might not say, but only where they might no longer be constrained to cry, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of Hosts! No such occasion ever will be given for such loss of confidence; but they will say, "Alleluia! salvation, and glory, and honor, and power unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his judgments."[1]

As those who desire to be of good repute with you as men of understanding, and of humane, generous sentiments and feelings, we do not hesitate to say, that the "reasonableness of future, endless punishment" is as plain to us as its scriptural proofs.

If, when we read that it would have been good for Judas Iscariot that he had never been born, and therefore that there is no eternity of happiness for him, to follow any vast period of expiatory suffering, — if we are expressly told that blasphemy against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, neither in this world nor in that which is to come, — if it be true that Satan and his angels are reserved in chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day, and if then a part of our race are to be consigned to the same abode with them for retribution, — whose eternity is expressed by the selfsame word which is employed to designate the duration of happiness for the righteous; and for these and other equally powerful representations of the Bible, we have unwavering faith in the doctrine as a revealed truth; the confidence with which we

[1] Rev. xix. 1.

believe it may be judged of when we say, that it commends itself to our reason as truly as it does to our faith. How it commends itself to our faith, may be learned by knowing that the doctrine does not stand as an isolated thing in our belief. The laws of comparative anatomy, so to speak, may be applied to it, and we say, If certain things are true, which in our earliest discoveries of practical truth we are confident are essential to salvation, then this doctrine is as really required, as immense vertebræ of an unknown animal require that the undiscovered ribs should also be immense. An astronomer notices the slower or quicker rate of motion in a planet at one part of its orbit, and he tells you that there must be a world beyond it, not yet seen; he tells you its size, its gravity, its orbit, its rate of motion; and when at last Neptune is discovered, it proves to be precisely that which Uranus dictated by his perturbations. So that the doctrine of endless retribution is not, with us, a mere dogma; it belongs to a great scheme of revealed truth which we call the "plan of redemption," all of which stands or falls together.

The key to this great scheme — "which," we are warranted to say, "in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men *as* it is now revealed unto the holy apostles and prophets" — is the Supreme Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Believe that, and logically you are led to receive the whole. Reject that, and you cannot consistently believe the doctrine now under discussion.

> "'What think ye of Christ?' is the test
> To try both your state and your scheme."

The Creator, the Second Person in the Godhead, takes our nature; that mysterious, complex Being goes to the cross, and dies. Then the atonement follows, as a matter of course;

and if an atonement is made for sin, then the wages of sin is death. If man can atone for sin by ages of suffering, and then reach heaven, it is unreasonable, we say, to believe that this stupendous sacrifice would have been made. So that Christ is "the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation." There are words of mighty import in that passage: "Who hath made him *to be sin* for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." [1]

"THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH." Some say, The wages of sin is conscience; some, The wages of sin is discipline; some, The wages of sin is imprisonment for a great, indefinite period, for the purpose of punishment and restoration. Let us adhere to the Bible: "The wages of sin is death." If you call it figurative, the laws of rhetoric teach us that a meaning totally opposite to the nature of a figure cannot be true. The ruling idea conveyed by the word *death* is *termination*. If you search the Bible for instances in which *death* means a limited infliction, and so reduce the side of the equation in the passage from which the text is taken, you must by necessity reduce the other side; and thus, so much as you diminish *death*, you must diminish *life;* for if death be not death, neither is life eternal life.

Notice also the two contrasted words in the verse from which the text is taken: "The *wages* of sin is death; but the *gift* of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Death for sin is "wages" — something earned or merited. Eternal life is not "wages" to us; it is to angels. The law is the angels' gospel. They stand by obedience. But to us eternal life, if we have it, is without works — a gift, unmerited, free. Having forfeited heaven by sin, God stands ready to give it to us on certain terms, the terms and method themselves being no less wonderful than the gift.

[1] 2 Cor. v. 21.

Need I remind you that this is a subject which, for each of us, is of unparalleled interest? Each of us may, without presumption, say with his Maker, "I live forever." If God says, "Of my years there is no end," the words may be responded to by us. Of my years there is no end. But each of us is also a sinner, ruined and lost. We believe that sin can be forgiven only by faith in Jesus Christ, who, by his sufferings and death, is a substitute for the sinner, and constitutes for him a righteousness which takes away his condemnation, and prepares for his sanctification and salvation. We are told that there is salvation in no other way, and, moreover, that unbelief of it, where there has been sufficient opportunity to understand it, proceeds from a wrong state of feeling, and is therefore morally wrong, and that such unbelief is declared by Christ and his apostles to be the greatest of all pardonable sins. Christ says, "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Do we who preach tell the people this? Surely it is not possible for the Son of God to suffer and die in our stead, and we be innocent if we do not believe in him; but we shall add to the guilt of sin the heavier guilt of rejecting the offered remedy, procured at such infinite expense. The sight of Christ will close our lips if we are not saved. He portrayed the scenes of the last judgment; the separation, the welcome of the righteous, and the sinner's doom. And having done this, he went to "a place which is called Calvary," and died to save us from the condemnation which he had so faithfully and affectingly portrayed. If we fail to believe in him, and he therefore fails to redeem us from our sin, we must experience the truth of our text. And when the judgment is passed by, and the wicked have gone to their own place, and angels stand in silence, weeping, and thinking of their end, methinks I hear one of them break the silence and say, After the Saviour had suffered for them,

it is an infinite pity that they should perish. And may many (may it be all!) of you, who now are unbelievers, but then redeemed sinners, continue the strain and say, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Salvation! Salvation! Every one of us can be saved. "For 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." O Saviour! how sweet thy name! how precious thy dying love, in connection with this theme! Thou art our sun, pouring celestial beauty on those clouds which are round about God, and painting on this darkness and tempest at which we have gazed, a rainbow in sight like unto an emerald. May we all cast our crowns at thy feet, saying, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

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N. A.

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INSTANTANEOUS CONVERSION.

The difference in the judgments of men with regard to Religious Conversion, is owing to the difference in their views with respect to the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. They who believe that a vicarious sacrifice for sin has been made by One who "was in the beginning with God," and "was God," and was "made flesh," are led to expect and to find something in the relation of men, as sinners, to God, which makes such an atonement indispensable to salvation. It confirms their faith in the tremendous penalty threatened against sin; it shows them not only the possibility, but the justice, of pardon founded on such a sacrifice; and the promised supernatural change, by the Holy Spirit, of all who are thus pardoned, is no more than they might expect would follow.

If the Saviour be, to some, Supreme God, but to others only "the young man of Nazareth;" or if he be to some an atoning sacrifice for sin, and to others only an efflorescence of human perfectibility; and again, if he be to us One who was "with God," as well as "God," and to others merely a superhuman testimony of divine love, a created being greatly endowed, — our views and feelings on religious subjects will totally differ in things esteemed by some to be essential to salvation. They who hold that men need only instruction and moral

culture to secure their eternal welfare; that Christ was merely a messenger, teacher, example, and only thus a Saviour; that sin is its own punishment, in this world; and that death is invariably followed either by immediate happiness, or, at least, by some merciful, disciplinary measures, — must look with sincere disapprobation upon any thing which is sudden and impetuous in religious experience, and chiefly because of the false theology which they think is thereby inculcated. Instead of a popular religious excitement being to them like

> "——— Morn, her steps in the Eastern clime
> Advancing, ———"

and sowing

> "——— the earth with Orient pearl,"

they say, "An enemy hath done this;" tares, broadcast, are to disappoint and sadden those who, they think, are laboring, by the only right processes, in the great field of morals and religion. Religious doctrines, therefore, are evidently far from being mere speculations; for surely nothing can be more practical than things which have power to heave society, like the sea, from land's end to land's end; and those great religious excitements, called "Revivals of Religion," are created only by these doctrines.

It is not the object, now, to discuss these doctrines, but to offer an exposition of our views on the great subject of religious conversion, as connected with these truths; and this for the information, respectfully and kindly, of those who think that evangelical Christians give undue prominence to the subject of instantaneous conversion, and that we depreciate the value and importance of a continuous, uniform life of piety. It is thought that we aim to excite a certain "agony" of soul, which we call "experiencing religion," and that we

therefore place little or no stress on religion, viewed as the great work of life; or, if we do not thus intentionally represent the subject, that at least we encourage a disproportioned view of the one act of obtaining forgiveness.

That such is the general impression with those who do not entertain evangelical views, is obvious from their current strictures, in writing and conversation. A fair specimen of these strictures comes to hand, just now, in a communication in one of our daily papers;* and being in no respect different from many of the same class, it will serve as an illustration of the objections and difficulties in the minds of many with regard to the subject. The following are extracts: —

"THE REVIVAL.

"To the Editor of the Boston Courier:

"There is, it seems, enough superstition left in the world to call this a special visitation of God; or there is a hazy philosophy, that looks upon it as a providential tide in the moral world. — A false idea of religion itself is spread among the people. Religion — by which I understand a right heart towards God and towards men — is that which we are to attain by the reasonable and strenuous exertion of all our powers, God helping, and the constant use of all the means provided in nature, in life, and in all holy ordinances and institutions. But instead of a man's feeling that he is put to learn in this great school of God's ordaining, — to learn of Christ day by day, — to take into his heart and into daily heart-meditation the Sermon on the Mount, he is sent away into some little, exceptional revival school of man's making; and there 'he gets' — what? Why, 'religion.' Which is as great a mistake as if a youth, by a week's paroxysm of anxiety about his studies, instead of a whole university course, should be said to get learning. I do not object to epochs and resolves in the religious and moral course; but I object to this notion of having

* Boston Courier, April 15, 1858.

attained the thing in question, instead of having resolved to seek it and finally to attain it.

"But it may be said that the parallel between learning and religion does not hold; that for learning man has his pristine powers, but that in his spiritual nature he is all diseased, sick, and paralyzed. Admitting it were so, still I say that the revival method of cure is not the right one. A judicious physician would say to the sick man, as a general prescription, 'You must take exercise; you must walk out daily; you must carefully regulate your diet; you must deny yourself all unhealthy excitement; it will be hard work for you to get health, and will take a long time.' 'No,' says the patient, 'I had rather go to such a shop, and take a certain *nostrum* they have there; or a shock from a galvanic battery.' It won't cure him."

The difficulty with this unknown but doubtless sincere writer, and with all whom he represents, is this: he makes no account of the great change in our relation to God as sinners, which, all evangelical Christians believe and teach, is constituted by an act of faith in the sacrifice of Christ. Such a change we find to be insisted on by Christ and the apostles, as the first essential step in the work of salvation. It is attended with a conviction of being under condemnation for sin, and with sorrow for sin as committed against God; a sincere turning of the soul to God, pleading the work of the Redeemer as the ground of forgiveness. Doing so, we are delivered from condemnation, and at the same time a preternatural change is wrought in us by the power of the Holy Spirit, which is called in the Bible being "born again." This we profess, through the mercy of God, to have experienced, and people who sit under evangelical preaching experience it. They who have never known it may not properly adduce their negative testimony against our positive knowledge. We have learned from the Bible and experience that there is a

certain way of beginning a religious life, and without this there is, for us, no true religion. We do not find the Saviour declaring, first of all, that "He who lives a good life shall not come into condemnation," but, "He that believeth shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life," and that, too, before his good life has tested his sincerity. This must precede a good life; for without this preternatural change accompanying this act of believing on Christ, we are not capable of spiritual feelings. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." *

So that if Christ has made an atonement for sin, and there is an act of regenerating grace accompanying faith in it, no one can be a Christian who does not receive Christ in his great office. We do well to understand fully what is required of us, and what is done for us, in becoming Christians. There is nothing so important as this. To be born is an everlasting calamity unless we are born again.

It is with all men, we believe, as it would be if we were guilty of a capital crime. We cannot return from the scene of our transgression to our dwellings and places of business as though nothing had happened, saying, "Good citizenship consists in doing well all the time, not in being cleared by a court of justice." In our case, good citizenship would consist, first of all, in being cleared at law. But we say, "Can being cleared at law make us innocent, virtuous, and in every respect good?" Being justified by the proper authority, it may be replied, is necessary to life itself; this must take place before we can speak even about living, much less about living a good life. Our life itself is forfeited to human justice. "To begin and be good" is not the divinely appointed method of being saved, but to be "justified" from our sins by exercising

* 1 John v. 12.

faith in the sufferings and death of Christ as a satisfaction to divine justice, and thus to receive, by the grace of God, a change of nature. A good life is the necessary consequence of being set free from the condemning sentence of the law.

When we hear one say, in reply to this, "Religion is the work of a life; it cannot take place at once," we think of the captain of a vessel who, in a dark night, is sailing towards Cohasset Rocks instead of Boston Harbor, and who should say to his mate, entreating to let him change the helm, "A safe voyage does not consist in one change of the helm; there must be a safe run." But in his case a good voyage will consist, first of all, in changing the helm. So with us. God deals with us only as sinners till we are justified by faith in Christ. He who "has not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God," in his essential office and work, is, according to the Bible, "under condemnation."

As in a long and complicated difficulty between man and man, a definite understanding and reconciliation, a proposal and an acceptance of conditions of peace, are indispensable, making all subsequent acts between the parties easy and free, so this one act of believing on Jesus Christ as an offered sacrifice for sins, and the sense of pardon and acceptance with God which comes with it, are the occasion of exceeding peace and joy by the very definiteness which they give to our religious hope. This is referred to when it is said, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." On every other plan of reconciliation with God, we never know when we have done enough. But we speak the experience of multitudes without number when we say, that there is wonderful power in the atonement by Christ to satisfy the conscience at once. Hence, the sudden and great joy which accompanies conversion, when the subject of it is fully aware that he has exercised saving faith.

We experience the great practical value of this way of pardon by an act of faith in the Redeemer, at dying beds. A man arrested by sudden sickness, or by an accident, has but a few uncertain hours to live; yet, though he has always forgotten his God and Saviour, we are instructed, by our views of the gospel, to offer pardon to him, upon condition of his accepting the sacrifice of the Son of God as the propitiation for his sins. Believing in instantaneous regeneration, and in pardon, as a consequence of the simple act of faith in Christ, we approach a dying sinner with confidence. Salvation will ensue upon his first act of faith in Christ, as really as though a life of piety could succeed. We are not compelled to feel that by his neglect he has lost his chance of salvation; but the mercy which provided pardon for us without adequate merit on our part, abounds "much more" "where sin has abounded." Some say this is too easy a way of being saved, and thus our system appears too merciful. Others say it must encourage men to put off repentance in hope of that last extreme chance of being saved. No doubt many do thus trespass upon the long suffering of God, and some of them find, alas! that it is to their destruction. But as to the dying thief, so to others, Christ crucified affords mercy through faith, without works, in a dying hour. The selfsame way of justification and salvation by faith in Christ, without works, we propose to the sinner on the verge of time, and to the youth with the prospect of long life. To the youth we say, that to him who trusts in Christ, God imputes righteousness freely without works. And to the dying man who has no works, and will never have any, to offer, we preach the same glorious gospel of the blessed God.

We must be careful not to lose the opportunity of salvation by mistaking the only true beginning of it, and substituting the whole future method of a good life for the entrance itself,

which we must pass before we can be, in the scriptural sense, Christians. Christ says, "Enter ye in at the strait gate." Entering a gate is not "the work of a life." The road which follows may be long, but much time is not spent in passing a turnpike gate. Sometimes, when searching for a strange place, we suddenly, to our surprise, find ourselves there. We took the right turn without being aware of it; and thus many, in their anxiety and confused feelings, really exercise true submission, and find themselves at peace with God, without being aware, at the time, that they had done so great an act as that of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Every thing, therefore, depends on the way in which we propose to begin the Christian life. There is no such thing as entering the way to heaven wrong, and coming out right, for God has only one method of receiving us. When we insist on this we appear to some illiberal. But we did not invent the way of salvation. We did not fix its terms. We speak only that which we find revealed, and which we have, by our experience, found to be true. For we discovered that, before we could proceed in religion, the atonement of Christ must take effect "for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." We needed, first of all, forgiveness and reconciliation. This we sought and found by faith in the atoning work of Christ. After that, a life of virtue and piety, of love and obedience, of growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, was seen to be required, and we saw it to be provided for, through the renewing and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, who has an equal part with the Redeemer in the work of saving man.

We now proceed to the second part of our subject. Indispensable as we find the act of justification to be, and stren-

uously as we insist that men must experience it, and, with it, at one and the same time, regeneration, we also insist that this is only preparatory to something else. True, the dying man who believes is saved by his faith, without its accompanying evidence and fruit of good works; and he experiences the renewing of his nature, for Christ's sake, in connection with his faith. But, to borrow the inspired expression, "they which live" are to evince their faith by certain consequences flowing from it, without which their faith is vain. The apostle says to those "who have obtained like precious faith with us through the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ our Lord," "And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue." For they have only begun to experience the great purpose for which they were converted.

To be a Christian — blessed be God — is not merely to obtain a verdict of acquittal. It was not for this alone than the plan of human redemption began "before the world was." The work of atonement, and the influences of the Holy Spirit, have not achieved their great design when the sinner is simply discharged from the punishment which he has merited. "He shall save his people from their sins." "God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, by turning every one of you away from his iniquities."

It is not to be concealed, that some are entirely satisfied with having a hope that they are forgiven.

If we should see a child who had done wrong, and had been weeping, and who had obtained forgiveness for some great sin, exulting with his playmates, and saying, "I am not to be punished," and that should appear to be his sole reflection with regard to the transactions between himself and his father, we should say, "You certainly have light views of your misconduct, and we more than doubt the sincerity of your professed repentance." There is no religion without repentance

of sin. He who, in any way or for any reason, has merely obtained a hope that he shall not be punished, and has not been humbled by the thought of his sinfulness, proceeding from an evil nature, and who does not feel that for the iniquity of his heart and life he deserves nothing but displeasure from God, and that all his future obedience cannot make recompense for his sins, nor abate his obligations for the infinite sacrifice which his sins have cost, and, besides, that he is continually doing and feeling that which, to-day, needs the blood of atonement, as really as when he was first pardoned, has never had proper views of himself, and of forgiveness, and of Christ's atoning and redeeming work. Such a man will be likely, when the novelty of his experience has passed away, to sin again without much compunction. He will have low views of the divine requirements and of holiness. It will be with him as with those who draw money in a lottery, and find it easy to part with that which came at no expense.

But when we feel that the pardon of sin was procured at infinite cost, and the evil of sinning against God — not merely against our own interests, but against God — makes a suitable impression, we dread the thought of repeating those things of which we have repented; we fear, most of all, the thought of sinning against Him who was wounded for our transgressions.

The repentance which is actuated by sorrow, awakened by considerations of the character of God and our obligations to him, is repentance unto life not to be repented of. Inasmuch as doing wrong is our great sorrow, it is not our greatest joy that we are forgiven, but that God will help us to love holiness and to seek for it; our great desire is, to be conformed to the will of God. His law is still our standard; our aim is perfect conformity to his will and image. Thus, being sincerely penitent, the blood of Christ has cleansed us from the legal conse-

quences of sin, and it will progressively cleanse us; that is, lead us to purify ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

We must "add to our faith virtue." In its highest, largest sense, we must be virtuous. We must let religion, like a healthful wind, sweep through all parts of the character, as such a wind is welcomed into the opened apartments of a dwelling where sickness has long infested and infected every thing. We must be improved every way, in our private relations, in our business, in our habits, in our disposition, in our whole character. They "that believe in God" must "be careful to maintain good works." To profess that religion has the ascendency in us, and yet to be deficient in good morals, is so palpable an absurdity that it is every where viewed with disgust. Large portions of the doctrinal Epistles are occupied with exhortations to strict morality. A good man in one of our churches uniformly inquired of candidates for admission to the church, when under examination, whether they loved to read the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm; because he knew that in that psalm we have constant protestations of desires for holiness, and of love for the commandments of God, as well as for his promises. "I will never forget thy precepts, for with them hast thou quickened me." "My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved."

When we are told to add virtue to faith, some prefer to give the more specific, and, as they say, the more strictly correct interpretation to virtue, as meaning *fortitude*, — the original word for *virtue* being derived from the name of Mars. They would therefore regard the apostle as exhorting us, having believed on Christ and professed our new relation to him, to be courageous and firm in our Christian profession; never to be ashamed of our principles nor of our Master; never to be daunted by opposition, or by ill success, nor to cower in

the presence of unbelievers; but when Christ is reproached through the truths which he has enforced upon us, to say, "Let us go forth, therefore, unto him boldly without the camp, bearing his reproach." Surely this is properly included in the term *virtue*, while the real signification of the term, here, seems to require a more extended definition.

Religion is rational; add, therefore, to "virtue, knowledge." "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." The objects of faith are above reason, and incomprehensible; yet there is nothing in one of them which does violence to the human reason; and after the mind has consented to the supremacy of revelation, its preternatural truths are perfectly harmonious with all our feelings; in proof of which, witness the heartfelt satisfaction and joy imparted by the firm belief of the inscrutable things of revelation. As vegetation, which is a great mystery, pours out fruits and flowers upon the earth, so the mysteries of religion are a soil loaded with the richest products. Ignorance is not the mother of devotion. We must be something more than fervent and zealous. Emotion which is not founded in truth soon wearies itself and others. We must be instructed. Some young converts, overjoyed by their discovery of the way to be saved, are tempted to think that they know every thing in religion which is to be known. They will do well to reflect how ignorant they have been all their lifetime; "foolish, disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." And now that "the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards" them has appeared, while it should make them confident and strong in his love and power, it should also make them exceedingly diffident and circumspect, esteeming others better than themselves, "submitting themselves unto the elder," seeking to be instructed by the experience of those of whom they can say, as the apostle Paul, with beautiful modesty, says of some "who also were in Christ before me."

It is a hopeful sign when a young Christian begins immediately to study the Bible, inquiring as to the best ways of reading it for devotional purposes, and for instruction, seeking the best helps in doing so, and manifesting a preference for the word of God above all the uninspired writings even of the best of men. There is no better answer to be given, generally, when young Christians ask us, "What books shall I read?" than to say, "The Bible." The most intelligent believers and the most useful Christians are they who are thoroughly imbued with the spirit and language of the sacred Scriptures. That is a singular commendation, with the reason for it annexed, which is bestowed on the early Berean converts, as being more "noble" than they of Thessalonica, because they "searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

Self-control must now be strengthened. "Add to knowledge, temperance." Religion must master our appetites and passions, through the power of love to God united with the implanted principle of aversion to sin, and love of holiness, which we receive at regeneration. Every thing is defective in our experience if obedience be not a fruit of it. "If a man love me, he will keep my words." "Herein is love, that we keep his commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight." Religion is conformity to God, not a mere hope of being forgiven, not simply a persuasion of having been regenerated. The great object of our redemption is to restore in us the image of God. We are to have the same standard of obedience, — that is, the perfect law of God, — now that we are redeemed from the curse of the law, as we should have were our salvation to depend upon our obedience. Nor is our obligation to keep it lessened by our inability; for the law of God is not graduated upon a moving scale, suiting itself to the different moral capacities of the different subjects of the divine government. The substance of the law is, "Be ye

therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Failing of this, we cannot reduce the requirements of the law to our ability; nor, on the other hand, does sin lose any thing of its guilt, nor human imperfection obtain acceptance at a more favorable rate. But "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness." God cannot cease to demand perfection of us. And if this be unattainable by reason of our apostasy, is the obligation thereby impaired? By no means. Provision for our salvation is made, in the atonement, of another righteousness, "even the righteousness which is of God through faith;" and, at the same time, we are to aim constantly at perfect conformity to God. Some murmur at this, as though it were a hard saying. On the contrary, it is a cause for gratitude that God does still propose to us the perfect standard of his own infinitely blessed nature, as the mark at which we are to aim. He has provided against the certain failure of our best endeavors, by the righteousness of Christ, while he bids us keep our eye fixed on himself as the standard of duty and effort. It is to be our lifelong effort to be increasingly good. "For whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son," not merely to be saved from punishment. It was to maintain the cause of holiness in the universe that our redemption took place. Our forgiveness, regeneration, and final salvation have this for their chief end, to reëstablish the perfect authority of God over us, and, perhaps, to strengthen that authority in other subjects of the divine government. Hence we give evidence that religion has obtained dominion over us, that we possess religion, only as it makes us more and more like Christ. If we give the reins to our appetites and passions, if we are seen hankering after worldly pleasure, if we do not govern our tongues, if our evil tempers and dispositions are not modified, if we are capable of dishonesty or falsehood, a hope of having been con-

verted, and the most splendid religious experience, so called, will not save us from the mortification and dismay which those words of Christ will certainly inflict upon us — "I never knew you."

There is a higher exercise of religious principle even than in self-control as applied to the government of our passions. "Patience" is a more perfect proof that we are bearing Christ's yoke. In the trials of our several conditions, we "have need of patience, that after we have done the will of God, we should inherit the promises." After self-denying, active service, after the most persevering watchfulness against temptation, and 'keeping under the body and bringing it in subjection,' some protracted sorrow or trial, ill health, misfortune, disappointment, some bitter loss, will seem to shut down, like a cloud with no sunlight beneath it, upon our prospect; and then we are called to an exercise of confidence in God, and of submission to him, such as no previous trials occasioned. Great stress is laid in the Bible on "enduring." To bear secret, heavy trials, "with all long suffering and joyfulness," is a preëminent proof that God is our portion, and that his will is our delight. This is pure religion and undefiled.

All this creates in us that habitual holy living which is called "godliness;" the all-pervading influence of godly fear and childlike love becoming an atmosphere in which we have our being. But religion is not merely contemplative. It does not make us satisfied with meditations upon divine things. It is a beautiful illustration of the entirely practical nature of true religion, that social duties are presented as a necessary attendant of godliness. "And this commandment have we from him, that he that loveth God love his brother also." Hence we are told that we must add to godliness "brotherly

kindness." That great proficient in the school of Christ, the apostle John, occupies much of one Epistle in insisting upon love to others as a necessary proof and fruit of loving God. There is a difference between love and kindness. Less passionate, more general in its extent, shedding practical benefits around it by words, and acts, and looks, kindness in the disposition, manners, and conduct is a source of inestimable happiness. It cannot be affected. It is felt most sensitively. It goes where love may not yet go. It is a means of influence which is not surpassed. It can be cultivated. The manners can be amended so as to comport with it. Quickness at discerning, and promptness in relieving, an embarrassment, or an inconvenience, or a positive want, is capable of being increased, and should be studied.

But as to that which the Bible represents as the crown of human excellence, "charity," so different from every other moral quality, no uninspired description, no picture of it, is more impressive, and more readily felt and understood, than when we see it in full exercise, as we almost always do, in dying Christians. When we are dying we love every body. All our animosities subside. We take kind and favorable views of others, so far as justice allows. We embrace all in our affectionate desires and good wishes. When the celebrated JOHN ELIOT, of Roxbury, was near to death, at the age of eighty-six, some one asked him how he did. "Alas!" said he, "my understanding, my memory, my tongue fail me. Every thing fails me except my charity. I think that rather grows than decreases." Dr. Increase Mather, then in London, sent a copy of his son's (Cotton Mather's) Life of Eliot to Richard Baxter, who was near his end, and was suffering with a peculiarly painful illness. Mr. Baxter roused himself and wrote as follows to Dr. Mather: —

"Dear Brother: I thought I had been near dying at twelve

clock, in bed, but your book revived me. I lay reading it until between one and two. I am now dying, I hope, as Mr. Eliot died. It pleased me to read from him my case: [*My understanding faileth, my memory faileth, my tongue faileth,* and my hand and pen faileth,) *but my charity faileth not.*] That word much comforted me." It is well to cultivate that which, on the verge of time, we perceive to be the spirit of the heavenly world. It was said of Mr. Eliot, towards the close of life, "He scented more of the spicy country at which he was ready to put ashore."

It is noticeable that two of the apostles use nearly similar expressions with regard to the preëminence of this Christian quality. Paul says, "*And above all these things,* put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."[1] Peter says, "*And above all things,* have fervent charity among yourselves; for charity shall cover the multitude of sins."[2]

After Peter had finished the enumeration of the things which he says a Christian must add to his "faith," he says, "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful *in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he is purged from his old sins."[3] He means to say that one who rests in merely having, as he supposes, believed on Christ, and does not proceed to the cultivation of a Christian character, takes an extremely limited view of things, has no proper conception of his duty, and brings discredit on his reputation as a convert. Why did he repent? Did he truly repent? If he did, it was not merely to obtain pardon; he became averse to sin; and now, his life will be a constant

[1] Col. iii. 14. [2] 1 Pet. iv. 8. [3] 2 Pet. i. 8, 9.

struggle against it; — as the apostle intimates, when he enjoins upon us to "take the whole armor of God," and when we have "done all, to stand," — that is, waiting and watching, in armor, for those assaults which will surely come. He will no more be satisfied with having been converted, than a man upon a journey is satisfied with merely changing his direction, a finding himself upon the wrong road.

But if we proceed as we began, being still penitent for sin looking for pardon through Christ, depending constantly not on works, nor discouraged at deficiencies and remaining evil within us, but trusting to the righteousness of Christ for justification, and at the same time, while delivered from the condemning sentence of the law, making that law, in all its spiritual application, our rule of life, and so endeavoring to improve in all goodness, — what will follow? "If ye do these things ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." No "strait gate" will open to receive us; but in proportion to our proficiency in goodness will be our welcome and our crown. For, while our works are no the ground of our justification, they are the ground of our reward. One passage, occurring where we should not look for it, expresses in few words the great truth, that sinners justified and saved by mere mercy, are, nevertheless, rewarded in proportion to their goodness: "Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his works."[1] Justice would seem to some more appropriately to be illustrated by such reward; but to those who have forfeited every thing by sin, and whose prayers and praises, even, are accepted only through a propitiation for sin, it surely is "mercy" to afford them the opportunity of increasing in goodness, with its consequences.

[1] Ps. lxii. 12.

These things, therefore, we teach and exhort, insisting upon the one great act of believing on Christ as an atoning sacrifice, by which we obtain peace with God, and receive a preternatural change, which makes spiritual things perceptible and congenial; and then we declare, that this is but the entrance, the enrolment, the initiation; and that the sincerity of this great experience is to be shown by increasing conformity to the will of God. Neither of these two parts of Christian experience can exist without the other.

For a man may be the most perfect of moralists, and if this be all he will yet fail to be saved; because God has not appointed morality to be the ground of justification. A man cannot "have peace with God" till he has had such a sense of sin as to see and feel his need of atoning blood. His morals may be commended by men; but at heart he has had no proper view of sin, nor of his relation to God as a subject of his government. There is no true Christian morality without such a view of sin as God takes of it; and his view of sin is expressed in the great propitiation for sin — in his having "made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

But having exercised faith in this propitiation, and having experienced a change, which is not merely that of the governing purpose, but a work of the Holy Spirit, and which constitutes as real a bias towards good, though constantly affected by our evil nature, as the natural state of the soul is biased towards evil, we strenuously insist that the individual must prove this to have taken place in him, by a life of piety and morality.

It will not be wondered at, therefore, that we make so much of conversion. We do not require a man to tell us the precise time when this change took place. Richard Baxter says that he was once in company with forty ministers who related their

religious experience, and not one of them, so it happened, could specify the time when he was conscious of first believing on Christ. This, indeed, was a rare occurrence; but the cases are not only frequent, — they are such as to inspire the utmost confidence in the reality of a divine work upon the heart, in which the subjects of it cannot point to the time when it took place. As there is a moment when the tide ceases to ebb and begins to flow, there is a moment when the change in our religious feelings and character takes place. There are signs, apart from dates and strict historical knowledge, which evince that saving faith has been exercised, that a preternatural change has been experienced; and finding these signs, we are "confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." We then look for a life of increasing conformity to God. If we find, however, that an individual has never known what it is to trust in the atoning death of the Redeemer, we are sure that he has never experienced the change of nature which is essential to the new spiritual life; because the work of Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart, are inseparable.

There is a way of speaking about the dangers of self-deception, and of warning and cautioning people not to be superficial, which discourages their efforts to do the first essential things in becoming Christians. Neither Christ nor his apostles dwell on the infinite importance of sincerity and perseverance in this way. Let the first things be rightly done, and we may be sure that every thing else will follow in its time and place. For while we do not cease to be free agents after we are converted, but warnings, threatenings, and promises are still addressed to us, showing that the government of God over us is still a government of motives, it is nevertheless true that God has a part to perform in the work of our perseverance

and sanctification. The new nature is indestructible. It does not consist merely in a series of volitions, which may cease, and leave us as we were before; but whoever believes in Christ is born again. He will persevere in holiness and be saved.

Towards midnight, perhaps, we hear some one approach our dwelling, ascend to the lantern, and as quickly descend, leaving a clear, steady light in the lantern, and, it may be, in the midst of wind and rain. We may have been struck with the quickness with which the flame was lighted. Though kindled in an instant, it would burn, day and night, for years; for there is somewhere an unfailing supply which feeds it. Great preparations had been made for that flame, though kindled by a single touch.

So it is with the life of God in the soul. From the foundation of the world that soul was chosen; provision was made for its redemption and salvation; the great plan of mercy in its behalf was arranged in the councils of eternity; instruction, discipline, conviction, all have done their useful, necessary work; but all is in vain unless the hand of the Spirit kindle it into a flame. As the material prepared for the light in the lantern might flow into the air, to the end of time, to no good purpose, if it be not lighted, so all our knowledge of God, and of moral and religious subjects, our natural and acquired endowments, cannot of themselves afford us the light of life. They cannot light themselves. That light is communicated in a moment, and supernaturally. Its consequences are to be eternal, but it is communicated at once.

This is supernatural conversion. Every son and daughter of Adam needs it. Christ told Nicodemus that without it no man can see the kingdom of God. It requires the exercise of our powers and faculties, our choice, our efforts, as really as though there were not divine agency in it. At the

same time there is that connected with it — blessed be God! — which is "not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." We are voluntary and active in this change. We repent, we accept Christ, unconscious of divine aid, yet feeling our entire dependence upon it, and when we comply with the requirements of the gospel in the exercise of our natural powers, it is because "God shines into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God as it is in the face of Jesus Christ." And thus, while it is all of grace, God has so arranged the method by which it is obtained that every one may, by the use of the appointed means, more surely be converted, even, than he can produce light at his lamp by the use of the ordinary means. Not only so, God commands it. He makes it the duty of every one to experience it without delay. "REPENT YE, THEREFORE, AND BE CONVERTED, THAT YOUR SINS MAY BE BLOTTED OUT, WHEN THE TIMES OF REFRESHING SHALL COME FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD."

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3

Number Three.

Truths for the Times.

JUSTIFICATION,

AND

ITS CONSEQUENCES.

ADDRESSED TO

INQUIRERS AND YOUNG CONVERTS.

BY

NEHEMIAH ADAMS, D. D.,
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These publications appear at the suggestion of parishioners, who, on hearing them in other forms at different times, have expressed a desire to see them in print, for the benefit of those who wish to be more acquainted with evangelical doctrines, and with our reasons for believing them.

NUMBER I.

The Reasonableness of Future, Endless Punishment.

NUMBER II.

Instantaneous Conversion and its Connection with Piety.

NUMBER III.

Justification and its Consequences.

NUMBER IV.

(In preparation.)

Our Bible.

The series will be continued at short, regular intervals, while there may seem to be special occasion for an exposition, in this form, of some fundamental doctrinal truth.

N. A.

Boston, *May* 14, 1858.

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JUSTIFICATION

AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

When we read, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin," we see the dawn of the great idea contained in that which is called justification by faith in Christ. Blessed, indeed, must he be to whom God will not impute sin; for if this be secured, all is well. If God does not impute sin, it must be for reasons and upon principles which protect and honor his own character, while the ultimate holiness of those who are pardoned will also be secured. But if there be any thing which we should beforehand pronounce impossible, it would be that sin should not be imputed, or that its punishment should be remitted. With a past life of transgression, with a sinful nature, remaining so till death, it would seem impossible that we could ever, in this world, be in such a relation to God that sin should not be imputed to us. All analogies are against it. Pardon in the state and in the family is followed by conformity to law; but if a citizen or a child should, after being once forgiven, be as blame-worthy as every sinner must ever be in this world, when judged by the perfect law of God, there would be no such thing as not imputing sin. And yet this is the corner-stone of all evangelical truth, "to wit,

that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Jesus Christ, by his sufferings and death, has done that which is imputed to every one who believes in him; it takes the place of the sinner's personal righteousness; so that the sinner, by exercising faith in Christ, is thereby reckoned as innocent, and is treated accordingly. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth;" that is, the law which requires obedience, and threatens death for disobedience, accomplishes its end in every one who believes in, and pleads, the sufferings and death of Christ as the ground of pardon.

If one should take a pen, to express in the clearest and strongest terms the idea of being pardoned and saved in consequence of sufferings and death endured by one for another, he could not, after the greatest deliberation, write any thing more clear or strong than the language of the Bible is, when speaking of salvation by the sufferings and death of Christ in our stead.

"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, — and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." "After threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself." "He bare the sins of many." "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

The doctrine of salvation, as evangelical Christians hold it, is, that in the Godhead there is a plural mode of existence;

that the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost are one only living and true God; that "the Word became flesh," was "made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death,—that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man;" that his whole work of obedience, suffering, and dying constitutes, by divine appointment, an equivalent for the merited punishment of sin, and it is made the ground on which sin can be forgiven consistently with justice. The supreme Deity of Christ is essential to an atonement. If Christ be not divine, his work is merely a pathetic exhibition of interest in human welfare, not a vicarious sacrifice. To reverse the proposition, if "the Word was God," the sufferings and death of Christ could not have been a mere expression of sympathy; but all the strong expressions relating to redemption by his blood, require a vicarious sacrifice to warrant the amazing interposition of God made flesh, and making "intercession for the transgressors."

Some reply to all this by saying that it is "figurative," "metaphorical," "Oriental exaggeration;" that the thing itself is so "improbable," and "impossible," that the interpretation of the words, however explicit, must be controlled by making a large allowance for the boldness of the figures.

If this be so, we may, perhaps, agree with those who also tell us, that God cannot make a revelation to the whole world by human language. For, employing, as he must, the minds and speech of men in certain countries, and at certain times, such is the diversity in modes of thought and expression, that men of no other times and countries can arrive at any certain knowledge of what is intended in the revelation.

But we call in question the principles upon which they interpret the language of the Bible. They apply rules to it which they would not, for the sake of their reputation as scholars and men of good understanding, apply to any other

writings. When a careless or a passionate man uses figurative language, we subtract something from it in determining the truth. When a serious and honest speaker or writer labors to convey an idea, or to make an impression, with figurative language, we know that it is because literal speech fails to express his conceptions, and we, therefore, rather add something to the amount of meaning in his symbols than detract from it. Only in things of infinite moment, in things which relate to them as sinners, and to their peril and their redemption, do men view language transcendentally, and thus pervert its meaning. — Let us take a view of the Brazen Serpent corresponding to that which is thus taken of salvation by the sufferings and death of Christ.

A man lies on his bed in the tent, suffering from a fiery serpent's bite. Friends tell him that God has commanded Moses to make a serpent of brass and set it upon a pole, and it shall come to pass that whoever is bitten, if he will look upon the brazen serpent, he shall live. They prepare to remove the bed to the tent door, that the dying man may cast his eye to the appointed symbol and be saved.

One of the friends, however, interposes. He has not seen the brazen serpent. Indeed, he would not lift his eye to be more satisfied than he is that such a way of being cured is preposterous. There is no possible connection, he says, between a brazen serpent and the bite of a flying serpent; between looking at something upon a pole and the cure of an envenomed wound. Can the sight of brass cool the fevered blood? The very look at the image of a serpent would awaken fresh pain. No judicious Levite would try to raise the apparition of a monster for the cure of one who had been wounded by that monster. The whole appointment, therefore, is "figurative," "metaphorical;" there is no pole, no brazen serpent, yonder; but the meaning of God's command

to Moses is this: The Infinite Father wishes to have his suffering children meditate upon the infliction which he has felt compelled to send upon them, by means of venomous serpents, for their salutary chastisement. They must get a clear, vivid sense of their transgression; their conceptions of their sin must be as real and deep as the sight of a shining brass image of a flying serpent would be impressive. By the "pole," it is intimated that we must keep the subject of our sin "lifted up" before our minds, until we are thoroughly penitent.

And now, while the cured and grateful patients in the encampment come, one after another, to the tent door, beckon to this friend of the dying man, and beseech him just to turn the bed so that he may look and be saved, the transcendentalist replies that, if Moses himself should tell him to do so, he has too much confidence in the wisdom and goodness of the Infinite Father to believe that he would appoint such a means of cure. "Nehushtan"[1] he would call it, as Hezekiah did when it became an object of idolatry.

But let us hear the Son of God: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." If we may have the same confidence in language that relates to the concerns of our souls for eternity, which we do not hesitate to repose in the apparently sincere and honest words of a physician, or in the instructions received from our superiors in business or in command, we cannot be at a loss in what way to understand these words of the Saviour. The look which the wounded Israelites gave at the appointed sign was an act of

[1] Or, *A piece of brass.* 1 Kings xviii. 4.

faith. It was not for them to know why that method of cure, rather than any other, was appointed; with implicit faith they cast their eye upon it, and were thereby healed. It is easy to see that the brazen serpent, reminding them of their punishment, would test their willingness to receive a cure from the hands of Him whom they had offended; and the more obviously gratuitous the cure was made to appear by the appointment of a sign which had no necessary connection with medicine, so much the more would it require humility and submission, as well as faith, to comply with this appointed method of being healed.

"Even so," the Saviour says, "must the Son of man be lifted up." But, as we see him on the cross, men are divided in their interpretations of the design in that crucifixion. Some impute a wholly metaphorical meaning to the act; they make it an allegory. Others receive it as literally as the plain words of Christ, literally understood, oblige them, by the ordinary rules of language, to receive it. Christ was "lifted up" on a cross. An act of faith in him is as necessary (and it is as sure) to save the soul, as the look at the brazen serpent was to cure the victims of the fiery serpents. We may turn it all into poetry and myth; we may allege our preconceived opinions as to our moral necessities against such a way of being saved, and argue, from our persuasion concerning the character and government of God, that the literal sufferings and death of Christ cannot be an atonement for sin; but, while we do this, publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before us; absurd as it seems to us, and while we try to represent it as absurd, many around us, who experience that great religious transformation which is so universal in its features, viz., religious conversion, turn from every form of unbelief, and from the ministry of our friends who deny it, and, with intelligent, strong faith, accept the literal sufferings

and death of the Redeemer as the ground of their justification and salvation.

When we hear Paul say, "But we preach Christ crucified," we do not wonder to hear him add, "to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness." True, it is strange that with Moses and the prophets in their hands, and the smoke of their altars going up in sight of Calvary, the Jews should not have recognized in Christ the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world; or that the Greeks should not have been convinced, by such teachings and miracles as those of Christ, that he was that Lamb of God. But we know that when our sinful will and pride are assailed, belief is by no means according to evidence. Even after they had seen Jesus open the eyes of the blind, 'then came the Jews to him, and said, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.' To have accepted the man of Calvary as an atoning sacrifice for sin, would have required a state of heart which the penitent thief and others like him only possessed. There are three who are dying on three crosses, "on either side one, and Jesus in the midst." He "in the midst" is dying to save our souls. God is setting him forth "to be a propitiation through faith in his blood; to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." They tell us that "he is wounded for our transgressions, he is bruised for our iniquity; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." "I saw those stripes," says one of the bystanders, a Pharisee; and as he speaks, he wraps his robe about him with a manifest feeling of discomfort at the recollection, mingled with some loftiness of manner, and with an air of in-

credulity — "I saw those stripes; they took off his robe, and with the rods which the Roman lictors use, they struck him till the blood came." Turning about with a half-concealed expression of scorn, somewhat chastised with pity for the deluded victims of such a superstition, he adds, "They say that 'by his stripes we are healed;' 'propitiation,' they call his death, 'for the sins of the whole world.'"

Now, this seemingly absurd proposition, this "stumbling block," this "foolishness," is our gospel. All the forms of ridicule have been exhausted upon it, and upon those who believe it; and yet more young men in our colleges have, this year, embraced it than ever before in the same space of time. We are as literal in our belief as to the sufferings and death of Jesus, as we are with regard to the Passover in Egypt, and the brazen serpent in the wilderness. Nor do we consider the atonement by Christ merely as an "at-one-ment" — putting the effect for the cause; but the atonement we hold to be "the offering up of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Every thing that Christ did — his becoming flesh, suffering, and dying, and rising again — all are parts of a great whole; while the death which was endured is the essential thing, the rest being subordinate, but necessary in connection with the infinite sacrifice for sin.

We come to God feeling that we deserve all which is threatened against sin; that we have nothing to plead as a bar to punishment, excepting that which God has himself appointed, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Pleading that sacrifice, we are forgiven. This is justification; "it is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone." The moral character of Christ is not imputed to us; no transfer is made of his personal goodness, but his atoning work is "im-

puted," "reckoned to us for righteousness." "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Forgiveness of sins is immediately bestowed upon every one who seeks for pardon through Christ. These two passages interpret each other: "Therefore, being *justified* by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;" and, "There is therefore now *no condemnation* to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Gratuitous pardon comes to every penitent sinner through the sufferings and death of Christ; so that the simple, heartfelt acceptance of it has the effect, by the appointment of God, to clear the soul from condemnation. All its sins are at once blotted out. God is at peace with us; we are accepted of him, in consequence of this one act of receiving Christ. A change of heart by the Holy Spirit accompanies this act of saving faith.

If this be so, we cannot wonder that they who believe this, and experience it, say with the apostle, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Word, "the same in substance, equal in power and glory," with the Father, becomes, for us, a child, a man of sorrows, a sacrifice for sin; his sufferings and death are an atonement for "every man;" pardon is bestowed at once, and without reserve, upon those who plead the Saviour's death in seeking to be reconciled to God; all which they had forfeited by sin is restored to them; God has given to them eternal life; they shall never perish; no man shall pluck them out of his hands. Hence the joy which attends religious conversion, and obtaining a hope of pardon and acceptance with God, of deliverance from the reigning power of sin, and from the wrath to come. The consciousness of loving God and of being loved by him, and of having a spiritual relation to him established

forever, with all the present and prospective blessings connected with it, is the greatest happiness of which our natures are capable; all things are counted loss in comparison with it; the desires of the soul have at last found objects commensurate with them; and thus the kingdom of heaven is like that "treasure hid in a field, the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."

It will be plainly seen, therefore, why, if all this be true, we make so much of that first act of believing on the Lord Jesus as a sacrifice for sins — of being justified. It is the outer door pass-key; it commands the whole house. No one is accepted of God until the act of justification has taken place; and this takes place at once upon the exercise of faith in the Redeemer as a sacrifice for sins.

The great burden of evangelical preaching, therefore, is "Christ crucified;" this was the great theme of apostolic preaching — pardon through faith in the death of Christ. "To him give all the prophets witness, that whosoever believeth on him shall receive the remission of sins."

AN OBJECTION CONSIDERED.

The plan of justifying and saving us through the righteousness of another, appears to some, theoretically, to be dangerous to good morals, by affording encouragement to sin.

This objection Paul recognizes, and answers, when he declares that Christ is not the minister of sin, and when he exclaims, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" "Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid!" He does not answer the objection with a logical argument, but with an impassioned exclamation.

He who is really pardoned by this method, cannot turn "the grace of God into licentiousness;" they who have had spurious repentance and faith, may wrest this doctrine, as they also do the scriptures, to their own destruction. The most effectual way to secure our obedience seems to be, to forgive us freely and at once; to make us see and feel that even our future imperfections and sins are provided for by the sufferings which were endured on the tree; and then to constrain us by the love of Christ, by the remembrance of what it was necessary for him to become, and to do, and to suffer, on account of sin, to live not to ourselves, but to him that died for us and rose again. Such is the divine method of securing the love and obedience of fallen men; its success is recorded in the history of the gospel as exemplified in the lives and deaths of a multitude whom no man can number.

This objection to the way of salvation by free grace, is also effectually answered by considering that

A CHANGE OF HEART ACCOMPANIES PARDON.

The work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart is, equally with the work of Christ, a part of this great plan and method of salvation. There is a preternatural change wrought in every one who believes in Christ in the way now explained. Christ says, "No man can come to me except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him. It is written in the Prophets, And they shall be all taught of God." It requires no such divine influence to believe any thing else, or to come to any one else, as in coming to Christ and to his way of saving us. If faith in Christ be wholly of ourselves, if there be nothing supernatural connected with it, no divine influence is needed any more than in a change of political opinion.

If a phenomenon took place on learning a certain tongue, or in adopting any theory of morals or science, similar to that

which occurs every where under the preaching of justification by Christ, it would be a prominent subject in all our books of mental philosophy. We send Christian missionaries to Greenland, to India, to Africa, to the South Sea Islands, and straightway the letters of the missionaries contain accounts of those same religious experiences which occur under our own observation. Leaving out the names of places and persons, one could not tell whether the conversions occurred in our land, or Otaheite, or Burmah, or Constantinople, or among the Hottentots.

Without this supernatural work in the soul, the prospect with every one who believes in Christ would be deficient. But when the Holy Spirit changes the heart, as he does in every case where faith in Christ is exercised, instantly the current of the affections begins to run in an opposite direction from their former sinful course. It is no less so than if one should lift the seaward end of a river's bed, and cause the stream to flow back in new channels which had been opened for it, they having a declivity which before prevented the stream from flowing into them; but now the water finds its way easily, in hitherto strange directions, and accomplishes new and important uses.

So God turns the current of the soul at the moment when he "doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel." But does the current always run smoothly? Are there no cross currents, no adverse winds? All through life there will be conflict. This itself, however, is a proof that the great change has taken place. Before, the sinful feelings met with no resistance, except from conscience, whose power became more and more feeble; but now, a new principle is implanted; now, the renewed nature makes resistance, and amidst great sorrows and trials, and occasionally being brought into captivity to the law of sin, which

is in the members, nevertheless prevails. The house of Saul becomes weaker and weaker, and the house of David waxes stronger and stronger. Then the truth of those words is experienced, "He that is born of God sinneth not." As we say that, in a healthy state, one can not eat wormwood, and yet every one has power to do it, so sin has become uncongenial with the new taste; the new nature has governing desires which are opposite to the old; one is surprised to find how, without effort, he relinquishes old habits, pleasures, friendships, prospects, which now are seen to be contrary to the will of God, and to spiritual progress. Prayer now becomes easy and natural; it is not confined to certain times and places, though good habits and system are carefully cherished; but in the street, at work, in company, the heart readily turns to God. Through life, the Holy Spirit carries on that work which begins with believing on Christ as a sacrifice for sins, and with being consequently justified by the act of God's free grace.

Many who do not hear the way of salvation set forth as evangelical Christians believe it, and many of those who do, earnestly desire to experience this change of heart. Their efforts after goodness have been like climbing a sand hill; they have never obtained that sense of acceptance with God which is necessary to a solid peace.

The reason of their ill success is, that they have not directed their efforts towards that one essential thing which stands as the door to all religious experience, and to which Christ refers when he says, "If any man will enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." He is himself "the door;" and believing on him as a sacrifice for sins, accepting pardon through his blood, is "entering in." Now, here is a great wonder among the wonders of infinite grace,

that upon receiving one unspeakable gift, God gives us another; for, if we come to him renouncing our own merit, pleading no works for justification, but just as we are, accepting pardon through the sufferings and death of Christ, there is bestowed upon us, at one and the same time, with the pardon of all our sins, the renewal of our natures by the power of the Holy Ghost. God not only provides for us a substitute in the person of the incarnate Word, to satisfy the requirements of divine justice, and invites, and, to use his own words, "beseeches" us ("as though God did beseech you") to be reconciled to God, but upon our acceptance of Christ, (itself his own gracious working in us to will and to do of his good pleasure,) he confers that great grace, regeneration, a change which the Bible describes by such terms as "new creature," "raised from the dead," "life," "born of God." Hence it is said of Christ, "To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to as many as 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."

ANOTHER OBJECTION: "IT IS TOO EASY."

The thought of being pardoned freely and at once, without the allowance of any thing on our part which can in any way constitute a claim, or be in any sense an equivalent, confounds all our previous ideas of the way to be saved. We are not prepared to meet with such gratuitous, such abounding, love and mercy. Could we but invest repentance, or faith, or submission to God, with something meritorious — could we suffer, or make sacrifices, or perform labors, and feel that it was in view of these things that we are forgiven, — this would satisfy us; but to receive pardon as a free gift is a perfect acknowledgment of utter helplessness and ill desert; and it is not till we have tried every other method of being reconciled

to God, in vain, that we accede to his method of saving men. Then the wisdom and love of God in redemption astonish us; we see how perfectly God has maintained the honor of his law by making such an atonement for sin before he would forgive the sinner; we see how safe the sinner is who is justified "by the righteousness of God through faith," instead of by his own wretched attempts at obedience; the infinite magnanimity (for want of a better word) which there is in blotting out our transgressions; above all, the stupendous sacrifice and sufferings of the Son of God in our behalf, awaken gratitude and love which are not equalled by any emotions of which the heart is capable. All objection to the plan of salvation as being too easy, is lost in the thought of the glory and praise which redound to the character of God by such a method of saving men; we sink into nothingness in comparison with it; we hear him say, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my name's sake, and will not remember thy sins." We see that we cannot vie with the love of God any more than we can contend with his power; that we must be willing to be loved, and to be saved by infinite mercy.

AN IMPORTANT QUESTION: "IF I BELIEVE, SHALL I PERSEVERE?"

When this way of being justified and accepted of God has been plainly made known, it is a very common objection — indeed, it is almost universal — "If I accept this method of pardon, I still have no security that I shall persevere." Indeed, the connection between believing on Christ and continuing in the Christian life, is not apparent, till we find that there is an absolute certainty of being saved, if we have been justified through faith in Christ. That one step insures every other, and leads to final salvation. One passage of Scripture asserts this in the plainest terms — "And whom he justified,

them he also glorified;" and there are other passages equally direct. There is nothing more effectual to excite hope and confidence in the mind of a sincere inquirer who seems just ready to believe in Christ, than to show him that his whole future Christian life is as really included in the covenant promises of God, as his justification is upon his first act of saving faith. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "He that believeth on the Son shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."

"The love divine
Which made us thine,
Shall keep us thine, forever."

All this will be done in the same connection with our own voluntary efforts, as in the case of our justification, in which we were as really active as though all depended upon ourselves. So it will be with our perseverance in the Christian life; and our mistakes, and follies, and backslidings, and afflictions, and repentances, all the mercies of God — in short, the whole discipline of life — will be employed to accomplish that which will be, nevertheless, as certain as though we were at once transferred, upon being justified, to a state of complete sanctification. Words of encouragement, therefore, need to be addressed to those who dread the thought of failure after having begun the Christian life. It is this dread which holds them back, in multitudes of cases, from complying with the conditions of salvation, or, having done it, from avowing their faith in Christ by a Christian profession.

They readily acknowledge that the first step towards acceptance with God, the work of justification, is wholly of grace. They cannot atone for their sins; they furnish no righteousness as the ground of their acceptance with God. Here they rely implicitly on sovereign love and power; and,

in doing so, they find themselves the subjects of a plan of salvation in which all the attributes of the Godhead meet and are illustrated. This they joyfully acknowledge; they are willing to trust implicitly to the power and goodness of God in the great concern of being justified.

Now, as the work of justification is all of God, the work of sanctification is also his. If he delivers from condemnation, he will keep us from it; if he sends a Redeemer, he will send the Holy Spirit; whom he pardons he will save. We have no anxiety with respect to the competency of Christ and his atoning work; we are sure that he is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by him; and now, the Holy Spirit is equally competent to accomplish his part of the work. As we do not undertake to atone for our sins, and cannot provide a way for our justification, but leave it to Christ, so we must leave our sanctification to the Holy Spirit. But in both cases we employ our own powers and faculties. We act when God justifies us, 'striving according to his working which worketh in us mightily;' for we are never more conscious of perfect freedom than when we are under the most powerful divine influences. In like manner, when the Holy Spirit sanctifies us, we are made "willing in the day of his power."

Thus we have a complete answer to the common objection, "I fear that, if I exercise faith in Christ, and make a public avowal of it, I may not persevere. Failure would be disastrous to my peace; I should be a reproach to the Christian name."

Seeing that all are liable to failure in the Christian life, what if all should postpone their public profession of religion till they are just ready to enter heaven? Then there would be no danger, indeed, of bringing a reproach on religion; but where would religion itself be, seeing that religion exists only

in the lives of its professors? — for there is no religion in the world any further than there are those who follow Christ. We are to remember, therefore, — and we should be encouraged by the truth to enter upon a Christian life, — that to sanctify us is as much a part of the divine plan in our redemption, as to justify us. "For whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Justification takes place at once; but, while sanctification extends to the last moment of life, it is as sure as pardon and justification.

All that one need concern himself to do, therefore, is to obtain peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. By coming as intelligently as he ever did any act, and acknowledging his sinfulness and just condemnation, and complying with the offered terms of pardon, — that is, a heartfelt acceptance of Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for sins, and asking to have it imputed to him for his justification, — he will at once have peace with God; there will be for him "no condemnation." This is the simple, plain method which God has appointed, by which men are to be saved; to this they always come after long and wearisome endeavors to obtain peace by other means; they then perceive that their error has been in trying to do too many things, and all of them entirely aside from the simple, essential act of accepting free forgiveness through the infinite merits of the Redeemer, without works or merit on their part. These remarks apply especially to those who, for a long time, profess that they wish to be Christians, and do not see why they have never experienced religion. The reason is, that there is only one way of being accepted of God, and that is, by relying wholly on Christ, without any personal merit. We must neither leave one sin behind us, nor bring any good work with us, when we come to Christ, but with all our

sins, and with all our destitution of personal goodness, we must appear before him to be forgiven, wholly through the sufferings and death which he, of his infinite mercy, endured on our account.

One definite thing should therefore engage the attention and efforts of every one who wishes to be a Christian; and that is, To be pardoned. He who fixes his mind solely on this, and strives to obtain it, will seek in the right direction; for he will thereby be led to regard himself as a sinner, and not merely as one who is unhappy and in peril; the nature and ill desert of sin will present themselves to his mind; he will be led to see his utter inability to make satisfaction for his want of conformity to the law of God, and for his transgressions; he will see and feel the need of something beyond himself to make satisfaction to the law of God, whose penalty he will find he has incurred. Ceasing from all vague efforts to experience something, he knows not what, which he hopes will open some unknown door of hope before him, he will come at once to the simple conclusion that he is helpless, that he is condemned, that he must perish unless God has mercy upon him; and then he will see that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."

We should not have devised such a way of salvation. It is an explicit revelation from heaven, "the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the foundation of the world for our glory; which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." It is made known to every humble inquirer; it is hidden from the wise and prudent; they who approach it with self-conceit, or with debate, or to satisfy any preconceived wishes, will never find it. When Peter made his confession of Christ on a certain occasion, the Saviour said to him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-

jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Of the same import are those words — "No man can say that Jesus is the Christ but by the Holy Ghost." "All that the Father hath given me shall come to me; and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

One word, therefore, expresses our need, our duty, our privilege; and that is, *Pardon*. Do I need it? and why? How has it been procured for me? How may I obtain it? What consequences flow from it? What will follow if I am not pardoned? We must give up our vague thoughts and endeavors with regard to religion, and fix our thoughts wholly on this: How may I obtain forgiveness of sin? This question has now been considered and answered. Whoever, therefore, feels that he has sinned, and has relentings of heart, and wishes to be at peace with God, has only to come, as Israel in the desert did to the brazen serpent, and look to the crucified Saviour, and by as simple an act of faith as those wounded men exercised in that gratuitous provision for their cure, he must put his trust in that Just One, suffering, dying, rising, interceding for him. In doing so, he will be saved. All his sins will be forgiven at once. The Holy Spirit will renew his heart. He will be "received into the number and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God." His preparation for heaven will proceed from step to step, and he will be 'kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.' All this, if we are willing to humble ourselves, and receive as a free gift to lost and perishing sinners, we may now receive without money and without price. We seek in vain for peace and safety until we thus submit to the way of justification through faith in Christ. We go about with unforgiven sin upon us, with no covenant to keep us one moment out of

perdition, and adding to all our sins the guilt of rejecting a crucified Saviour. Therefore, "WHOSOEVER WILL LET HIM TAKE THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY." "BEHOLD I HAVE PREPARED MY DINNER; MY OXEN AND MY FATLINGS ARE KILLED, AND ALL THINGS ARE READY; COME UNTO THE MARRIAGE."

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Truths for the Times.

GOD IS LOVE.

A

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ON THE

Reasonableness of Future, Endless Punishment.

WITH A BRIEF NOTICE OF

REV. T. S. KING'S TWO DISCOURSES

IN REPLY TO SAID DISCOURSE.

BY

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PASTOR OF THE ESSEX STREET CHURCH, BOSTON

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V

ADVERTISEMENT.

Having preached a Lecture on "The Reasonableness of Future, Endless Punishment," at his regular Sabbath evening service, and, the next Sabbath evening at Hollis Street Church, by invitation, the author was led to preach a lecture, of which the following pages are the substance, in his own pulpit, at his next Sabbath evening service, with a view to complete his statement of a subject which could not be fully set forth in one discourse. It was originally designed to be printed, but with no reference to any reply, from any source, to the previous lecture, — no such reply having, to the writer's knowledge, then been made.

The pastor of the Hollis Street Church having since published two sermons in reply to the one first named, it will not be thought improper if the present publication should contain, in an appendix, a brief notice of the same. In the discourse itself, however, of which these pages are the substance, the author finds that he had anticipated many things in the "Two Discourses" from Hollis Street, before he knew that they had been preached.

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" III. Justification and its Consequences.

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GOD IS LOVE.

WHATEVER may be the component parts and qualities of the sun, its prominent characteristics are light and heat, and all its parts and qualities combine to produce them.

So every thing in God conspires to one thing. That which presides over all his actions, and rules in all his feelings, and pervades his whole nature, so as to give its character, in the view of intelligent beings, to all which he is, and to all which he does, is Love.

It might have been something else; for example, Justice. Whatever we heard, or saw, or felt, of the Most High, might have produced this chief impression upon us, — that God is Just. Or it might have been Power, illustrated in the works of nature, and in his dealings with his creatures. Or it might have been, in a word, Holiness, — every thing conspiring to produce, with an overwhelming impression, the feeling that God is Holy. All these attributes are essential to our reverence and love for God; but these, singly or altogether, are not so preëminently his characteristic, that it can be said with truth, God is Justice, God is Power, God is Holiness.

No one has failed to think what an infinitely solemn thing it is that we live under the absolute disposal of one Being who made us, ordains our lot, and is able to do with us that

which seems good in his sight. The question will arise, What security have I for my welfare? Annihilation is impossible. There are elements around me which I cannot control. The wind can destroy me; the chemical combinations in the atmosphere can take away my health, my life; lightnings may consume me; the earth can swallow me up. My disembodied spirit being still susceptible of pleasure and pain, what protection have I in a future state? how do I know that existence, on the whole, will be a blessing, and not a curse? The mind longs for a feeling of certainty that benevolence is and will be the law of our being. God is almighty; no one can go from his presence; how may I know that his power will not be employed to make me unhappy forever, let my character be what it may?

The answer to such thoughts and questionings is found in the incontrovertible truth, that the perfections of God are ruled by Love.

But how does it appear that love guides in the divine administration; that, to a competent spectator, who could see the whole scheme of the divine government, it would appear that the motive, the feeling, and the end aimed at, is Love?

If we can establish the following proposition, which it will be a principal object of these pages to do, this question will be settled in every mind. The proposition is this:

IT IS ESSENTIAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT OVER FREE AND ACCOUNTABLE BEINGS, THAT LOVE SHOULD RULE IN THE DIVINE PERFECTIONS.

It would plainly be impossible for this world to exist, as things are now constituted, if love did not pervade the perfections of God, and rule in them. If this is made clear, we shall have no difficulty in applying the truth wherever there are intelligent subjects of the divine government.

If love were not the motive and end of the divine Being, it would be necessary to suppose that some other quality would be; for in the nature of things, every moral being has some ruling motive or governing purpose. We have only to suppose that the governing purpose or feeling in God were something different from love, his object being not to manifest love as his chief end, but to do something else; for example, to show his power. This, therefore, is the testimony, we will suppose, which is borne by the heavens, earth, and seas — that God is power. All these things, indeed, now testify that God is powerful; but suppose that, in the same sense in which it is now said that God is love, it should be said, with equal truth, God is power?

To begin with the seas: What would be seen there? Now, benevolence reigns for the most part over the great deep. A thousand fold more ships pass safely over it than are sunk in it; innumerably more lives are preserved than destroyed there. Men go to sea with the confidence that there will be favorable winds to bear them to any and every part of the globe; and every day or week vessels arrive in the different ports from northern climes and southern, from the east and west. This is benevolence; there is power in it; but chiefly it illustrates the goodness of God.

But take away benevolence, consulting the happiness of man, from its rule in the divine purposes, and let power ascend and govern to the exclusion of benevolence as the great end. Then the object would be to make the four winds show their strength; the height of waves, the fury of tempests, the roar of ocean, the apparent mingling of sea and sky, would proclaim, God is power. From the fierce Baltic to the typhoons of the Indian Seas, this voice would go forth, — God is power. Few, if any, sails would tempt the winds of

heaven ; a keel would seldom venture among the waves whose chief office should be to show that God is power, each billow then, like a wandering green mound, denoting that some human form was intombed there. Commerce would cease; parts of the earth would bid each other farewell ; for God is power.

How would it be on land ? Gigantic forms of rocks would overhang the dwellings of men, which could then be only in valleys, where the chief locomotive power visible would be the wings of eagles, mocking the weakness of imprisoned man. The rain would descend to show its force, not to bless the earth ; the rivers would be swift with currents defying human strength and skill ; the springs and fountains which now, like a child's hymn, murmur, " God is good," would rise into torrents, and cry, God is power. Vegetation would be excessive, and men would be cumbered under the prodigality of the earth. Nothing would exist as now merely to give pleasure. The greenness which refreshes the eye would assume a dazzling brilliancy, to impress the mind with a sense of power; the hues and fragrance of flowers would be useless; every where strength would supplant beauty ; majesty would tread upon the meek and quiet forms of nature; and the awful power of God would compel the fear and adoration which now, involuntarily, arise with mingled love and praise, at the sight of the touching evidence of his goodness. As for the heavens, day unto day would, indeed, utter speech of him, and night unto night would show forth knowledge, but not as now, (in the elliptical but expressive language of the original,) — " no speech ; no language; their voice is not heard ; " but, on the contrary, the air would be full of varied and awful grandeur both in sights and sounds ; and signs in the sun, moon, and stars would make the nations pale ; the grateful vicissitudes of seasons would be exchanged for demon-

strations of omnipotence; the only impression on the minds of men would be that which is made by the forlorn Moslem cry through all Mahometan deserts, and seas, and cities, "God is great."

But let us suppose that the justice of God should make the predominant impression upon our minds. Then, the world would be a palace of justice; every place of assembly and every dwelling would be like a court room; every where we should see the signs and ministrations of law. Then every transgression and disobedience would meet with a just recompense of reward. The common spectacle in the streets would be people meeting with their deserved fate, vengeance seizing on the wicked and mixing for them her cup of trembling in exact proportion to their crimes. In the midst of festivity and domestic peace, the sentence of death would be uttered by ministers of justice, refusing respite or reprieve; the great end of God's administration of the world would be to do justice, and to impress a sense of his justice upon men; the terrors of law and of violated obligation would take the place of clemency, and the providence of God, which now makes the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust, would be armed on every side with admonitions of guilt, and of approaching or instant retribution. Then the softening influences of contrition and repentance would be exchanged for fear and despair. True, goodness would meet with its just reward; every righteous act would be duly paid for, every kind deed be recompensed at once; but, in that case, virtue would lose the powerful excitements which disappointment and injury afford; faith, with its precious influence on the mind and heart, would disappear; probation, that means of spiritual benefit, the divine method of educating us for a nobler state of existence, would become impossible; for pure justice would dispense her

rewards immediately, without forbearance towards the wicked, or benevolent delay for the sake of strengthening, and so in the highest measure rewarding, the good. It is evident, therefore, that justice, on which, nevertheless, the safety of the universe depends, could not properly be the governing purpose in the divine mind and administration.

But can the same objections be made to holiness, as the predominant manifestation in the divine character? Yes; even now, while the goodness of God attempers the insufferable rays of his holiness to the eyes of angels and men, the powerful impressions of it are more than they can bear. Angels veil their faces while they worship. In the temple, the cherubim had more wings with which to cover themselves than to fly, while they cried one to another, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of Hosts. At which voice, and under a sense of the holiness of God, Isaiah cried, "Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." If the holiness of God should universally make the first predominating impression upon the minds of his creatures whenever they approach him, or think of him, and this impression should be such that no sense of his infinite benevolence mingling with it could mitigate or qualify it, the fear which is cast out by love would occupy every mind; the holiness of God would dazzle the sight beyond endurance; worship would consist only in distant prostration, nor would any creature, even the archangel, venture to say, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." A sense of his excellency would make them always afraid. Job said, "Only do not two things unto me; then will I not hide myself from thee; withdraw thine hand from me, and let not thy dread make me afraid. Then call thou, and I will answer; or let me speak, and answer thou me."

But now we see a pleasing contrast to such representations of the divine character. The methods by which God manifests himself to us so as to produce the greatest and best effect upon our moral sense, and thereby to give us the most exalted views of his greatness, are illustrated, for example, in the causes by which light is ordained to give us comfort and pleasure. Power and wisdom are employed in doing it, and yet benevolence is more conspicuous in it than they. The different colors of things are owing to certain qualities in the things themselves, a leaf being constructed so as to reflect green rays, the atmosphere a soft blue; that which we call the color of an object being the result of its construction by the hand of God, who makes the leaves in the woods such that when they decay they gratify us with the variety of their colors. Here the power of God puts forth benevolence as its illustration. It would not have been as great a proof of power so to have made every thing in the air, earth, and sea, that it should absorb all the colors; then nothing would be seen but that which was white, and the sun, with his full splendors reflected from every point, would, with our present eyesight, have been our sore tormentor. Or creation, by some similar process, might have been shrouded in black, and "Night, from her ebon throne," would have stretched her sceptre into the day. While God has chosen to gratify our sense by a benevolent arrangement which makes different objects, and the same objects at different times, shed different rays upon us, his power is more signally illustrated through his benevolence than it could have been by overwhelming impressions of his omnipotent force.

If, therefore, it appears probable that the present state of things, and the happiness of intelligent beings every where, could not exist unless benevolence took the lead in the manifestations of the divine character, we may argue, from the

necessity of the case, that if there be a God, love must pervade his perfections and rule in his acts. This is true in those states of society where the true God has not been and is not recognized. "Nevertheless, he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." The heathen and pagan world could not exist, except as the benevolence of God countervailed its constant tendency to self-destruction. "His tender mercies are over all his works." "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." "So is this great and wide sea." Intelligent men concur in the acknowledgment that the attributes of God are guided by benevolence, and that there is an evident design in the constitution of things to make this conciliating impression upon the minds of men, that God is good.

Now there is one principal objection which is urged against this view of the divine character. It is drawn from the moral condition of our race. Our fallen nature, our entrance into the world with a moral constitution predisposed to evil, is held to be a sufficient refutation of all proofs of God's goodness drawn from the works of nature. They are inanimate; they promote, it is said, the temporary comfort of man as a necessary means of sustaining life; but here are moral beings in a world blasted by sin, they themselves possessing a sinful nature; — is not such a nature a reproach to the character of the Being who presides over it? Does it not conflict with the doctrine now maintained, that God is love?

The answer may, without hesitation, be, No; and the proof is abundant and clear.

But let it be plainly understood what it is which we now attempt to show. Not one word is here to be said on that perplexing subject, the existence of sin. But, assuming that

the Creator proposes to make free, accountable creatures to inhabit this world,—it will now be attempted to show, that we could not have been more favorably placed under any other system which they who impugn the present constitution of things have ever proposed.

May we not all agree upon this question, Whether it is best that God shall make a universe of intelligent creatures, who shall be entirely free in their choice to love and serve God or not? There shall be no compulsion, no predisposition to sin; on the contrary, rich experience of the character of God, and of what it is to love and serve him, shall be afforded; and then his subjects shall decide whether to obey or to sin. Is it best that God shall create such a universe? Considering who he is, and taking into view the infinite blessedness of those whom he shall love, and on whom he will forever bestow all that he can give, as far as they are capable of receiving it, we should all, probably, say, It is infinitely desirable that creation should be peopled as widely as possible with these intelligent, free creatures. The probabilities, we should say, are, that such a Being, once known and loved, will secure the obedience of his subjects, and, if so, the happiness of which they will be capable, no finite mind can conceive. It is worthy of a benevolent God, we should say, to bring such an intelligent universe into being.

They come into existence. Some of them dwell in the immediate presence of God. But there, even there, it appears that some of them, in the exercise of their perfectly free choice, keep not their first estate, but leave their own habitation, and, in so doing, forsake their allegiance to God. They must have had, in heaven, every possible inducement to love and serve God; but for some fancied good which they did not possess, they renounced their loyalty, they became rebels.

We say nothing about their punishment; we only ask, Have we seen any thing up to this point to impugn the goodness of God? They have become sinners, in the exercise of that freedom with which they were endowed instead of being constituted an intellectual orrery, made to revolve, by force, around a central object, whether they would or no. God was good in making them, and in making them free; in all this God is love. Has their transgression cast any reflection upon his character? It may be said, He could have prevented them from sinning; why leave them at such peril? Would a parent suffer his child to expose himself thus to ruin, if the parent could, by any influence, prevent it? The reply is, Parents govern their children, when they are at years of understanding, by surrounding them with powerful moral restraints and persuasive influences; but there is a certain province in the child's free agency which they do not invade. Even in the case of the redeemed, whose perpetual uprightness the Bible teaches us to believe will be made sure, we cannot suppose that any thing will be done which will in the least intrude upon the consciousness of perfect liberty, or suggest the thought or feeling of restricted freedom. Whether it be just and wise to allow every race of beings to be placed on probation at first, is a question which we have not light enough to discuss at much length; we can only say, that there seems to be no want of benevolence in trying their choice, under a full and explicit disclosure of the consequences which will ensue upon obedience or disobedience. No one can properly say that a fair and full statement of a proposal, with all that will follow its acceptance or rejection, does not acquit him who makes the proposal from all blame if the choice inclines to the wrong side. The bias being as strong towards good as towards evil, and not only so, but being fortified by experience in the happy consequences of uprightness, benevolence is not impeachable, if, in pursuit of some

imagined advantage, we forsake our first estate, with all its obligations, and seek a selfish end. Such, so far as we can learn, was the case with angels, and we cannot find just cause of exception in it against the benevolence of God, unless we take the ground that, rather than expose immortal creatures to the liability of losing their happiness forever, even by the exercise of their own intelligent and deliberate choice, it would be better that God should have no creatures but flying fowl, and beasts of the earth, and fishes, who cannot possibly, by choosing wrong, involve themselves in such a calamity as sin. Let the universe be an infinite firmament for suns and planets, and let the only forms of intelligence be mechanical revolutions, in sublime cycles, by unnumbered worlds, which shall be dumb, except as their spheres make music, or the irrational creatures which inhabit them utter their voices; and let their wonderful forms of chemistry and mineralogy illustrate the wisdom of the Creator; but let there be no intelligent creature to behold them, and to love and praise God; let almighty goodness bring every thing else into being except an offspring in his own image, lest, perchance, some of them should choose to forsake him, in the pursuit of fancied good! We confidently say that this is not benevolence; and that it is far from being any impeachment of benevolence for God to make spirits in his own image, and give them liberty to every possible extent, with all its liabilities, and with its privileges and blessings.

Next, let us pursue the illustration in the case of our first parents, without any reference to their posterity. Adam is put on probation as a free, accountable creature. God endows him with every form of blessing; holds converse with him; instructs him fully as to his duty, and the consequences of a right or wrong choice. He puts his obedience to the test, by prohibiting one tree, which was necessary neither to existence

nor to happiness, provided man would prefer obedience to God above every other gratification. In all this, God is love. It is not a temptation to sin. On the one hand, there are positive experiences of blessing in uprightness, and promises of further good; on the other, a most explicit dissuasion from doing wrong, with a disclosure of the consequences. Man, in the perfectly free exercise of his own will, eats the forbidden fruit. The temptation could not have been reduced to lower terms, and yet be a trial of obedience. We cannot discern any thing thus far which impeaches the benevolence of God.

Now we come to consider ourselves. In consequence of this apostasy, all the posterity of these first parents are born with a sinful nature. To this, objection is made. Let us come into existence, it is said, without any bias to sin, and let each of us take his chance for himself, to stand or to fall. This would be benevolent. Then we should agree that God is love.

Now, without venturing, as was said before, one step into the unfathomable abyss of speculation on the subject of moral evil, let us simply consider whether, in view of universally acknowledged premises, we are warranted in saying, that a contrary method with regard to our moral probation would be any more benevolent than that which God has adopted with regard to man. Let us see, on the contrary, whether the present system be not manifestly benevolent, without presuming to speculate as to its being the only method which could possibly have been adopted. It will be enough if we see that in the present moral constitution of things with regard to our probation, God is love.

Instead of coming into existence as now, with a fallen nature which will inevitably develop sinfulness, and make us liable to its fearful consequences, we might each have been born upright, free to choose for himself whether he will stand or fall.

No redemption, however, is to be provided for us in case we fall. As angels, and as men, took upon themselves the great responsibility of sinning, with all its possible consequences, so must we. Which will we do? Assume this responsibility, each for himself, with no way of recovery if we fall? or will we consent that a progenitor shall try the experiment for us, our nature be determined by the result, and redemption be provided and offered to us in case that he involves us with himself in disobedience? Our nature is the same with that of Adam; he sinned; our will is the same free will; why should we think that we should remain upright, if Adam fell? The least possible provocation to sin existed in his case; the love of God was set against an untasted fruit, his threatenings against a tempter's word that it would make him happy. A stronger inducement to remain upright, a smaller inducement to depart from God, we could not have. Now, will we take our chance, and put our condition at stake, knowing what the result of the experiment was in the case of our fellow-creature, Adam? It is no want of benevolence in God not to let men take that risk; and this is all which we seek to prove.

If angels fell, if Adam fell, for all that appears to the contrary, as many of our race would eventually have been lost as under any other moral system. It is benevolent to let men come into existence with a fallen nature, and to let this be their probation — Will you accept free forgiveness and preserving grace? You who are born in heathen lands, and have the law written in your hearts, your thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another, your infants and young children being saved by the exercise of a compensatory dispensation toward them, and you who know good and evil, being taught by the known consequences of sin in your souls and bodies, and by the effects of doing right in an inward self-approbation, — will you accept this testimony on either side,

obey, and live? And you for whom revelation is added to the light of nature, you with the gospel of Jesus Christ in your hands, will you obey the gospel, and so be saved? Motives of infinite tenderness plead with you to this effect: "for if ye do these things ye shall never fall;" but if in a state of original uprightness you sin, you sin as angels did, with no Redeemer. We may safely assert that our present condition, as fallen creatures, with a Redeemer, is, to say the least, and to speak very far within bounds, no less a proof that God is love, than angels or Adam had in being made to try the question of obedience or disobedience for themselves, with the consesequences annexed. So far as we are informed, every race of creatures is placed on probation.

If this be so, and if it would have been indispensable that every one of us should have had some trial on which his character and standing forever should depend, we cannot fail to admit that the question on which we are now tried, viz., whether we will repent and accept a free and full redemption, is as favorable and as safe for us as the question, whether we will remain upright and live, or fall and be irretrievably lost. And therefore no injury is done by making our progenitor try the question for us, and connect us with himself in his fall, and in his recovery by the infinite mercy of God. Had we fallen in Adam with no possibility of restoration, the question would be totally different from the form in which it now stands. Then it would have been, whether it is benevolent to involve a race in the doings of their progenitor, and give them no opportunity to retrieve their state. No such question is raised by the conduct of God towards us. Redemption is contemporaneous with our apostasy; they must be contemplated together; it is injustice towards God to separate them. Therefore, all the invectives against the present moral constitution of things as unjust and cruel, are themselves unfair, because they

leave out of view one half of the truth; for the provision made for man's entire recovery is, to say the least, as great a proof of benevolence, as his apostasy, which involved us, could, by any misrepresentation or partial statement, be of the opposite. Hence, when we hear men say of our coming into the world with a constitutional bias towards evil, that God is a hard master, and treats us cruelly, and requires brick without straw, and sets us adrift with the chances of shipwreck all against us, we feel that extreme injustice is done to the character of the ever-blessed God. What would men have had their Maker do for them? Do they insist that he ought to have given them each a chance to test the question for himself, whether to remain upright, or to throw away his inheritance, like Satan? Is this the infinite privilege which they covet? Is God unrighteous in denying them the opportunity to draw, in that lottery, the prize of eternal life, or the blank alternative, perdition? Surely, if they reflect on the plan of mercy, which, we maintain, God has devised for us, they cannot, as men of understanding, impeach the divine benevolence; and as to its wisdom, it may be well for us to postpone our conclusions against it till we are better informed upon the question whether, in the compass of the divine knowledge, there was any other expedient which was at once so honorable to God and safe for man. But as to benevolence, there can be no reasonable denial, that the connecting of us with Adam, with the intentional provision of a Redeemer, is as kind, there is as much evidence in it of love, as in allowing angels to stand or fall each upon his own responsibility, with no provision for their recovery if they apostatized.

This view of the case is not invalidated by all the misery which sin has occasioned in the world. God is not the author of it. He makes man free, tells him what consequences will ensue upon his obedience or disobedience, and then, if by one

man sin enters into the world, and death by sin, and so death passes upon all men, for that all have sinned, the question is, whether this is any worse than it would have been had we fallen without a Saviour; and whether we should have fallen is a question whose very uncertainty is fitted to appall the mind, and to make the absolute certainty of restoration from a fallen state by a Redeemer, if we choose to accept it, an object of grateful contemplation, and a proof that God is love, seeing that he is not willing that men should perish.

Yet, it will be replied, they do perish, we are told, by millions, and they perish in consequence of their strong constitutional predisposition to sin. Now, before we suffer ourselves to impugn the goodness of God on this score, would it not be well to know whether or no as many would not have perished if each had had a separate probation. Then, if liability to fall be inseparable from every state of existence, the question must be removed back to the very origin of all things, and we must say, Is it right for God to create moral and accountable beings, some of whom will voluntarily sin and be lost? He who feels competent to be the judge of the Almighty, or even to be his counsellor, needs at least to read once more, or perhaps for the first time, the Almighty's words to Job, on the expediency of sitting in judgment upon the eternal purposes of God. If it be said that such a remark is fitted to silence, not to satisfy, it is interesting to know that God did not seek to silence Job upon the subject, but he addresses him thus: "Gird up now thy loins like a man, for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me." And it is not by metaphysical questions that the Most High argues with him; but he makes use of the snow, and hail, and rain, and lightnings, the lion, the raven, the wild goat, the wild ass, the unicorn, the ostrich, the peacock, the horse, the hawk, the eagle, behemoth, and leviathan, to show that he to whom these creatures and things

are mysteries, and more than a match for both his wisdom and his strength, while they never cease to fill him with wonder and love at the divine benevolence and skill in their formation, may safely leave some other questions, relating to things higher than eagles, and deeper than the snows and floods, to the same wisdom which he does not fail to recognize in the works of nature.

But it is said, The penalty which, it is alleged, God has annexed to disobedience, cannot be consistent with love; for, if God knows from the beginning that a great number will sin and suffer forever, his love is not a perfect attribute, or love surely does not rule in his perfections. Some stern and unamiable principle gives its character to the Being who is willing to see a portion of his offspring miserable forever, when he could have prevented it by forbearing to bestow existence upon them.

The demand here seems to be that God shall make it impossible for any of his intelligent creatures to commit sin; and, if he cannot do so, it is claimed that true benevolence requires him not to bring them into existence.

We will forbear to consider the question whether, in the nature of things, God could create moral beings, and yet prevent them universally from sinning; or the question why he cannot prevent all, as well as some, from apostasy. We need not involve ourselves in the perplexities of that long-debated point; for there is an answer to this objection which lies outside of metaphysical and theological disputes.

We have reason to believe that angels who have maintained their integrity during their probation, and that the redeemed who have finished their probationary state in this world, will be kept by the power of God unto salvation forever, and that they will "never fall." We do not know in what respects

the divine influence which will keep them from falling in heaven differs from the divine influence which was extended to Adam when on probation, or why it could not have kept him from falling, (as it will keep the redeemed from apostasy,) and in perfect consistency with his own liberty. This is a region into which the human mind cannot safely enter; for it involves all those questions respecting the origin of evil which are still open questions. There is a beautiful simplicity in the manner in which the Saviour treats this subject — the origin of evil — in his parable of the tares. "So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? From whence, then, hath it tares? He said unto them, *An enemy hath done this.*" This is all the explanation which divine wisdom has revealed with regard to this perplexing subject. We are left to suppose that, in order to make a universe of free minds, it is necessary that all, in some period of their existence, should be tried as to their allegiance. In saying this, we do not step beyond the bounds of revelation; for we surely know that man was thus tried, and we also know that of the angels some have fallen. Then the question would be this: Is it, after all, injustice or unkindness to wake up an immortal spirit from nonexistence, endue it with godlike powers and faculties, place it under the most favorable circumstances in the immediate presence of God, and give it permission to choose life or death?

Let us apply the question to the following case, and see how we decide such questions in human affairs: A man at the head of the engraving department in the Bank of England is intrusted with great responsibilities. If faithful, he is of immense service to the community in the prevention of counterfeiting. His salary is in proportion to his great responsibilities. In his silent, quiet way, he is the means of unmeasured benefit to the commercial world; and all these

considerations unite to keep him upright, while, at the same time, great watchfulnesss is exercised over him, and he feels that unsleeping vigilance marks every one of his official acts. But notwithstanding all these guards, and his powerful inducements to be honest, we will suppose that he perverts his trust, commits large forgeries, and is transported for life, to be a convict in a penal colony, making his wife a widow, his children fatherless, and covering his family and friends with a cloud of sorrow which is worse than death. Now, who will undertake to say, It is wrong to place a human being in circumstances where defalcation is possible? Who will venture the judgment that the inducements to uprightness and its great rewards are not consistent with benevolence, because, if disregarded, the consequences will be so fearful? Surely, if men should act on this principle, which they require at the hand of God, they could not even employ a clerk. There must be no responsibility, because it is capable of being perverted.

But some who will assent to this reasoning, and own that probation is reasonable and just, demur to the alleged eternal consequences of transgression under the government of God, and say, that it is not consistent with the benevolence of God that any of his subjects should be punished forever, let their transgressions be whatever they may. They adopt this principle as the foundation of every thing, even of the being and attributes of God. The ultimate, eternal happiness of every intelligent being, they say, is absolutely required by the great law of benevolence, and God can neither be nor do any thing inconsistent with this.

Let us take Satan for an illustration. Let us assert, for the sake of the argument, that Satan is to be punished without end. Now it is said, It cannot be true that "God is love," while that great spirit is suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

To this it may be replied, Good parents punish a child so

long as he sins, let the period of transgression be as long as it may.

To flinch in the chastisement, saying, After all, it is too much to punish you so long, and to keep you from my love, while the child is as rebellious as ever, would subject the parent to contempt. So long as Satan chooses to sin, we must admit that God does right in continuing the punishment.

If Satan, during the last five or six thousand years, had chosen to repent, there has been nothing to hinder him; and no one can believe that, had he repented, God would have continued to punish him, whatever the natural consequences of his transgression might have been; for we, when forgiven, may still suffer from the natural effects, in body and mind, of our evil ways. Yet if Satan were penitent, hell would be a changed place to him; loving and fearing God, he would have verified those words which Milton puts into his mouth:—

> "The mind is its own place, and in itself
> Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven."

Has not Satan had opportunity to repent? There is one part of his experience recorded in the Bible, which, we shall all agree, should have made him a good angel; and that is, his intercourse with Job. He is suffered to strip Job of every thing, and to afflict him with the severest bodily anguish which infernal ingenuity could select. Job comes forth from those trials a better man. Satan sees that there is that in God which is worthy to be loved even under chastisement, and to be preferred above possessions and children, and life itself; for, "though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." "Till I die, I will not remove mine integrity from me." But what does Satan after this? He afflicts Israel in Egypt four hundred years. He instigates Pharaoh to fight against God, and so on to King Saul, Jeroboam, Ahab, and Jezebel, "the man of sin," the slave

trade, and all the barbarities of war. Thus, instead of ceasing to sin against God, he has been helping to fill the world with sin and misery. He has seen the most touching forms of goodness, vieing with the angelic beauty of his own original abode. He has seen Ignatius bare his breast to the lions in the Roman amphitheatre, Polycarp, John Huss, Lambert, Ridley, and Latimer embrace the stake; the Huguenots perishing for their religion "upon the Alpine Mountains cold;" he has seen John Bunyan bid adieu to his poor little blind child, and go into Bedford jail for twelve years for Christ's sake and the gospel's, — he has seen all this, and has not relented in his opposition to Christ. Were there any thing in love and pity to redeem the soul, he could not have lived through such scenes, and have also witnessed the times of Christ, the transactions in Gethsemane, the judgment hall, Calvary, and at the Resurrection, and the day of Pentecost, and not have been reclaimed. We should have to draw to a greater degree on fancy to invent a more favorable probation for him, than human fancy has ever yet shown itself able to depict. In addition to all this, the loss of heaven, and whatever there must have been of rigor in the sufferings of such a being as he under the mighty hand of God, must have supplied him with sufficient demonstration how fruitless it is to fight against God his Maker. Sympathy for such a being is misplaced, even though he shall forever eat the fruit of his doings.

But here is poor, frail, sinful man; — he sins away his day of grace. Shall a God of love deal thus with him?

We must all believe that in no instance will endless retributions be inflicted, if at all, on a human being, in which the justice of the infliction will not commend itself to the judgment of every benevolent mind as fully as in the case of Satan himself. But in arguing upon this subject, men love

to invent cases of extreme hardship, and then they appeal to our sensibilities against the justice and benevolence of God. For example: Here, they say, is a youth about fifteen years of age, subject to the infirmities and temptations of immature life; he is not interested in religious things, yet by no means openly vicious; he passes along heedless of the future. He is drowned. There is no evidence that he feared God, or that he had complied with the terms of salvation. He had a very short probation. Subtract the years of mere childhood from the term of his life, and it seems appalling to think of eternity deriving its hopeless character from the indiscretions and follies of seven or eight years, and those the most thoughtless years of life, the most unfavorable to prudent consideration. It is demanded whether we believe that God will shut the door of mercy upon that youth forever, and whether we deem it just to cut him off, and consign him to hopeless woe, while a companion, who escapes death at the same time, lives to the age of sixty, and enjoys tenfold opportunities to be saved, and thereby obtains salvation.

The answer to this is twofold. In the first place, We greatly err in shutting the door of hope, ourselves, against any sinner as a subject of repentance and faith. Little do we know what has taken place between the soul and God in the apparently most hardened cases of sin, or in the most thoughtless and trifling young person, where sudden death has cut short the day of grace. Should all that may have transpired in such cases be disclosed, perhaps it would have the effect to harden others in their sin, and would lead to great presumption. A wise silence is preserved, and thus our wholesome fears are permitted to act in deterring us from trespassing on divine forbearance. At the same time, no one can say what intercourse the Spirit of God may have had with the soul in the near approach of death, and even in cases where the

senses cannot report to the bystanders the operations of the mind. Perhaps it will not be deemed unsuitable here to say, It was not without warrant in the possibilities of divine mercy that a friend, on a certain occasion, presumingly sought to impart consolation to mourning parents, whose son, a graceless youth, was killed by being thrown from a horse. This friend succeeded in writing certain words on a plantain leaf which had grown up from the youth's grave; and the pious mother, as she was one day kneeling there, descried these words upon the leaf: —

> "Betwixt the saddle and the ground
> Was mercy asked, and pardon found."

This was easily interpreted by many as a preternatural revelation to the mother, that her child repented and found pardon through Christ in the last moments of a wicked life. No one will say that the assertion in this fraud had no warrant in the nature of things.

We charge God foolishly if we impute to him vindictive acts before we know that they have occurred.

We have another answer to the inquiry now under consideration. A young person may as intelligently and deliberately refuse the offers of eternal life, and choose to risk the consequences of eternal death, as a person of the maturest age. This is subject to the judgment of Him who "will not lay on man more than right, that he should enter into judgment with God. For the work of a man will he render unto him, and cause every man to find his own way." God can place the subject of religion before the mind of a youth with such clearness, and vividness, and persuasion; cause him to be approached and followed with such heavenly influences from every source which divine and human love can employ, and set before him the endless consequences of his conduct;

and the youth may deliberately reject his God and Saviour, and make answer that he would prefer banishment from God rather than love such a being as he clearly perceives him to be, or to be saved in such a way as the gospel makes plain to his understanding, — so that God will remove him from this world, where his example and influence would corrupt many others, and suffer him to indulge his opinions and feelings among those of his own tastes and preferences. How long this sinner shall remain in this world of probation before he is removed to a state of penal infliction, God, the Judge, will decide. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

This illustration, in some of its particulars, has been drawn from a recent statement to the writer by a very intelligent lady now deceased, with regard to her feelings and words during the period of youth, when convinced of her sins and of the way of salvation by Christ. She told her Christian friends that she fully understood the idea of justification by faith, without works, through the sufferings and death of Christ, but that she hated it with a cordial hatred; that she never would submit to be saved in that way; and that if heaven was to be obtained only in that way, she would say to God that she did not wish to have any part in his heaven, and that he might dispose of her as he pleased. These were precisely her words. It could truly be said to her, "Ye have both seen and hated both me and my Father." There are feelings in many an unrenewed heart which do not make such explicit and bold expression of themselves; but many will recognize in these words their own fearful similitude. This deliberate and almost impious rejection of divine wisdom and love in Christ Jesus, did not meet with what might be deemed its just recompense of reward; for, by methods of gentle and winning grace, that heart was prevailed upon to accept the way of salvation by a Redeemer, and the penitent lived to a

good age, eminently useful in bringing souls to Christ, and in leading some to be preachers of that faith which once she destroyed. But if God had taken her at her word, and had removed her from time into eternity, leaving her to her own choice, one thing is certain, that she could never have impeached his goodness in suffering her to choose for herself, and for being willing to lie down in endless sorrow rather than to sing "forced hallelujahs" in heaven.

But now it will be said, Inasmuch as 'God was love' in thus turning her from her sin and folly, we believe that in the next world he will be the same; he will perform similar acts of grace in eternity, or we cannot believe that his character as a God of love is perfect.

The answer to this may be as follows: Whatever God might do for the recovery of the soul in the world to come, he cannot surpass that which, if we believe the gospel, he has already done to save us. This remark, it will be borne in mind, does not touch the question whether God will do any thing more hereafter to save the soul; but we may say without fear of contradiction, that nothing can exceed the incarnation of the Word, and the sufferings and death of Christ, as an expression and proof of love to sinners. If this be granted, it cannot be said that, after having bestowed the utmost proof of love on men, if God should, at a given time, cease in his efforts to reclaim them, this is a just allegation against him as wanting in perfect love. "What more could I do in my vineyard that I have not done in it?" Shall I, by omnipotent force, create grapes on vines which my sun and rain, my tillage and dressing, have failed to make fruitful?

But it may be said, God has not, in this world, tried the effect of severity to its full extent. If God is perfect in his love, he will not give over till he has used extreme measures of chastisement to save an immortal soul.

This implies that chastisement can succeed to accomplish that which infinite loving kindness has failed to do.

We have had one great experiment tried before our eyes, as to chastisement being the ultimate means of reformation, in the history of the Jews. More of them, by a hundred fold, were converted under the preaching of the gospel, apart from their chastisements, than have been converted during their centuries of punishment. The experiment is sufficient to show that chastisement, of itself, is not "the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation." Christ is that "power," that "wisdom." Ages of woe, mingled with promises of restoration, have not succeeded in making the Jews submit to the Messiah. But affliction, of itself, even while holding in its hand exceeding great and precious promises, cannot reclaim the Jewish people, in a world of mercy, from their infidelity. He who believes that any process of recovery is to succeed the atonement by Christ, we will not say, gets no encouragement to his belief from the Bible, but, does infinite discredit to the atonement, as the grand and ultimate method of influencing man as a moral agent; and, if the Bible does not represent Christ and his sacrifice to be the last effort of mercy, and the rejection of him to be followed by "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord," and with being "unjust still," language can make no certain impressions upon the mind. Surely we may expect that the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, would be employed hereafter to conduct whatever remedial measures might be used to recover the soul from sin; and yet it does not look like a continuation of his merciful presence and influence to say to the hopeful subjects of his continued grace, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!"

Yes, "God is love," now and forever; and the darkest

parts of his system are far from countervailing the proofs of it afforded by all that we know of his ways. They who take mournful views of the present world, and of their afflicted and sinful state, should remember that, in coming into this world, we strike upon a road which proceeds from a region of blessedness, and leads to a condition of surpassing glory; but the section over which we are passing is, for wise reasons, one of trial and sorrow. We must take into view the past and the future of the great career; and, if we obey, we shall at last have infinite reasons for gratitude that we have been brought into being. For, if God is love, he is this to every one who is willing to love him; and if any refuse, they have but their choice. Let the heavens, earth, and seas bring their testimonies that God is love; let sight, and taste, and smell, and touch, all the melodies and harmonies of the world, and all the sensibilities of the soul, declare that God is love: we have in the incarnation and sacrifice of Christ a proof which exceeds them all. One of the persons in the Godhead takes the form of man, lies in the manger of Bethlehem, passes through the conditions of youth and manhood, and at last is made a sacrifice for our sins. This is, as literally as it could be, our Creator suffering in our stead. He was "made in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin," and "bare our sins in his own body on the tree." If we esteem it a calamity that we come into the world with a bias towards evil, he has set over against it this manifestation of infinite love towards us, so that no one need perish; no one will perish who would not, probably, have lost his birthright had he stood for himself in some Eden, or in heaven; for he who will not believe in and accept Jesus Christ, has no reason to think that, if made upright and placed on probation, he could have preferred the favor of God to every possible solicitation to sin, or could have resisted his desires for untasted good, more easily than

he can now resist the present poor and unsatisfying pleasures of sin, in preference to the love and service of his Redeemer.

And now, while love will lead and guide all the acts of God, we have assurance that it will not be a weak love; it can never excite the suspicion of imbecility: on the contrary, all the attributes of God are filled with love, and love is filled with all the attributes of God. If we decline the proposals which this love and wisdom make to us as intelligent and free subjects of the divine government; if we refuse to believe the simple, plain story of sin and redemption, and prefer our false philosophy; if it must be said of us, "He feedeth on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned him aside, so that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" and so we take the risk of going into the next world without a Saviour, one thing is sure — we shall, nevertheless, be eternally the monuments of the truth that God is love. Our consciences will bear witness to it; for we shall remember how, in our lifetime, we received our good things, and we shall perceive what good things they were, to have been created under such a dispensation as that of the gospel, with its astonishing provisions and appliances to effect our salvation and happiness; and in our separation from those who, unlike us, chose to love and worship at a throne which is called "the throne of God and of the Lamb," we shall ourselves illustrate the love of God in not suffering the universe to present such a mingled conflict of good and evil as the world presents. "As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." When a man suffers capital punishment, it is discretionary, in certain cases, for the government to give up his body to the

surgeons, and so the felon subserves the purposes of science and humanity, and involuntarily helps to heal and save men. "The Lord hath made all things for himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." To every soul he will say, "Friend, I do thee no wrong." He "will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but that the wicked turn and live. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" But God will eventually use all, and every thing, to glorify him. The commonwealth does not desire convicts for the sake of their manual labor, but if they make themselves felons, the state will avail itself of their handicraft.

As there is nothing which grows that affords us more pleasure than a noble vine, God selects it as an illustration of men, when they fulfil the purpose of their creation; and if they do not, he represents them to be as useless and worthless as the wood of the vine. "Son of man, what is the vine more than any tree? Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? Or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon? Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel; the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the midst of it is burned. Is it meet for any work?"[1] Thus the soul of man is capable of perpetual advancement towards God; but if it persists in sin, it is no more "meet for any work." As no good use can be made of a bad book, an obscene picture, or garments infected with contagious disease, but they must be buried or burned, so the sinner, if he cannot be reclaimed, must be disposed of in such a way as wisdom and justice shall determine. But some bestow all their sympathy on the incorrigible sinner, and forget that there are rights and privileges belonging to others — rights of protection, rights of self-defence — which, to say the least, are of equal importance with his. Others seem to make

[1] Ezek. xv.

small account of sin; they see no reason for future, endless punishment, because they perceive nothing to punish. Others seem to think of God only as of a fond parent, who has no object but to see his children enjoy themselves, and with whom the shutting up of one of his offspring in close confinement for life would be impossible; and is he, they say, more humane than God? But so long as there are such subjects as Satan and his angels, and wicked men, to be governed, there is, of course, a God with a character appropriate to his office as governor of these his subjects. A man with such softness of character as many impute to the Most High, would not have the qualifications necessary in the humblest magistrate; he could not be trusted to try a question which involved the personal liberty of an offender. It is enough to make one sick and faint at heart to think of such a being as at the head of affairs. Far different is the God whom we have, for example, in the vision of Nahum, the Elkoshite, — in which terror and beauty vie with each other: "God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth; the Lord revengeth, and is furious; the Lord taketh vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies. The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked; the Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him. The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that trust in him; but with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies."

If there be such a God, and our aversion to him be owing to any moral perversity on our part, there will be no need of outward inflictions to make us completely wretched, so long as we remain alienated from him. Our condition for eternity

would, therefore, be hopeless, unless in this world we should become reconciled to God; for, if this aversion is based upon any correct perception of his character, the more we know of him the more shall we desire to flee from him.

This brings us to one more proof that God is love, which must by no means be omitted. All men are by nature averse to the character and government of God, by reason of sin. This is true not only of those who by the force of education are prejudiced against what are called the evangelical doctrines, but of those also who have been taught to believe them. Every man by nature has "the carnal mind" which "is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." This aversion is criminal; yet it is such that, if left to themselves, all will, freely and wickedly, refuse to love and obey God. The fall has not impaired man's natural ability to love goodness; of course, man is capable of loving infinite goodness; but that exists in one whose will is contrary to that of the sinner, and to whose moral character the sinner, while he loves sin, has an utter distaste; so that no one can even come to Christ except the Father, which hath sent him, draw him. In this direful predicament, God interposes, and overcomes the sinful reluctance of some; and still the invitation is, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely;" but while many refuse, others are persuaded and enabled to embrace Jesus Christ as he is freely offered in the gospel. They then experience that new birth which is the special work of the Holy Spirit. It will seem superfluous to some that it should be said, that whoever, for example, is reading these lines is as welcome to all the blessings of the gospel as any other. No secret decree prevents him from obtaining the full benefits of salvation by Christ. No abuse of privileges, no rejection of offered mercy, no hard thoughts, nor unjust accusations, of his Maker, nor even blasphemous words against him, have shut the door of mercy

upon his soul. He who, for his sake, lay in the manger at Bethlehem, and expired on the cross, is now his advocate on high, and as a fruit of his merits, the Holy Spirit strives to bring the soul to God. Let him reflect how marked the dealings of God have been with him, in his preservations, blessings, and trials, and in the means employed to keep him back from presumptuous faults, and to bring his attention again and again to the subject of religion; let him consider, if, in all this, there be not some appearance of a desire to effect his salvation, and that, too, notwithstanding great provocations to give him up forever. Is there any love like this? Not only in the ransom paid for us, but in the persevering efforts of injured mercy, in behalf of every one of us, there are proofs that God is love which will furnish us with our principal testimony to that truth.

It may, therefore, be said to every one, let his character be as it may, God loves you. Complacency in us while we are wicked, of course, he cannot feel; but there are feelings of love on the part of God towards every one, such as are not equalled by any human interest in the object of its good will. While the displeasure of God against sin, and the necessity of its endless punishment, are fundamental truths, God is love; hell is not the exponent of his character; it is a subsidiary in his administration; but as Gehenna did not lie where the Temple, "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, on the sides of the north," was built, so the foremost object in the Deity is not wrath, nor punishment. But when Moses prayed, "I beseech thee show me thy glory," the Lord said, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee;" yet it is to be noticed that he immediately adds, And I "will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy;" — in which expressions we see that while grace and mercy are set forth to make the chief impressions of the divine character, they are enunciated in a

way to suggest the idea of discrimination in the manner in which they are exercised. And so when, on Sinai, God proclaimed his name at the renewal of the tables of stone, it was "the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering; and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation." Here the predominant impression is that of goodness; yet the very term "*long-suffering*" suggests that there are bounds to mercy, while the avowed principle of connecting parents and children, as here described, makes one feel that the character of God has depths in it which are not all explored, nor sounded, by the analogy of earthly parentage. If we leave out any essential attribute from the character of God, we do not worship the true God. At the same time, there is an order and a proportion, in those attributes, to disregard which is like applying the wrong end of a magnet for a given purpose. As we are sinners, all the attributes of God have relation to us; and hence it is that redemption, unfolding all those attributes in their various exercise, and in disclosing to us, as it were by necessity, the mystery in the divine nature of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is represented as the chief work of Jehovah.

Each of us is urged to be a subject of that redemption, and to afford an illustration of the attributes of God in our salvation, and not in our future, endless punishment. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. FOR GOD SENT NOT HIS SON INTO THE WORLD TO CONDEMN THE WORLD, BUT THAT THE WORLD THROUGH HIM MIGHT BE SAVED."

APPENDIX.

BRIEF NOTICE

OF

REV. T. STARR KING'S "TWO DISCOURSES," ETC.[1]

THE circumstances under which the discourse, of which the present pages are a supplement, was preached, are generally known. They are stated in the 'Correspondence' prefixed to it, in the first number of this series. After the additional statement, in these pages, of the writer's views concerning the character of God, as concerned in the moral condition and destinies of our race, very little needs to be added on this point, in this brief notice of the "Two Discourses" recently published by the Pastor of Hollis Street Church, in reply to the first sermon on this subject. The present publication ('God is Love') had its origin as a sermon not in consequence of these "Two Discourses," (which, if preached, had not then been published,) but from the desire of the author to lay before his stated hearers a somewhat more completed view of the important theme.

While no complaint is here made, and no objection is felt that the Pastor of the Hollis Street Church should have replied, as he did, to the sermon above named, or that he should have published his answer, yet, as the invitation to preach contained no intimation of a purpose to use the sermon in aid of a counter statement of doctrinal opinions on the same subject, the present occasion may fairly be used to say a few words in reply. Perhaps the apprehension that there would be any occasion to say them, might have operated as a reason to decline the courteous and fair invitation to preach. And now, in the same friendly spirit which led to the acceptance of the invitation, and which, it was apparent, dictated it, all that shall be said will be in no controversial spirit, but with a sincere and earnest desire to commend our evangelical views still further to the understandings and hearts of others.

[1] "The Doctrine of Endless Punishment for the Sins of this Life, unchristian and unreasonable. Two Discourses, delivered in Hollis Street Church. By Rev. Thomas Starr King. Boston: Crosby, Nichols & Co."

The thought that the discourse on the "Reasonableness," &c., may have led the author of the "Two Discourses" to say certain things, which will be quoted, awakens a natural and a friendly feeling of responsibleness in him who may have been the occasion of such utterances. This makes him more ready to say a few words in reply.

It is a remark of Bucholtzer, "A preacher is known by his peroration." There, his heart, his motive, his governing purpose, appear. He has ceased to argue; he appeals; and the controlling emotions of his soul are then, to his thoughts and feelings, like the push of the sea which sends the waves ashore. It was, therefore, with the deepest interest, and with feelings which cannot be fully expressed, that the closing paragraph but one of the "Two Discourses" was perused. It is as follows: —

"Brethren, we need a religion that shall have no fear of the justice of God forever, but boundless confidence in it, rather. It is heathen to ask for an interest in Christ, in order to be shielded from God's law. If you are a sinner, seek deliverance from yourself, but not from God's law, or from God. Face his law. Ask for its searchings and scourge. Even if you are about to die, be not afraid of infinite justice. To slip away from it would be your only danger. It is inseparably mixed with God's love, as the gravitation of the sun with its light and heat."

The thought that these words were addressed to a company of immortal beings, each of whom, with us, is to meet a dying hour, and then is to answer for the deeds done in the body; and the recollection of those explicit words, "Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight;" "to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus;" and how the very chiefest of the apostles counted every thing but dung, that he might "win Christ, and be found in him, not having," he says, "mine own righteousness, which is of the law, *but that which is through the faith of Christ*, the righteousness which is of God by faith;" and moreover, the thought that the speaker himself, with us, will one day test the correctness of these words, in their application to himself, — awakens a feeling of unaffected interest toward all who believe and speak these things; and yet it is an interest which the proprieties of life forbid us to express, save in the guarded manner of deference to the right of private judgment, and of respect for individual responsibleness. No words from human lips, on this theme, ever seemed so bold as these. They call up, vividly, the image of a man leaping the enclosures of Sinai, venturing into the darkness and tempest which were round about God, and, without availing himself

even of the mediatorship of Moses, protesting, 'I want no mediator,' and beckoning his tribe in Israel to follow him; — although Moses himself had said, "I exceedingly fear and quake."

The innumerable souls which have fled for refuge from the law of God to Him "who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth," cannot have been deceived in the expressions which divine revelation made upon them; for they are the great body of devout persons in all ages. We have no hymns in our language which celebrate the justice of God as the foundation of a sinner's hope. Never do we hear men of devout lives saying, in health or in sickness, 'God forbid that I should glory save in the justice of God.' He explicitly tells us in his word that we have no righteousness of our own; hence we have no peace with God till we are justified, by his righteousness, through Christ; and therefore it is only at the cross of Christ that, for us, "righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

The grand secret of the unbelief here expressed with regard to the way of salvation by faith, appears in these words, in another part of these "Two Discourses." Speaking of the statement commonly made, that the doctrine of future, endless retribution is inseparably intertwined with the Supreme Deity of Christ, the preacher says, (p. 60,) —

"Brethren, I do not believe in the Supreme Deity of Christ, or that it is taught in any portion of the New Testament. I know that most of the noblest Christians of the world to-day do believe it. But," &c.

This being so, and while it is so, nothing else which pertains essentially to the great system of revealed truth, as evangelical believers hold it, is ever truly received. If Jesus Christ is a foundation stone, the superstructure will correspond to his nature and character. If he be "the Word who was with God and who was God," there must be an infinite difference between all which he does and that which a creature can do. The sufferings and death of such a person as Christ, in whom the divine Word is incarnate, are, by an immeasurable difference, of more consequence than the sufferings and death of a created being. Accordingly we find a stress laid on the death of Christ which is fully accounted for, as we believe, only in there being a propitiation for sin. Perhaps the author of the "Two Discourses" was present with some ministerial friends when one, formerly a minister of like views with him, and now a distinguished ornament in the literary world, remonstrated with them for making use of the Lord's Supper, because of its absolutely sacrificial associations; alleging that a principal reason with him for leaving the ministry was, the necessity of using that ordi-

nance, when he utterly repudiated the idea of vicarious sacrifice in the death of Christ. He was, at least, consistent; his witness is true.

But the author continues his objections to the idea that the atonement involves the doctrine of future, endless retribution; and he asks, (p. 61,) —

"Why must the possibility of pardon stop at the grave? Why, if a soul can be saved from just wrath here, through faith in the atonement, cannot a like faith avail, if a sinner offers it who has suffered for centuries in the abyss?"

Such a question — and it is one of fearful interest — must be referred for the only answer, if any, which can be given, to the revelation of God. As man did not fix the way and the terms of salvation, he can himself give no satisfactory answer to this inquiry. How long probation shall be, is determined only by infinite wisdom. In proportion to the stupendous sacrifice made for sin, it may be that the term during which it shall be offered is made brief. This seems to be hinted at here: "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord." These are singular words; they relate to the rejection of mercy through the blood of Christ; and the "vengeance" and "recompense" spoken of, imply other attributes and feelings in God than those of a father. When we think of probation as being short, compared with eternity, we are to remember what the offer is, who makes it, and by what means it was procured. True, it is but a little while, at the longest, that any of us live in the world; but, during that brief space of time, proposals are made to us by our God, in our own nature, from an atoning cross; and a very few, intelligent, deliberate acts of rejecting or neglecting those proposals, have an importance proportioned to the nature of the proposals; hence it is said, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" We who have fully known the way of pardon by a Saviour's death, may not properly ask why we may not avail ourselves of the same offer ages hence.

The author tells us, (p. 59,) that

"The doctrine [of endless retribution] is a fiction, an invention, pure and simple, so far as the Old Testament is concerned." — "There are not any disclosures about the details or destinies of a future life in any book

written between the time of Adam and Malachi. The idea of eternal punishment came into the Jewish mind and literature from heathen sources."

There is no room here to enter fully into an exhibition of the manner in which the idea of future and final retribution is interwoven with the whole of the Old Testament history, from the time when it was said to Adam, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Nor is it necessary to pursue the illustration of this truth, seeing that we have a certain testimony upon the point which it will be hard for any to set aside. — The statement is, that the Old Testament nowhere teaches the doctrine of future, endless punishment.

The rich man in hell was told that between him and heaven there was a great gulf fixed, "so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence."

"Then he said, I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment."

Now let us attentively consider the reply which Abraham made to this proposal: "Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them."

We do not then hear the rich man reply, Nay, father Abraham; thou knowest that there is not in the Old Testament one word from Moses to Malachi relating to this hopeless misery.

The opportunity thus to impugn the Old Testament was not embraced. The reply of the rich man simply was, "Nay, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent."

Then follow those words which stamp the seal of heaven, by the hand of Jesus Christ, upon the Old Testament, as a sufficient guide to the men who possessed it, with respect to eternity: "And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

All this should awaken in us a candid desire to find those testimonies in the Old Testament to future retributions — testimonies which even a messenger from the other world, it seems, could not make more convincing. Wherever and whatever the rich man was suffering, his surviving Jewish brethren had, in their Old Testament Scriptures all the information which a spirit from within the veil could usefully impart.

The objection perhaps most commonly urged against future, endless retribution is set forth in these Discourses, with the aid of a quotation from an eminent writer and preacher of the same faith with our author. The slight impression and influence which, it is said, the doctrine has upon those who believe it, is used to show that

"'It may be a sort of theory to be speculated about, to be coldly believed in, but it is not truth that can be taken home to the heart. *Coldly* believed in, did we say? No; so believed, it is not believed in at all. It is not *believed*, unless it is believed in horror and anguish; unless it sends its votary to his nightly pillow in tears, and wakes him every morning to sorrow, and carries him through every day burdened as with a world's calamity, and hurries him, worn out with apprehension and pity, to a premature grave. He who should grow sleek and fat, and look fair and bright, in a prison from which his companions were taken one by one, day by day, to the scaffold and the gibbet, could make a far better plea for himself than a good man living and thriving in this dungeon world, and believing that thousands and thousands of his fellow-prisoners are dropping daily into everlasting burnings.'"[1]

To allude once more to Rev. John Foster's thoughts on this subject, we find him also dwelling with much force on this same objection — that it "sits so easy on the minds of the religious and benevolent believers of it." "If the tremendous doctrine be true, it ought to be continually proclaimed as with the blast of a trumpet, inculcated and reiterated with ardent passion, in every possible form of illustration; no remission of the alarm to the thoughtless spirits." "The most prolonged thundering alarm is but as the note of an infant, a bird, or an insect, in proportion to the horrible urgency of the case."

What, then, we might ask, can we possibly do, which will be at all proportioned to the urgency of the case, even if we should live in a frenzy, and cry out perpetually, as the people in the flood must have done, to one another? — In all these strictures, in the first place, there is not a just consideration of the principles of the human mind as susceptible to moral suasion. In waking a sleeper from a burning dwelling, we may adopt measures to rouse and save him, which would only disgust a sinner if applied to his moral sensibilities. Clamor and cries of distress, tones of sorrow inarticulate through grief, a countenance on which unutterable concern for the perishing should always be depicted, would fail of their benevolent intention, if employed, Sabbath after Sabbath, and from day to day, by preachers of the gospel to save men. Christ and the apostles were plain and bold

[1] "Two Discourses," pp. 63, 64. — Quoted from Rev. Dr. Dewey.

in their warnings; but they understood human nature too well to scream their admonitions, or to use the intonations of the affrighted.[1]

But, further, these strictures are not in accordance with our general conduct in other things. We are all aware that scenes of indescribable wretchedness exist in this city, perhaps not far from our dwellings. This knowledge does not keep the most humane among us agitated, as it is sometimes demanded that we should be, if we believe in future punishment. Human nature could not endure such excitement where no help could be rendered. Our various duties would forbid it.

No minister of Christ, and no believer in the punishment of the wicked, will fail to confess, with shame and sorrow, that he feels so little the power of this belief; that it influences his feelings in so small a measure. But he will make the same confessions with regard to his conceptions of the Saviour's love, the evil of sin, and the blessedness of heaven.

But there is a singular inconsistency in those who make this objection to a belief in future punishment. A pamphlet was published in this city several years ago, in which the writer dwelt at large on this objection, quoting Mr. Foster, and expatiating at length on the argument. Then, strange to say, in another part of his work, and in seeming forgetfulness of all this, he compiled two pages, in small type, of fearful representations respecting future punishment, from some of the American Tract Society's publications, — Baxter's Call to the Unconverted, Alleine's Alarm, Saurin, President Edwards, and the Peep of Day; and, in questionable taste, he called this "Hellomania." Some men, surely, according to his own showing, have cleared their skirts of the blood of souls; even Mr. Foster would nave admitted this, could he have perused that fearful emblazonry of the terrors of the Lord. But it seems hard to be reproached by the same individuals, with unreasonable apathy with regard to future punishment, and then to have them utter epithets against us, which seem almost intolerant, for using such terrific representations of the future. Our friend, the author of the "Two Discourses," has unconsciously fallen into this inconsistency. On the sixty-third page, he has, with the concurrence of a distinguished writer, just quoted, represented us as utterly deceived in believing as we profess to do, because we are not more in earnest in our tones and efforts. And yet,

[1] A distinguished physician of Boston says, that a gentleman once came into his office, and said, "Sir, I am very deaf, indeed; and now I wish you to speak slow, and low, and I can hear you."

on the fifty-second page, he had made severe strictures on a passage from the sermon on "The Reasonableness," &c., which makes the supposition that it will be wretchedness enough hereafter for sinners merely to have their own way. He quotes as follows: —

"God may say, This I will do. I will place all of you who sin, in a world by yourselves, from which I and my friends will forever withdraw. . . . . He would take away, we must suppose, all their domestic relations, friendships, social pleasures, books, every pursuit of knowledge, music, travels, quiet sleep, morning and evening salutations of loved ones."[1]

Then our friend exclaims, "All this forever! All this in a world devised by the infinite intellect with exquisite relation to purposes of torture!" &c.

What shall we do? We are like "children sitting in the markets and calling unto their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented." If we are mild in our persuasives, we are insincere; if bold and startling, we shock the sense of our friends, and excite invectives against ourselves not surpassed in terror by President Edwards's sentences, nor by Alleine's Alarm. — But we must bring a charge against these same friends of ours, for their inconsistency with their own belief, in not perpetually denouncing us, and saying to their hearers concerning us, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation" — these calumniators of the most High, these tormentors before the time, and without the least warrant, of innocent men, women, and children, by their 'unchristian' doctrine of future woe. O, how do we deserve to be driven out from among God's children into dry places, to cry and cut ourselves with stones, if all which is sometimes said of our belief is true. Where is the zeal of the unbelievers? Our dogma "sits too easily" upon them; they are not half awake; may we be excused if we say, Cry louder; quit yourselves like men, till this direful faith in future retribution is banished from the world. Else allow that we are, alike, naturally incapable of responding, as we should do, to the great, awakening truths of eternity.

It seems useless to quote the names of certain distinguished men and women as having wavered in their faith about this doctrine. It is only to be wondered at, that, with so much in it to try their confidence in it as a matter of pure revelation, thousands instead of tens, among evangelical believers, do not hesitate to receive it. The overwhelming majority of devout readers find the doctrine not merely

[1] "The Reasonableness," &c., p. 22.

in certain proof texts, but in the drift of Scripture, its implications, and in its fearful silence about any future state of probation.

Indeed, it admits of a question, whether, as a general thing, the most convincing proofs in the Bible of this doctrine, are not those which may be called incidental. These might fill a volume. For example, to quote from memory, "In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall lie;" "I will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh;" "the wicked shall be turned into hell;" "as the chaff which the wind driveth away;" "son of perdition;" "perish;" "shall not see life;" "good for that man if he had not been born;" "every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire;"—and the implications in the parables—"shall be taken away even that which he hath;" and the parable of the net — where the bad fishes, when drawn ashore, are not carefully thrown back into the sea, but are "cast away;" and in the parable of the tares, which are "gathered and burned in the fire." "So shall it be in the end of this world."

It is interesting to know that evangelical men, who, from time to time, have expressed doubts or difficulties with respect to the eternity of future punishment, often admit that the Scriptures are probably against them. Mr. Foster is an illustration. A more striking case is that of Dr. Thomas Burnett, one of the twelve or fifteen quoted by our author as having denied, or doubted, this article of faith. Dr. Burnett says, "Human nature shrinks back from the very name of eternal punishment. *Yet the Scriptures seem to hold the other side.*"[1] This good man wrote in Latin against future, endless punishment, and protested against his book being translated, for the reason that men are hardly restrained, even by the fears of eternal punishment, from going into all manner of sin, and the general disbelief of the doctrine, he feared, would tend to immorality. Origen, a disbeliever in the doctrine, intimates the same thing.[2] Surely, if the Scriptures and morality are on the side of the doctrine, it is hardly "unchristian and unreasonable."[3]

[1] "Natura humana abhorret ab ipso nomine pœnarum æternarum, &c. At Scriptura Sacra a partibus contrariis stare videtur." — *De Statu Mort. et Resurg.* p. 288, 2d ed.

[2] Contra Celsum, lib. vi. p. 292. — Ed. Spencer.

[3] Bishop Bull, also, makes a remark on Purgatory, which applies well to the doctrine of Restoration, as injurious to morals. He calls the doctrine of Purgatory "a gross imposition, that hath been, I am persuaded, the eternal ruin of thousands of souls for whom our Lord shed his most precious blood, who

The words "*everlasting*" and "*forever*," in Scripture, do not always mean *without end*. All admit this. "The *everlasting* hills," "he shall be his servant *forever*," and many such expressions, show, that the words indicate a duration corresponding to the nature of the object, or subject. Every intelligent reader knows this.

But there is such a thing, such an idea, as *having no end;* there is a proper *eternity*. Of course, there are words to express the idea. This is certain — the same word is used to denote the duration of punishment, which conveys the idea of the only proper eternity of which the Bible speaks.[1]

But as to *Gehenna*, Dr. George Campbell says, —

"That *Gehenna* is employed in the New Testament to denote the place of future punishment prepared for the devil and his angels, is indisputable. It occurs just twelve times. In ten of these there can be no doubt; in the other two, where the expression is figurative, 'child of hell,' and 'set on fire of hell,' it will scarcely admit of a question that the figure is taken from that state of misery which awaits the impenitent.[2] These two cannot be considered as exceptions, it being the manifest intention of the writers in both cases to draw an illustration of the subject from that state of perfect wretchedness."

Our author's objection to there being any *place* called *hell*, is the common one, and he thus expresses it: —

"One cannot easily see how the word [Gehenna, or the valley of Hinnom] could pass completely over from an uncertain to a technical sense, so long as the Jewish state remained, and the polluted valley was there, shedding its historic and moral associations into the mind of the people of Palestine. After the destruction of Jerusalem, the word could become unfixed from all geographical restraints and capabilities, and wither *up* into a dry, Rabbinic designation of a place of torment in the future world." — p. 23.

The idea is this: *Gehenna* could not, to the Jewish mind, in the Saviour's days, have meant an unseen place of torment, because it was

might have escaped hell, if they had not trusted to a Purgatory." — English Works, vol. i. p. 115.

[1] Some inquire, why, in the last verse of the 25th of Matthew, we read, "*everlasting* punishment," and "life *eternal*," when one and the same Greek word, it is said, is used in both parts of the verse. It is because the translators preferred to use variety, rather than repeat the same word in a brief space. The same thing is done in John iii. 15, 16: "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have *eternal* life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have *everlasting* life." The same Greek word is here translated by two different English words; and this Greek word is that which is translated *everlasting*, in connection with the punishment of the wicked.

[2] Prelim. Dissert. vi. part 2.

known that *Gehenna* literally meant that noisome valley near Jerusalem; but, in after years, the term may have come into use; but it could not have done so while the people saw the smoke ascending continually.

A complete answer to this is found in the fact that Jerusalem itself gave its name to heaven: "*Jerusalem*, which is from above" — "the heavenly *Jerusalem*," &c. Lapse of time was not necessary to grow the moss of sanctity over it, and thereby make it a synonyme for heaven. We have abundant illustrations of the immediate transferrence of a name of a place, or thing, into the current phraseology of the people then living, to represent something in morals or life. *Billingsgate*, *Coventry*, to mention no others, are familiar instances.

But if the word was actually used ten or twelve times in the New Testament to denote, as we must all confess, something besides the literal valley of Hinnom, this disproves our author's theory; whether it was *hell*, or any thing else, which the word meant, in those passages, so long as it did not mean *the place outside of Jerusalem*, our author's reasoning fails. And that it did not mean that literal valley, in these cases, is perfectly clear; for one who should say to his brother, Thou fool, was not cast into *the valley of Hinnom*. God would not "destroy both soul and body" *in the valley of Hinnom*; nor were the Pharisees concerned to "escape the damnation of" *that valley*. Hence, Gehenna had, in the Saviour's time, given its name to some other place; — and where was it?

Our author tells us, —

"There is no doubt that the Pharisees of the New Testament times believed in eternal damnation. Let the doctrine receive all the strength and respectability which such an indorsement can confer." — p. 23.

Great importance belongs to this admission, which is not in the least diminished by the connection of the truth involved in it with such bad men as the Pharisees. The great Teacher uttered his woes against them for their errors; but, had Jesus been a preacher of universal salvation, what awful reproofs would they have had from him for so libelling the "infinite Father" as to teach eternal damnation! Not a word of this, however; on the contrary, he charged them with making their proselyte "twofold more a child of *Gehenna* than" themselves. This, from the lips of Him who was at that moment reprobating their errors before the people; but he did not say a word against their belief in eternal damnation as being "*unchristian* and *unreasonable*."

But the limits of these pages forbid more extended remarks. In these "Two Discourses" we have the theory laid down that the ultimate, perfect, and eternal happiness of every intelligent creature is the first great law of the universe. To that idea the Bible must conform. "Jesus was a poet;" and all his imagery of punishment means nothing more than wholesome discipline; and Milton and Shakspeare are quoted to prove and illustrate the nature of the Saviour's figures of speech. There is no system of truth, so called, in the Bible; "asterisks," largely sprinkled in the pages of the Saviour's words, would properly express his elliptical way of communicating truth; and the apostles are less systematic than Christ. The Bible, we should judge, in our friend's view, is a glorious discharge of brilliancy, such as we see in the "golden rain," or the flight of several hundred "serpents" at once, in the pyrotechnic display; or like the sudden uprising together of a whole forest of birds, of all plumages and songs. Every thing is for intellectual and moral excitation, but fragmentary, and it cannot be pushed into a theory; nothing is very certain, except that all is to be well. God, Christ, heaven, hell, the Bible, human life, accidents, pain, death, every thing, is, each and all, subservient to this primal law of existence — the eternal happiness of angels, men, and devils. Judas, we should infer, is, just now, and perhaps is to be for a long time, rather a bad piece of statuary marble; he requires exceeding great labor to chisel off from his unpromising outside the veins and soft spots; but he is good at the centre; and Judas will yet come out an ornament to the society of heaven. It will therefore be good for that man, eventually, to have been born. As for Satan, there is probably no such being; he and his hell are Oriental metaphors. In the great sweep of ages, sin and sinners will exist only in history.

We shall, every one of us, somewhere, both preachers and hearers, forever have personal experience of the truth or error of these views. As we open the Book of Chronicles, for example, and in its lists of names, the eye rests on one — let it be *Adbeel*, — it is interesting to reflect that he, an immortal spirit, is this day pursuing his deathless career, with a personal history infinitely precious and important to him. So with each of us. It is a cause of gratefulness, therefore, to find one's self on that side of a question like this where, even if it be the wrong side, we are safe, according to the opposite theory. Great obligations are upon us who believe these momentous things. One is, not to be lofty or repulsive towards others, but to remember that our word is

called the word of 'reconciliation.' And while we preach endless punishment, salvation from it, through a Redeemer, is to be our great theme. Hope does more to save men, if Christ be set forth as the ground of it, than wrath. If we believe more than others, if we receive what we deem 'the whole counsel of God,' we should ponder our steps, lest, after having believed, and especially having preached, such things, we should only have sealed our own hopeless doom. Let those of us who preach these truths, therefore, make full proof of our ministry. We are, every Sabbath, helping to save men from the wrath to come, or causing them to be without excuse, if they perish forever. "AND WHO IS SUFFICIENT FOR THESE THINGS?"

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OUR BIBLE.

THERE MUST BE SUCH A BOOK as the Bible is held to be by the great majority of those who possess it — an inspired, all-sufficient revelation from God.

The same reasoning holds good here which Christopher Columbus used with regard to the globe. He insisted that there must be a continent in the west; that it was necessary, in order to maintain the equilibrium of the planet. He argued, moreover, that there was, of necessity, a nearer way to Asia than by the Cape of Good Hope. In faith, which could not be shaken because it was founded in the nature of things, he persevered in his search, till the sea weeds of the Bahama Islands floated by, and the perfumes of San Salvador came on the night airs to his ship.

Believing in the existence of a wise and benevolent God, we may, with more confidence than that which made Columbus look for a new world, declare that God has always given, and will always grant, to man, a perfect directory concerning the divine character and will, one about which an honest mind can make no mistake in its endeavors to learn its duty. It may be by direct communications from God himself to man; or by messengers, of whose authority to speak for God there can be no room for doubt; or in a written form. It is impos-

sible that there should not be such revelations. Thus, knowing that God will make men to dwell on the earth, we might insist beforehand, with absolute certainty, that he will furnish them with means of communicating their ideas one with another. It would not be benevolent, it is said, to suffer human beings, with their instincts and wants, to be, like so many islands, cut off, one from another, and each from all, by being deprived of signs and symbols to express their thoughts. There is no more necessity, in the nature of things, for language, than there is that intelligent and accountable beings should be informed, by some infallible and all-sufficient methods, what they are to believe concerning God, and what duties God requires of them. He who made the human hand, and has adapted the senses to the external world with such benevolent regard to the happiness and welfare of man; the God who has made medicinal herbs to grow in every clime suited to the diseases incident to that region; who fixed in heaven

> "the stedfast starre
> That was in ocean waves yet never wet,
> But firme is fixt, and sendeth light from farre,
> To all that in the wide deepe wandring arre;"

and who, in process of time, gave man the compass, and then the power of steam, and then the electric telegraph, has not failed, — it would be absurd, it requires too much credulity, to think that he has failed to bestow on man that which he needs above all things, and without which every thing else is comparatively without value — an all-sufficient revelation concerning his God, which, for its great purpose, is as reliable, and, in effect, as complete, as though God held personal intercourse with every man, face to face.

God at first communicated with men in person and by word of mouth; then by angels, and by fellow-men; —he, nevertheless, himself interposing continually with special disclosures

of his will, to leave men in no doubt as to that will and their duty. For reasons known only to himself, he has seen fit to withhold these immediate, personal communications with men. Has our need of a divine revelation ceased? The same necessity exists, and will continue to exist, that man should have an unerring guide as to truth and duty. If we have no such guide, the world, instead of advancing, has retrograded; and where is that benevolent God who, in the arts and sciences, by sea and land, in gold mines, in the coal, in surgery, and even in war, has progressively revealed his kind regard for the convenience of man, and his desire to alleviate his woes? Has he taken from us the most indispensable and precious of all his gifts — an authentic, all-sufficient source of knowledge respecting himself? In every thing else, we have made great advances upon those who have gone before us; the law of progression is every where seen in human affairs; but now, if we have no word of God, on which we can rely with as much certainty as Adam could upon that voice of the Lord which he heard walking in the garden in the cool of the day; if Pharaoh, with the messengers of the Almighty before him, enjoyed greater privileges than we, sinners of the nineteenth century; if Israel in the desert had its cloud by day and pillar of fire by night, its door of the tabernacle covered with the sign of the Almighty's presence, its mercy seat, its audible voice, saying, "I am the Lord;" and if all the people of God, even the children — the Samuels, the Josiahs — had clear, authentic disclosures of the divine will, and we enjoy nothing of the kind, but are left each to guess his way to heaven from certain writings which derive their authority only from their venerableness, but whose authority, even, is subjected to the varying opinions of men, — we may say with confidence that it is the greatest mystery in the whole providence of God. We hear it said that the Bible is the most wonderful of books. A

greater wonder, however, would be found in this, that there should be no Bible, no book claiming to be the word of God, possessing all the authority, the completeness, and sufficiency of a perfect revelation. The Bible is a wonderful book if it be true; it is, for every reason, more wonderful if it be not true. For then the whole analogy of God's providential dealings with men, by which he has in almost every thing advanced the race, and in nothing has deprived it of real blessings and privileges previously enjoyed, would be contradicted in the very thing in which we should most expect to behold the proof and illustration of his beneficence. We are, therefore, prepared to claim for the Bible, not only that it must be, and is, an inspired, all-sufficient revelation from God, but also that, as such, it is in no wise inferior to any form of revelation which God has ever made to men.

ONE BOOK FOR ALL FUTURE TIME.

One book for all times and all countries, it is said, is impracticable; and we cannot expect that all nations will receive it as the one only authorized and an all-sufficient directory.

Yet we know that one book, on a single subject, can be made to answer an individual, separate purpose for all future time; instances of this occur to every intelligent reader; and therefore we cannot see why one book could not be made by infinite Wisdom to answer every purpose relating to faith. Its object, if such a book is made, will be to teach man the knowledge of God and his duty. There is no reason why a book, composed, as to its different parts, through a very long period, may not sufficiently illustrate every subject relating to God and his will, so as to be an all-sufficient guide in matters of faith.

To make a volume for all ages, for every language, suited

to all the conditions of men, must require infinite wisdom, no less than any work of the divine mind. Had men or angels been deputed to make such a volume for the whole human race, not to be superseded as a whole, and as a whole never to be antiquated, — ever fresh, always profitable, capable of interesting the highest and the lowest understanding, and men under every sky, and in every condition of human life, — their wisdom would have been put to the severest trial in determining what to insert, and more especially what to omit, in what ways to secure variety, what style to adopt; in short, every thing which enters into the construction of a book would, under the circumstances, have presented formidable difficulties. It seems as though, after long consultation and experimenting, they would have reported unfavorably with regard to the possibility of making such a volume, and would have asked to be discharged from the duty; and, if the book must be made, they would have represented that nothing could be more appropriately the work of infinite Wisdom than to make the Bible. Accordingly, we find that Inspiration is represented to be as specifically the work of the Holy Spirit as the Cross is identified with Christ.

If men early forsook the worship of God, and entailed idolatry upon their descendants, those descendants were not left without admonitions respecting Jehovah, by the fame of Israel's deliverances, and by the knowledge of that wonderful journey through the desert. The "years of release," too, in after time, must have sent many witnesses of the true religion far and wide.

LOCAL AND TEMPORARY FEATURES OF THE BIBLE.

It is made by some an objection to the Bible that much of it is local and temporary, and was not originally addressed to the whole world. A collection of Hebrew histories, narratives

of personal adventure, lyrics, maxims, messages to particular kings and states, is made; and this is held to be, in part, a revelation from God addressed to the entire human race for all succeeding time, as the expression of his will and the rule of their duty. It is asked whether the publications of the Massachusetts Historical Society might not as properly be set forth as the rule of political and civil life in the United States for all coming time.

If those publications, and they alone, could be proved to be of divine origin, men would feel that the principles contained in them could, possibly, be of universal application. But, if there were a paper among them containing plans and specifications for a state house, would it follow that all the state houses were forever to be built after that model? No; and the directions with respect to the tabernacle and the temple are not intended as directions for the building of places of worship. How, then, it is said, can we call the minute details of the tabernacle a *revelation* to the whole earth? It is said, Let us discriminate. There is a word of God, here and there, in the Bible; but do not require us to believe that the directions to Bezaleel or Solomon respecting the snuffers, and the censers, and the brazen sea, are a *revelation* to people in North America, three thousand, nay, perhaps ten thousand, years afterwards; or that Paul's message about his cloak and the parchments are an inspired *revelation* to the christianized Sandwich Islanders.

According to the benevolent and condescending manner in which God has been pleased to educate the race, there are some divine communications to them, now on record, whose chief purpose was local and temporary; and at the same time they are still, and ever will be, of such use to mankind that they cannot be spared from the sacred canon. All that relates to the ceremonial law is of this nature. The minute directions about the altars and their victims are of no specific use to those

who have ceased to offer sacrifices; yet, if Christ be the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, every thing relating to the preparation of the world for his coming and his sacrifice is important and interesting; it cannot be taken away without impairing the historical evidence which belongs to the great sacrifice for sin. He that would separate Leviticus, for example, from the New Testament, might be expected, in presenting us with a water lily, to cut off the stem close to the calyx. Every speech, every letter, every tradition, relating to our revolutionary war and national independence, is now extremely interesting, whether it gives evidence of strong-sighted vision respecting the future, or appears only as a faint gleam in the mind of some yearning patriot. We do not despise these things; they were the beginnings of our national scriptures; and by reading them we more fully understand and appreciate our whole political history. Who objects to them as a part of the nation's biography?

Thus the men who worshipped at the ancient altar had "received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Our superstructure is now firm and strong, because of that underpinning which it received in the days of the Old Testament. Some who criticise the Books of the Chronicles, and the Book of Esther, and also particular portions of other Old Testament books, as wholly local, and now, as they tell us, unedifying, and incapable of being, in any sense to us, a *revelation*, forget that these things were, to resume the figure, really the underpinning by which our Christian faith is supported, though it requires some discernment of spiritual architecture to perceive it. Take, for instance, a passage which will serve several purposes of illustration at once. The revolting story of Judah's incest breaks in abruptly upon the narrative in Genesis. Its seeming intrusiveness and uselessness, but, above all, its offen-

sive character, make it a stumbling block to many an honest and conscientious reader. But, when we come to the genealogy in the first chapter of Matthew, we find that the fruit of this incest is a link in a chain on which the credibility of the Messiah's lineage depends. True to history, the direful origin of one ancestor of the Messiah is plainly given; all questions of descent, which, in royal or in noble houses, or among heirs at law, have been the occasion of trouble without measure, are settled, in this case, beyond dispute, by the intrepid honesty of the narrative. The story of the Levite and his concubine is another instance of the same kind with the foregoing. Why introduce such a sickening tale into the sacred word? For one most important reason, if for no other. The event there related was the occasion of the most fearful civil war which ever happened to Israel. The tribe of Benjamin was greatly depopulated by it. The history of the Hebrew nation demanded that all the incidents belonging to such an eventful page of it should be faithfully recorded. And is there no moral for every nation in that sad passage of Israel's history? Every people which is divided on any moral questions relating to their internal affairs, is instructed by the spirit and the manner of the proceedings which, in this case, resulted in the slaughter of more than ninety thousand brethren by the hands of brethren.

The seemingly useless, and, to us, the unedifying, lists of names in several places of the Old Testament had great importance in determining claims to estates, settling boundaries, and establishing the rights of personal property. All these things were necessary to bring forward the purposes of God relating to the Jewish people, and thus to prepare the way for the Messiah's kingdom. That is not a comprehensive view of things which now saunters among the older parts of the divine economy, and demands that one thing and another

be hewn down because it does not obviously, and in a striking way, contribute to a direct modern use. It requires consideration, good sense, an appreciative eye and heart, to know whether a thing is or is not of use; and the Goths and Vandals who failed here, have given their names and reputation to others. Since their day, indeed, none are more liable to just reflections upon them in the same line, than some who, with great pride of scholarship, have proved themselves incapable of appreciating the historical uses of the Old Testament, in some of its less practical parts.

The Book of Esther is much spoken against as professedly a part of revelation, because it is wholly confined to Jewish affairs, and relates the "incredible" story of a nation doomed to massacre with notice served upon them, eleven months beforehand; of seventy thousand Persians being killed by this same people, who escape the intended massacre; and, moreover, the book does not contain the name of God, nor make recognition of his providence.

But might we not almost as well complain that the Builder's name is not set in stars on the firmament of heaven, as that the providence of God is not emblazoned in words upon a history which, from beginning to end, teaches, most impressively, the doctrine of providence? In nothing is it seen more conspicuously than in the notice, eleven months beforehand, which was given to the devoted nation, who were, at the expiration of that time, to be cut off. Haman was led to consult his heathen god as to the day when the massacre which he had contrived should be perpetrated. "In the first month they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, to the twelfth month," [1] — not that they spent so much time in casting it, but they tried each day of the year, by lot, to determine when the

[1] Esther iii. 7.

massacre should take place. "The lot is cast into the lap but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." He makes the lot wander to the eleventh month. Time is thus given the Jews for preparation, and also for a change in their affairs, such as came to pass. The great feast of Purim, which to this day is celebrated by the Jews in commemoration of this deliverance, and on which the Book of Esther is publicly read, as we read our Declaration of Independence on the nation's birthday, is a memorial of divine providence, which serves a purpose such as no abstract maxims with regard to confidence in God, whether addressed to men or nations, could possibly accomplish.

Public events recorded in the Old Testament have a singularly powerful effect on the private conscience and heart of an attentive, prayerful reader. "I understand, indeed," says Professor Stuart, "what is meant when we are forbidden to exult over misfortunes. But when Edom is held up before my eyes by Obadiah, as having rushed upon the Jews in the day of their humiliation by the power of Babylon; when the imbittered enmity, the spirit of vengeance and rapacity, and the unspeakable meanness of the Edomites, and their consequent punishment, are embodied, and made palpable, and held up to open view in this way, — I am far more affected, and even instructed by it, than I am by the abstract precept in question." So true is it that "*whatsoever things were written* aforetime *were written* for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of *the Scriptures*, might have hope."

As to the lateness of the time when the Bible was finished, it is well known that for a long period God communicated with men by word of mouth, often immediately, and also by the ministrations of angels and men. The Old Testament grew to its present size while events were occurring to make up an instructive history of divine providence; and during

this period God, at sundry times and in divers manners, was speaking to the fathers by the prophets. We will not impugn his wisdom in deciding as he did when the fulness of time should be regarded as having come, and the Messiah should appear. Unless the world had been eternal, its creation must inevitably have been "late," in one sense, let it have taken place when it would; for as eternity had no beginning, the question could still have been asked, why the world was not made sooner. Though the New Testament greatly enhances the value of the Old, and was necessarily connected with the progress of the divine purposes, and must, therefore, in due time, be written, yet the Old Testament was all sufficient for the knowledge of God and salvation; for the apostle bids Timothy remember, "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

If it be required that, to make a proper Bible, every question, and every case, which can possibly arise, shall be recorded and considered, we must abandon the idea of one portable convenient volume; and the great majority of the world will be prevented, by the expensiveness of such records, from possessing a written revelation. Divine wisdom is conspicuous as to the size of the Bible, making it accessible to all. God had kept the nations apart for ages, by withholding from them the means of easy and rapid transition from place to place; but when many ran to and fro, knowledge was also increased, and the Bible came forth in forms suited to universal distribution. But who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor, as to the long period during which a completed Bible was withheld from the race? Enough, from age to age, was afforded, in various ways, so that God did not leave himself without witness; but why the Bible, in its completed form, has been enjoyed for only eighteen hundred years past,

is a question which must be left without any answer except that such was the divine will.

LOST BOOKS OF SCRIPTURE.

It is said that some inspired books have been lost. They fulfilled their purpose, however, and were suffered to perish. The ark of God has perished, with the tables of stone, the pot of manna, and Aaron's rod. Many of the words and works of Christ were not recorded; this, however, does not weaken the evidence of inspiration in those which have been preserved.

VARIETY OF WRITERS.

The employment of many men to compose the Bible, instead of being an argument against unity of design and origin, is a proof of divine wisdom, for it secures a necessary variety of style and subject. The seemingly accidental way in which the book is made up, — an event, a character, being taken here and there, to constitute the volume, — gives the book a charm which redeems it from all imputation of monotony. — God designed to teach the world, for all time, one instructive lesson with regard to his control in human affairs; how he frustrates wicked men, how he delivers the innocent, and that, in times of great extremity, he, by a simple event, can not only deliver, but send prosperity. In what way shall he most impressively teach this? He causes the Book of Esther to be written, and no romantic tale or veritable history illustrates in so signal a manner the doctrine of God's providence, whether towards a man or a nation.

He designs to teach this great, important truth, that this life is a state of trial, not of reward, and that prosperity and adversity are no evidence with regard to character; that un-

questioning submission to God under chastisements is the duty of all.

The Book of Job is prepared, and goes into the inspired volume; those subjects are discussed, illustrated, finished, for all generations.

Devotional poetry, prophecy, history, sententious sayings, the history of Christ, and the exposition of Christian doctrines and morals, make the volume complete; it is tested by succeeding ages; the evidences of inspiration in each of its parts satisfy its contemporaries, and at length the completed volume goes forth to the end of time, the work of infinite wisdom; such, that if Almighty God should now propose to make a revelation to the world in the shape of a book, to instruct men as to his character and their duty, we see no reason why it would not be just such a book as we now have. Had the book been written in heaven, on the throne of God, and had been visibly handed down to men, it would not be more truly the inspired, all-sufficient word and revelation of God than it now is.

HOW THE BIBLE WAS ESTABLISHED.

The Jewish church, after much investigation and experience, protracted through many years, finally settled the question of inspiration with regard to every Hebrew writing that laid claim to a divine origin. It is interesting to look at the history of opinions with regard to various books professing to be divinely inspired, and to watch the waning credit of many of them, till at last none but those which remain to the present day took their permanent place as the acknowledged word of God.

Great objection is felt by some to this method in which so important a thing as a Bible for the whole race, to the end of time, should have been produced; for it appears too accident

al, too entirely human, the result of mere popular opinion, aided, perhaps, by influences which were not consistent with entire liberty of thought. We know not, it is said, what bribes, what coercion, were employed, here and there, to gain currency for one book, and to depreciate another. A revelation from God for the whole race to the end of the world, it is claimed, ought to be accompanied with infallible signs of its being the work of God; it should wear a broad seal, which none could mistake nor counterfeit.

To this it may be replied, that the manner in which the most essential truths are every where established, corresponds to this very method in which the Bible itself was given. Those truths are the subjects of investigation and debate; the history of their influence is ascertained; their present practical effect, their consistency, one with another, are considered.

The laws which regulate the formation of a character, and of a reputation, seem to have governed in the establishment of the Scriptures as of divine authority. Men in trouble, in prison and banishment, under confiscation of goods, bereaved of dearest friends for the truth's sake, the sick, the dying, the emperor, the peasant, the slave, the counsellor, the sellers of purple, the tent makers, the rich and the beggar, were led to test the various writings claiming to be inspired; and the result was that some of them were not found to answer the purpose of a divine guide; for some unaccountable reason there was no response to them from the recesses of the soul; they did not lodge in the memory; they were not often quoted; the assemblies in which they were read showed signs of indifference, and yet men were aroused when certain other manuscripts were unrolled, and the public teachers stood up with them for to read. Now, instead of objecting to all this as too casual, too much like good and ill luck, caprice, it may rather be said that there is something divinely appropriate and beautiful

in it, honorable to the human understanding and heart, and laying the deepest foundations for a lasting hold upon the confidence of the world. An author, whose great desire is to establish his doctrines in the approbation and love of men, would prefer to have them received, at first, cautiously, and with a spirit of free inquiry, and obtain a permanent place in the human mind from their intrinsic excellence, and the experimental evidence of their adaptedness to the moral feelings of men, rather than obtain implicit deference to them from his position. We may, therefore, confidently ask if the way in which the authenticity of the Holy Scriptures has been verified, by subjecting them, with other writings, claiming inspiration, to the scrutiny of experience, be not more in accordance with our ideas of the highest liberty, and more honorable to God and man, than though they had been enjoined upon us by the simple, direct injunction of Heaven.

If it be said that this method of establishing the authenticity of a revelation from Heaven leaves too much to the caprices of the human mind, it may be replied, that if the writings in question be inspired, and are designed by the Most High to be his revelation to the world, they will surely, in some way, gain credence; for his word shall not return to him void; therefore the only question is, In what way do we agree that the authority of these writings can best be established? Allowing that God will bestow upon us certain inspired writings, is there any better way in which they can obtain power and authority than by their intrinsic influence over the human mind? Now, if the Holy Scriptures are not inspired, the hold which they have gained over the human understanding, conscience, and heart, is a greater miracle than their inspiration.

If it can be shown that the Old Testament Scriptures in the time of Christ were altogether genuine, and had not been corrupted nor diminished by the Jewish scribes, and if then

it appears that the Saviour recognized them as of divine authority, we see not how any can refuse to apply the name "word of God" to those writings. If errors could creep into them and corrupt them in their essential parts, so that no one could tell whether they were divine or of merely human origin, of course their authority would cease.

CHRIST DID NOT AMEND THE SCRIPTURES.

It is remarkable that among the severe reproofs which Christ addressed to the Jewish scribes, in which he accused them of making the word of God of none effect through their traditions, he never accuses them of altering the Scriptures. On the contrary, he appeals to those Scriptures as the authentic word of God. If among the received Scriptures there were a single book of doubtful authority, we must believe that, among his other instructions, he would have taught the people what was the true word of God. Much more, if one of those books had no right in the sacred canon, the Great Teacher would, first of all, have purified the source of religious instruction in the writings which were read to the people as the words of the Most High. He who made a scourge of small cords, and drove out the traffickers from the temple, would not have been less jealous against a lying pentateuch or a false prophet. Esther, the Song of Solomon, David's imprecations, Jonah, were not expunged by Him who, in the Sermon on the Mount, reviewed the traditionary laws, corrected the glosses, set aside the impositions of the Jewish teachers, and pronounced "woe" upon those who tithed mint, anise, and cumin, to the neglect of weightier matters; and surely it were a weightier matter to reform a nation's Bible than to correct the practices relating to temple offerings. "All things," said he, after his resurrection, "must be fulfilled which were written

in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me."

CHRIST LEFT NO WRITING OF HIS OWN.

Up to that time, he found no occasion to make any new inspired book to reform, or to complete, the Old Testament Scriptures. The Great Teacher was himself satisfied with "the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms." Though he were expecting that his disciples would write his own history, it is a marvel that he did not write or dictate some book which should be a Key, or an Index Expurgatorius, to the Old Testament, if there were a hundredth part as much necessity for it as some of our freethinkers assert. He, however, had nothing to write in emendation of the Old Testament. "He saw that it was good."

NATURE OF INSPIRATION.

What kind of inspiration does the word of God possess? Or in what sense, and to what extent, is the Bible the word of God?

The answer is, God imparted revelations, guidance, and superintendence to the sacred penmen, so that the Holy Scriptures were sanctioned by him as his authorized word.

To paraphrase this proposition: When it was necessary that the sacred writers should know things which the human mind could not discover, as, for example, future events, or the will of God relating to particular things, God made special revelations to the writers of the Bible.

When they were writing histories, God assisted and guided their recollections, and provided them with suitable sources of information, so that they wrote true history.

When they recorded common things, he superintended them,

so that they made no mistake, nor inserted any thing inconsistent with, or prejudicial to, the harmony of truth, either in thought or expression.

This, it will be perceived, amounts to what is called "*plenary inspiration*," from the Latin *plenus*, full.

PLENARY INSPIRATION.

Let us take it for granted that the things recorded in the New Testament did actually occur. It would occupy space to prove this which cannot now be so employed, especially as it is generally admitted that the New Testament, whatever may be said of its inspiration, is an honest record of events; — those things happened, which are there narrated by men who had nothing of a worldly nature to gain by believing and asserting them; but they did, many of them, suffer stripes, imprisonment, persecutions, and death, in attestation of the things which they had seen and heard. We take the records of these men, sealed with their blood, and from them we prove the inspiration of the Old Testament and the New.

Christ promised those who were to write the New Testament that they should be divinely inspired for their work.

In his last discourse with his disciples before he suffered, he said to them, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come."

After his resurrection, Jesus met them, and said, "Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me, even so send I

you." No commission could be more complete. "And when he had said this, he breathed on them and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." With such promises, and such a commission, it is reasonable to believe that whatever they did or wrote, professing to be the will and the truth of God, was under the full direction of the divin Spirit. Christ here gives them an unqualified appointment to act in all things pertaining to his religion. But nothing could be of greater importance to the world than a faithful record of what he did and said, and correct expositions of divine truth for the use of generations in all future time. We may rest our belief of the full inspiration of all which the New Testament contains on this, that Jesus Christ promised his disciples that the Holy Ghost should abide with them forever, so that in every thing essential to correct religious knowledge, they should be led into all truth. Two writers of the New Testament are not included in the number of those to whom these promises were personally made. PAUL was, however, called to be an apostle by Jesus Christ himself, and of course was invested with all the powers and privileges of apostleship. LUKE was his companion; and the agreement of Luke's Gospel with those of the three disciples and evangelists, confirmed his claim, in the minds of the early Christian world, to equal inspiration with the rest.

The writers of the New Testament received and gave the fullest evidence that, in their apostolic office, they were commissioned from God.

By the miracle at Pentecost, soon noised abroad, they were proclaimed to the promiscuous multitudes from many parts of the world, who were present at the feast, as the authorized and commissioned apostles of God. So that, whether they published the gospel, by preaching or writing, to their contemporaries or to future times, all that they said was authorized of

God, unless we can find something which recalled or limited their commission. The presence of God was with them in their ministry. Ananias and Sapphira fell dead at the word of Peter; the cripple at the temple walks; Dorcas is brought back from the dead by the same word. An angel described one apostle to Cornelius, an inquiring Gentile, as the man appointed of God to teach the Gentile world the Christian religion.

John in Patmos was commissioned by the Saviour in person to write. Paul is caught up to the third heavens. Such acknowledged ministers of God could not be permitted to record any thing as truth, or as direct revelation from God, for the use of men in all ages of the world, and be neglected or forsaken of God while they did it. The same necessity that the Holy Ghost should lead them into all truth while they were speaking, existed when engaged in so great a matter as composing the Bible for all coming time, when inspiration should cease.

Admit, then, that what the New Testament asserts respecting these men is true, and the inference is reasonable that in all which they did, said, and wrote, connected with the knowledge of Christ and of religious truth, they have, unless there be express notice to the contrary, the sanction of Almighty God.

Receiving, then, the New Testament as written by divinely inspired men, we come to consider that

Christ and the writers of the New Testament appeal to the books of the Old Testament as of divine authority.

If one asked the Saviour what was the greatest command ment of all, Christ said, "What saith the Scripture? How readest thou?" He quoted Moses, and David, and the Prophets; he "came not to destroy, but to fulfil" them; and, after his resurrection, he set his seal to them all by saying,

with reference to the sufferings, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead." He had forborne to use his power in self-defence, saying, "How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?" "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."

Some of the sacred writers were miraculously informed of future events.

The prophecies respecting Tyre, Nineveh, and Damascus, compared with their subsequent history, are illustrations. How did Isaiah know that there was to be a monarch on the throne of Persia whose name would be Cyrus, and that he would restore the Jews from their captivity? How, without divine aid, could he describe the minute circumstances of the Saviour's appearance, death, and burial, seven centuries before Christ was born, with such accuracy, in things improbable and seemingly contradictory, that Porphyry insisted, with the early Christians, that these words of Isaiah must have been written by an eye witness of the crucifixion, and were therefore a forgery?

If we can establish the inspiration of a single writer of the Bible by showing that future events were miraculously made known to him, or if by any other method of proof his divine authority is proved, it serves for evidence that all whom he recognizes as inspired, are, equally with him, entitled to full belief as commissioned by Heaven.

The writers of the Bible had divine aid in recording things which were past.

It is not unfair to take the Bible as it now is, and with its present influence over the human mind, and argue, that such records as many of them are, would not have been allowed to take their place as chronicles of divine providence, and the

only connected history of the intercourse of God with men, without superintendence on the part of the Most High. But apart from this, how can we think that Moses would have given the history of the creation with such particularity, without divine aid? Or how can we believe that, if he received all those particulars from tradition, God would have left him to the liabilities, to which every unassisted mind is exposed, of mistake? As to the evangelists, they were uninstructed men, of humble life; if a record of Christ's life, and a knowledge of his gospel, are important, in that proportion we may have assurance that the Holy Spirit would, as Christ said, bring to their remembrance all things which he had uttered. We sometimes hear the writers of the Gospels referred to as "humble note takers and reporters." The idea of their making a record, at the time, of the words of Christ, is not consonant with the impressions which they make upon us in their daily life. Indeed, is it not slightly ludicrous? They seem never to have had such forecastings, or to have reflected upon the passing events of their intercourse with Christ in so studied a way, as to make us feel that the taking of notes was any part of their occupation. Had they done so, we should, probably, have found them anxious to establish the authority of their writings by informing their readers that their reports of the Saviour's words were recorded at or near the moment when they were spoken. Instead of this, however, we find the Saviour promising them that the Holy Spirit would supply their memories with all needful information. This being so, we can see, from our own experience, how unlikely it is that such men should, of themselves, have recorded such discourses as those of the Saviour, without supernatural aid. It is difficult for most hearers, — sometimes for the preacher himself, to recollect the text, after not many hours, or a day or two, have passed; and every one knows the difficulty of giving a con-

nected account of a discourse to which we have listened. In giving a friend at home some account of an address which had given us pleasure, we are always reminded how imperfect is our recollection; we are pained at our inability to repeat things which, at the time, it seemed to us we could never forget; and we summarily conclude our narrative of the address by saying, "I wish that you could have heard it," which is regarded rather as a confession of our incompetency than a consolation, by the listener.

One of the most difficult parts of the Bible, and one of peculiar importance as to perfect accuracy of thought and expression, is the Sermon on the Mount — that code of Christian morals, that exposition of first principles in the new system by the Great Teacher. It seems to be morally certain, with regard to this record, that no unassisted human mind could have written, or would have been permitted to write, such a portion of the Bible. What nice discriminations have we here! what important strictures upon the hitherto received doctrine of the public teachers! what vital truths relating to spiritual religion! and what a lucid order and unencumbered statement characterize this remarkable record! He who believes that it could have been written, or would have been permitted to be written, by the publican Matthew without divine aid and sanction, ought not to charge believers in revelation with credulity.

VERBAL INSPIRATION.

While it was by no means necessary that every word which the writers of the Bible recorded should have been suggested to them by the Holy Spirit, nor that He should inform them, for example, how far Bethany was from Jerusalem, yet it is reasonable to suppose that he superintended all which they

wrote, so that they should be correct in their expressions and statements. This is essential to a professed revelation from God; for while the natural faculties of men may be employed in writing it, we must feel that God superintended them, so that they might not err. For the same reason that we believe that God gave a revelation, we must believe that he superintended and guided those who wrote, so that it should be his approved and sanctioned word.

If it be asked, then, whether we believe that all the words of Scripture were inspired, that is, divinely suggested, the answer is, Of the direct suggestion of many of them there can be no question; for the writers themselves report what they heard the Almighty speak. As it regards other cases, words are essential to thought; we cannot have a definite thought without the help of silent words. The sacred writers could not, in the nature of things, have received even a direct, silent communication from God without the suggestion of words. When a symbol is suggested to awaken thought, for example, figs to Jeremiah, or the sheet filled with animals to Peter, the thoughts suggested by them must clothe themselves in words before they could become intelligible. When the prophet or apostle came to utter or record these thoughts, he would be most likely to use the words which had vividly shone into his mind at the moment of inspiration. It seems reasonable to suppose that he would speak as he was moved by the Holy Ghost.

But it is said, there are some remarks in Job, for example, and in Ecclesiastes, which, by themselves, are not true. Were they inspired? — They are uttered in order to be answered; or to make out a drift of discourse which shall illustrate something, and help on the great purpose of the writer. A preacher who should take some of these words for texts, separated from this drift and design, would err; and many do.

We must not take some of Satan's words concerning Job, and try to deduce a truth from them; yet we may take such passages in their connection, for texts; and in so doing we shall fall in with the plan of inspiration.

But it is said, there are many statements in the Bible which any man could write as well as one who was inspired; for instance, that "Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews," that "Solomon built him a house," that Emmaus 'was about threescore furlongs from Jerusalem.'

But surely there is nothing credulous or irrational in supposing that the Holy Spirit watched over the sacred writers to see that they did not err in their incidental statements. The smaller and the more seemingly unimportant the statement, the more necessary, on some accounts, that it should be correct. In cross-questioning a witness, one catches at the incidental expressions, and from them sometimes constructs his most powerful arguments. The undesigned coincidences between the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, are made, by Dr. Paley, a strong argument in favor of the credibility of the New Testament. Suppose that the sacred writers had made mistakes in geography, and infidels could prove it? We see from the discussions connected with the geology of Scripture, and with the errors in dates, distances, and numbers which have crept into the Bible, what use would have been made of errors which could be proved upon the writers. It is true they could tell, without inspiration, whether Derbe and Lystra were near together; but suppose that the historian, instead of saying Lystra had said Iconium; it would have disparaged his credibility in important things. It is reasonable to believe in a *superintending* divine influence extending to those narratives and observations which needed no *suggestive* inspiration, but which it was important should be correct. — Some alleged errors of statement by men while confessedly under inspiration will be noticed hereafter.

HUMAN CHARACTERISTICS OF INSPIRATION.

Here we may notice, once for all, those obviously human characteristics of the Bible which lead some to question its inspiration. Paul leaves his "cloak" at Ephesus, and his "parchments," and he sends directions with regard to them in immediate connection with what are claimed to be divinely inspired precepts. Is that verse relating to the cloak and parchments inspired? we often hear it asked. If not, perhaps some other verses are not inspired. How shall we discriminate?

We will add to this a few more cases, and consider them together: —

"Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off."

"And there were set there six water pots of stone, containing two or three firkins apiece."

"The number of the names together were about an hundred and twenty."

Were these verses inspired? If so, why did not the inspired writer give us the exact measurements and numbers in these cases? He knew, of course, how many names more or less than a hundred and twenty, were assembled; and so in the other instances of ambiguous statement.

The principle of explanation is this: Human modes of thinking and speaking are used by the Holy Spirit in the composition of the Bible. Angelic forms of expression would have been out of place. Of the many different writers of the Bible, no two are alike in style; the wisdom of God has adapted himself to the tastes and feelings of men in causing those by whom he speaks, to think and speak in the way peculiar to their own genius and habits. As the same wind has different voices among the leaves of oaks and in the pines, so the breath

of the Almighty has different tones in the hearts and lips of inspired men. The style in the book of Ruth, and in Nahum, varies with the subject. John is different in his modes of thought from Luke; there is a diversity of operations, but the same spirit. The human qualities of the writers are never confounded by the highest measure of inspiration, but, on the contrary, are intensified. Then, again, the weaknesses, and the social feelings, the private friendships, and the minute affairs of the writer are allowed to infiltrate themselves with the flow of inspired thought and feeling, all serving to give the book, as it were, incarnation; "the *word* is made flesh and dwells among us." As the Saviour's hunger and weariness, limited knowledge, and prayers, are as essential to his effect upon us as the proofs of his Godhead, so when we read that Paul had no rest in his spirit because he found not Titus his brother at a certain place, notwithstanding "a wide door, and an effectual," of usefulness was opened to him, and when a score of verses in an inspired book are occupied wholly with messages of salutation to Christian friends, and the inspired man is found forgetting, perhaps, his parchments, and is compelled to leave the burdensome cloak behind him, and then speaks of it in his inspired letter; and when he cannot, by any effort, remember how many people he had baptized in a certain place, — we think that we may seem deficient in some of the qualifications necessary even in judging works of art, if we take exception to these shadings, this obscuring, which give the otherwise intense supernatural light a tone suited to the best effect. The fairest cheek on canvas, viewed from a wrong point, looks inconsistent; the proper angle of vision reduces the crossed lines to harmony.

No work of art, indeed no work of God himself, could stand before the rules of criticism which are sometimes applied to the Bible. The true theory of inspiration is in harmony with

the true theory of every thing else in which God and man are co-workers; for since man is not a Memnon's statue, with its films of mica for the wind to breathe in, but is a free agent, whose freedom is never destroyed by the divine agency, we must expect to see human qualities exhibit themselves even amidst the highest inspiration. Old Jacob, on his dying bed, rapt in vision, pauses, leans back, and ejaculates, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." Come, now, let us feel for the pulses of human emotion, and of the divine afflatus, while he is thus resting with a long-drawn sigh; let us accurately determine at what second, by the watch, inspiration ceased, and the merely human feeling coursed through him; for, if we cannot thus, or by some spirometer, or stethescope, distinguish between the breath of the Almighty and the breath of Jacob, how can we tell what part of the forty-ninth chapter of Genesis is inspired? — And yet, what harm will happen in such a case? Let the devout aspiration of the dying saint prove to have been such as any uninspired man could have expressed, — is there error in it? Is it not in such contiguity with supernatural vision that it will be safe to regard it as permitted, superintended? and even if there be no practical use in it, as there surely is to every dying Christian who may be expiring in old age, like Jacob, we may as well object that the grains of earth which come to us upon the roots of a plant, are inconsistent with the perfection of the flower. Those grains of earth are a witness for the soil in which the plant grew.

INFIRMITIES OF THE SACRED WRITERS.

The plenary inspiration of the Bible does not make it necessary that Paul and Barnabas should not have disputed and separated; or that Peter should not have used dissimulation and be blamed by Paul. Inspiration in writing, the

inspired directions which they gave, the inspired truths which they taught, the divine miracle which they performed, do not cover all their thoughts, words, and actions, at all times with sanctity; nor make them omniscient. Paul did not know the High Priest before whom he was speaking. These fallible men were endued, upon occasion, with a divine authority; all which they did and said at such times is the word and the act of the Almighty.

But there are alleged errors of inspired men which are capable of solution. An instance is in the speech of Stephen, who, while full of the Holy Ghost, speaks of the burying place of the patriarchs, and the number of Jacob's family in Egypt, in a way to occasion trouble to many. These, however, can be explained. So with regard to the allegation that the apostles believed and taught that the end of the world was nigh.

Paul is careful to tell us at times, that he is not speaking under divine direction, but is giving his private advice. We are left to infer, therefore, that at other times when he speaks to us, and we are not otherwise notified, it is by divine inspiration.

It is interesting to reflect that the Bible has no one character, real or fictitious, which it exalts, as writers of poems and certain histories do their heroes or worthies. We find in Scripture no Cyrus, with his Xenophon, no Achilles, with his Homer, no Æneas, with his Virgil to laud his virtues and conceal or apologize for his mistakes and follies. It is wonderful in what contrast to all this is the manner in which the Bible portrays its powerful characters. Abraham, and Lot, and Jacob, and Moses, and David, and Solomon, and some of the best of the kings, are set forth to us without the least concealment; no effort is made to palliate their faults by offering a sympathizing word as to the strength of temptation, or the frailty of our common nature. Transparent honesty marks every delinea-

tion of a life and character. It is not presumption to say that none but God would have made such a book, — the God who requireth "truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden parts, will make us to know wisdom." But now, in return for all this candor, — if we may use the term in such connection, — all this divine simplicity, this perfect truthfulness, many speak of the good men of the Bible in ways which do not show that they appreciate the manner of the Bible in this particular, or that they have ever seen each the plague of his own heart. They wonder at Abraham; they call Jacob by opprobrious names; David is a perpetual subject of their irony; they cannot speak of Solomon without lifting a hand to conceal a smile on their half-averted faces. It is not demanded of us that we approve or excuse the sins of these good men. But, it is becoming in us to remember, that it was from amid the ruins of fallen human nature that God was obliged to select his saints; that we know the worst of these men; that their repentance and confession, in some instances, are known to be proportioned to their fall; that the mercy of God, which we all so much need, is illustrated in commending and loving those who had been guilty of such departures from him; and that the Saviour of the world recognized them as good men. If, instead of forgiving them, and calling them, still, men after his own heart, God had cast them off, he would have been reproached for severity, as now for leniency. True, some are not satisfied by this last consideration, but they rather impeach Christianity and its Founder for not complying with their own standard of morality. It is enough, however, for the disciple, in his moral sense, to be as his Master, and the servant to be as his Lord.

It will not be amiss for certain writers who take special pleasure, we fear, in holding forth the sins of good men, to ponder the following words: "Some men's sins are open

beforehand, going before to judgment; and some they follow after."

DAVID'S IMPRECATIONS.

But was David inspired when he uttered his imprecations against his enemies?—If those imprecations, properly understood, were contrary to the mind and will of God, "David's Lord" would not have given his sanction, as he did, to the Psalms as a whole. He who wrote those imprecations would not have been permitted to say, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue," without a cautioning word from him who so explicitly corrected or qualified things which were "said by them of old time." —As to David's imprecations, it may be remarked in passing, they are none of them, nor all of them together, more severe than the imprecation of Paul upon Alexander the coppersmith, for doing him much evil. In his one brief sentence, he expresses all that David meant and said, with the same motive, and in the same spirit.

But was the writer of the one hundred and thirty-seventh Psalm, "By the rivers of Babylon," inspired, when he placed those words on record: "Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones"?

God had purposed to destroy Babylon, root and branch. Let us read the preceding verse: "O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed, happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us." They had seen their own little ones dashed against the stones by the hand of Babylon. When men see their wives and children destroyed before their eyes by savages, and these husbands and fathers, afterwards, in war, take the savages captive in their wigwams, and crush out every life, in young and old, they are not justly chargeable with immorality, nor is the present of a sword to the leader

of the destroying band, as a token of gratitude, generally deemed inconsistent with morality. There are exigencies in human affairs, there are agonies of experience, there are St. Bartholomew's days, there are Piedmontese scenes, when all the imprecations in the word of God are necessary, and just, and true.

DISCREPANCIES OF SCRIPTURE.

It is said, There are discrepancies between the sacred historians in their accounts of the same events. For example, one says, "the thieves which were crucified with him cast the same in his teeth." Another says, that one of the thieves was penitent, and rebuked his fellow for upbraiding Jesus. The argument is, One of the evangelists, therefore, did not speak correctly; at least there is a degree of carelessness in his statement, which is inconsistent with his being inspired.

This objection, so far from disproving the inspiration of the evangelist, is a striking illustration of the truth that inspiration follows the common laws of human speech and of thought. Suppose that you were giving an account of the ill treatment which a good man received from a mob. After describing the indignities which he suffered, you say that he was hurried away to jail. As he passed through an entry of the prison, where two convicts of the lower class were confined, the prisoners hissed at him. Now, you are brought before a court of justice to testify on this point. Did one or both of those prisoners hiss at this man? Your answer might be, My object in the narrative was to show that this good man was hissed even in prison; I was not giving evidence for or against the prisoners, but was describing the humiliation of my friend. It was that, and not the number of those who were concerned in the act, which made its impression upon me, and which I sought to convey.

No one would say that you had been incorrect in your statement, even should it appear by the confession of one of the convicts that he alone insulted your friend.[1]

When we read in the newspaper three or four different accounts of the same thing, all varying in some particulars, one giving more details of one part of the story, another passing over that part with a general statement, and dwelling more upon another part, we feel that this is natural. Four accounts of the same transaction about which there was controversy, all drawn up with most minute resemblance, would excite the suspicion that the writers had been together, and had agreed in their statements. Moreover, of what value would such mere duplicate writings be? But let four men, whose reputations, and whose all, are concerned in the transaction, differ in certain things, while they agree in the essentials of the story, and we naturally say, If these men were rogues, they would have used more carefulness; now, their discrepancies show that they are so much absorbed in the truth and importance of the things narrated, that they think little of the variations in their stories. Liars are ingeniously accurate in little things when they compound a lie; honest men can afford to differ in the circumstantial parts of a story. When God employed men to give us the history of the gospel, he might have made them coincide in the minutest things. But where, then, would have been the necessity or use of more accounts than one? We think that there is divine wisdom in permitting the evangelists to differ in certain unessential things, and at the same time superintending and guiding them so that they should not differ in any measure or kind, whereby their credibility could be impaired.

[1] This particular discrepancy respecting the two thieves may be satisfactorily disposed of by supposing, with some, that the penitent thief, at first, also reviled Christ.

It is known that the Books of Chronicles differ, in some important respects, from the books of the Kings. The question is, Which are true? and, How can both claim to be inspired? Rationalists have made some of their deadliest attacks here. — The Chronicles were not written for the same purpose as the Books of the Kings. The "Kings" are political history; Chronicles are ecclesiastical: the Kings are historical in their design; the Chronicles didactic, and were written after the captivity, are brought down to the end of the exile, were compiled after the time of Jeremiah. The object of the writer seems to be to inform the Hebrews, returning from captivity, respecting their pedigree, and to clear the line of descent in which the Messiah was to be born; hence the family of David is particularly regarded. Directions are given as to the restoration of divine worship; the priests and Levites are furnished with the most careful genealogies of their line; the ordering of their appointments under David and Solomon is specially given. In doing these things, it was not to the writer's purpose that full histories of all the kings should occupy his pages; he had accomplished his most worthy purposes, as here described, and he sought to confirm the piety of his countrymen, after their banishment, by dwelling upon the examples and the prosperity of good kings, and the sins of the nation which led to its downfall. But because the stream of history in those books does not run into the same creeks and bays with that in the Kings, the writer is, by some, impugned, and his books are set at nought. — But there are errors, in names and numbers, which cannot be explained. Copyists have here, no doubt, left proofs behind them that they were not inspired. These errors do not at all invalidate the credibility of the writer; for, in the most palpable case of all, in which a certain king appears, by computation, to be two years older than his father, we cannot

impute so foolish a thing to the writer; we see that the record has not been kept, by a miracle, from certain numerical errors.

ALLEGED IMMODESTY IN THE SCRIPTURES.

There are parts of the Bible which we would not choose to read before others, or to hear read. They relate to things which, it is commanded, should "not be named among you, as becometh saints." These things, however, enter deeply into human character and conduct; and a revelation to man, as he is, which should omit to deal plainly and faithfully with regard to these things, would be deemed deficient. As to their disparagement of the Bible as the word of God, a good and sufficient answer was given by a late distinguished and excellent civilian and Christian,* who mentioned it himself to the writer. Falling into religious conversation with the driver of a vehicle in which he was riding, the man objected to the Bible as containing things which he would be ashamed to read before his family; therefore he argued that God could not be its author.

Our friend asked him if he would think it proper, and would be willing, to uncover his feet and sit with them naked before his family. The man promptly said, No. "Then," said our friend, "God did not make your feet!"

The suitableness of a thing to be read or rehearsed on any and every occasion, is not the test of its truth and propriety, nor of its divine origin. Other uses, of vast importance, may be effected by it. Some of our laws cannot be read in a family.

Solomon's Song is the subject of great animadversion with many, of great difficulty with others, and indeed there are few who are not, in some way, perplexed by it. Several

* Hon. Simon Greenleaf, late Professor of Law, Harvard University.

things are to be considered. It was in the canon at the time of Christ. Many things in the original are expressed in a less literal manner than in our translation. Mixed society did not and does not prevail in Oriental countries. Eastern nations have not the same modes and standards of taste and manners with people in other latitudes; and there is a large part of the world, in those latitudes, who are yet to receive the Bible, and who will not adopt our modes of thought in all respects. In Lane's "Modern Egypt," we have, perhaps, the best explanation of this song. He himself tells us that in listening to the dervishes, as they sang their religious odes for purely spiritual purposes, though couched in the language of love, he was persuaded of the propriety and the divine origin of Solomon's Song, used for the purposes for which it was designed. The most approved explanation of it is, that it is intended to express the love of the soul for God; and if some prefer to say, of the soul for its Redeemer, they are warranted in thus giving it an application to him who is the alpha and omega of Scripture. But after all is said, this is true, — and the remark will apply to other parts of the Bible besides this, — that the different portions of the Bible are not all of them of equal use for edification, nor suitable to be read by all persons at all times. This is but the expression of every reader's experience, and of his history as a reader of the Scriptures. — But when we read the wholesale condemnation of Solomon's Song by some writers, we may profitably consider that there is more than one kind of modesty; and that, in professing much of one sort, we should be careful not to make ourselves liable to the imputation of boldness and effrontery. For, when we repudiate that which Christ did not condemn, and forget that there are other latitudes, not only of the earth's surface, but of Christian experience, than those in which we dwell, we need to be reminded that there is such a thing as prudery as well as virtue.

There must be mysteries not only in the Bible, but in its preparation, if God is the author of it. Some things which the Bible clearly exhibits as peculiar to the manner of its composition, we cannot wholly account for to the satisfaction of one another. We should all have arranged some things differently, or should have omitted some things, or have said less, or more, about them. He who finds and acknowledges no difficulties in the subject of inspiration, has something yet to learn. Far better is it to say to certain questions, "I do not know," than to ask those questions with a contemptuous feeling, and to hear such an answer with an air of triumph.

Some tell us that if we will abandon the doctrine of plenary inspiration, all the difficulties on the subject of inspiration will vanish. They are mistaken, and in the same ways as when they tell us that if we will give up the doctrine of the Trinity, we shall have no difficulty with the person and character of Christ. But the doctrine of two natures in Christ explains to us all the facts relating to him, which, otherwise, are greater mysteries even than the Trinity. So it is with plenary inspiration. The highest ground here is the easiest to maintain.

DIFFICULTIES OF DEISM. — INTERNAL EVIDENCE.

Here is a book composed of parts written at various times during a period of several thousand years, by about forty men, of every variety of tastes, talents, and occupations. Yet the book is one in its purpose and influence, all parts of it conspiring to confirm, and to fulfil, one the other. Was there no guiding, superintending influence from on high directing the composition of these books? Did men without any more divine aid than Cicero, or Franklin, throw out these writings so connected in their design that they could be

gathered into one volume without discordance in their statements, or discrepancies in their moral and religious opinions? Then we might believe that the different parts of an organ were made at different times during several thousand years, by men who had no design to make a complete instrument; but one made a pipe, another a stop, the other a key, at random; but the keys, pipes, and stops, being brought together, were found to be exactly fitted to each other — the keys all level, the pipes proportioned and voiced, the stops with their couplings; and the first time the instrument was played, it was in tune, and has been so ever since.

Here is a book written, in part, by herdsmen and fishermen, the parts which they wrote, as well as the others written by kings and prophets, having a style which belongs to no other writings. There is something in the language of the Bible which affects every mind unlike any other language. Let a secular orator quote a passage of Scripture: what force it gives to speech! and how entirely different is its effect, in every thing, from his own style, even though he be the most eloquent of men! No wonder that the human mind, weighing and pondering the words of different writings claiming to be inspired, sifted out those which were uninspired, and gave, at last, its irrevocable suffrage to those which we hold to be of divine origin. When we compare the books of the Apocrypha[1] and the Canon, we are not surprised that the common mind retired from such pastures and streams as the "Wisdom of Solomon" and "Ecclesiasticus," to the Book of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. Indeed, the only way in which it can be explained that some uninspired writings had power so long to maintain a place so near the sacred Scriptures is, that the common people, who have always been the true umpires in

[1] Apocrapha — *things not made public, or sanctioned;* — from a Greek word, *to conceal.*

things pertaining to the human conscience and heart, had not had familiar possession and use of the religious scriptures. Moses had, in every synagogue, them that read him on the Sabbath days; but the press and Bible societies had not given the records of religion to every one who would reach forth a hand to take them. Hence it required longer time for writings which, though of good moral effect, were not inspired, to find their relative places in the judgments of mankind. But there must have been, there must be, an invincible conviction in the minds of men with regard to a supernaturalness in certain writings, that other writings, equally good in their purpose, and as unexceptionable in their effect, were entirely set aside, and became discredited. This is a strong proof of the supernatural inspiration of the Scriptures. For if, as some say, every thing wise and good is inspired, we cannot account for it that large passages by the Son of Sirach, for example, should have been rejected by the concurrent feelings of believers, not long after they were written, as not worthy to be ranked with other writings whose authors were, nevertheless, men of like passions with their contemporaries. If the intrinsic goodness and truthfulness of a writing constitutes inspiration, we cannot account for the place which the sacred Scriptures have taken and held, invested as they are with a sanctity which no Paradise Lost, or Pilgrim's Progress, or Olney Hymns of Cowper and Newton, have been able to acquire.

JEALOUSY OF OUR REVERENCE FOR THE BIBLE.

But there are those who are jealous of this sanctity; and they regard it and speak of it as an unenlightened superstition. There is too much blind reverence, they think and say, for the Bible. It is undoubtedly the best of books; but they pray us to be more discriminating in speaking of it, and not

to let our feelings towards it approach so near to worship, that we cannot endure to have it spoken of as sharing in the infirmities of all things of human mould. They say, We truly wish that the Bible were an infallible guide, it would be so comforting and safe to feel that every thing in its pages is infallibly right and true. But alas! the discrepancies of the writers, and the errors of copyists, the mutilation of texts, and "the hundred thousand various readings," make it appear no less than presumption, if not effrontery, or, to say the least, it is fanaticism, to claim infallibility for such a book.

We reply to them that every thing which is essential to the knowledge of God and salvation is essentially the same in the earliest and the latest copies of the Scriptures. Errors of translation, and mistakes of copyists, and it may be, here and there, fraud, have marred the literal accuracy of the original in places some of which are greatly disputed, and others are generally acknowledged to be wrong.

We are asked, Is all which is within the covers of the Bible inspired? Is that book, in the sense of every thing which it contains, "the word of God"? They who ask such questions are, some of them, well acquainted with the discussions on the subject of "Personal Identity." How far may a house be altered, even allowing it is for the worse, and yet be the same house? or, May a vehicle be honestly sold as the manufacture of a distinguished builder, when a new and crooked spoke has been inserted by another hand, or a bolt with a head not uniform with the other bolts; or a lost curtain has been replaced by another maker?

We would none of us feel unwilling to buy a "Guido" or a "Titian," for knowing that a mutilated finger has been painted with a modern brush. But, Is that a real "Titian," one may say, with its mutilation? Here is the written evidence; the authenticity is capable of demonstration; the

changes in the piece are all manifest to a practised eye; the picture, with all its injuries, is a "Titian;" and, with far less essential damage than such a picture is supposed to have received, the Bible is, in the same sense, the same identical "word of God" as it was from the beginning. We maintain this on those principles of personal identity which are every where received and acted upon by mankind. Assertions to the contrary have been abundantly refuted by biblical critics, who have patiently taken up and examined each case in which the text of Scripture has received injury. Let no believer in the plenary inspiration of the Bible, especially let not young men, (who are prone to regard such appeals,) be afraid, when the inspiration of the Bible is assailed by those who make claims to freedom from credulity. In examining their writings during the preparation of these pages, the impression has been deepened that none are less free from credulity than they. While they promise you liberty, they themselves show that there is a fanaticism of unbelief, which is not equalled by any alleged superstitions which they so much dread.

We have reason to complain of some who profess to have a high regard for the Bible, and yet endeavor to lessen the popular reverence for the book. We look upon them as the very worst enemies which the Bible has ever had to encounter; for they make great protestations of regard for the Bible, only they 'would not have the people receive it with such awe and idolatrous reverence.' But they well know that the line between faith and superstition in every human mind is movable, and it is impossible to fix it; that reverence lies hard on the border of enthusiasm, and no philosopher, certainly no philanthropist, will venture to prescribe the demarcation. Sometimes we feel towards such men as a child would feel towards an apparently friendly man who should say, "I would not have you abate any thing of your reasonable love for your father's

or mother's memory; but be truthful and discriminating in your judgment of their character: you may not be aware that some who knew them best perceived that they had their failings; indeed, in an acquaintance with them of fifty years, several candid persons, who really loved and respected your parents, saw evidences of human imperfection in them, and were led to say, Are these persons really such saints as their pious children regard them? Are they worthy of all this indiscriminate —?" But a child's agony would by this time be more than his civility could control, and this imitator of him, who, in paradise, was found, "like a toad," at the ear of Eve, and poisoned her dreams, would, in some cases, receive, and in all cases would richly merit, summary leave to depart. The illustration will not hold good in every particular; for we do not admit that the Bible is intrinsically imperfect, — in the same sense that the best of men are imperfect. "I know," says the child to himself, "that my parents walked before me in uprightness; they were honest, virtuous, sincere, without guile, generous, unsuspicious; but withal, they met with tribulation, and injuries from open foes and pretended friends; without a constant miracle, they could not have passed through such things, in such a world as this, without contracting some injury."

So we feel towards the word of God. In such a world as this, and with such fearful treatment as it has met with, nothing but a standing miracle could have preserved the Bible from certain injuries. It is an interesting question, How far shall He who does not interpose to prevent fire from burning the flesh of a good man, work a constant miracle, to keep a book, transcribed, translated, so many times as the Bible has been, from mutilation? It is injured enough to vindicate the one great impartial law of providence towards the evil and the good; it is not injured so as to affect, in the least degree,

its credibility. The injuries which it has received are far less, in every sense, than some would make us feel them to be. As it regards their spiritual effect, they are no more than the tarnish which may have happened to the ark of the covenant, the mildew which gathered upon the folded curtains of the tabernacle in its removal from place to place, or the dust and cobwebs which may have eluded the Levite's eye and care on the wings of the cherubim. Take the Bible to a sick bed, to a funeral, to the cell of the condemned; open it in the family, in the place of secret prayer, at an ordination, a social gathering, or where two or three are met in Christ's name; and what listener or reader will be made to feel that it is any less the word of God, to the conscience and heart, than though the original manuscripts of the Bible were produced? And yet there are, by actual count, as Kinnicott and De Rossi tell us, more than eight hundred thousand various readings as to the Hebrew consonants, in different copies of the Hebrew Scriptures. But they are generally of no more importance than our different spellings of *Mohammed*, *Mahomet*, and *Muhamet*. There is not a doctrine, nor a moral precept, in the Bible which is in the least obscured by any of the casualties to which the text of Scripture has been subjected; no, not one. Though numerical mistakes occur which it is hard to explain, and dates are confused, and names appear, in genealogies, in seeming contradiction, to statements elsewhere, yet the moral impression of every narrative is uninjured. We might challenge the host of ancient and modern unbelievers to produce a single instance in refutation of this statement. All the loud warnings, therefore, against corruptions of Scripture, and all the sleek words of seeming candor, praying for more discrimination in our judgments of the word of God, are not warranted by any real harm which the sacred text has suffered.

It deserves to be said to all who seek to impair the enthusiastic love of the people for their Bible, that they are the worst enemies of mankind. Who are more so? The men who corrupt the word of God by their false doctrines and inventions, may still leave that word to have its proper effect upon the conscience and heart. But he who by any means weakens the authority of the Bible, as a supernatural revelation, takes a risk for which no reflecting person would be the underwriter for the wealth of the world.

What possible good these men really believe that they accomplish, it is hard to say. It may truly be said of them to the humble, devout believers, "There be some that trouble you." They love to arrest a cup of cold water on its way to a thirsty soul, and compel us to look through their microscope, and see the animalcules which seem to make the element alive. "And now," they seem to say, "you will drink with some scientific knowledge of what you are about to swallow. Knowledge is never hurtful; ignorance is not the mother of devotion; always remember when you drink that there is no such thing as pure water." If we remonstrate at this, then we are "bigoted," "illiberal," "enemies of science;" we "cherish ignorance," we "foster a blind attachment to old things."

Let us suppose that some speculative, experimenting, or malevolent, or trifling hand could disturb that mysterious power of magnetism which resides in the north. And now the needles of all the compasses are false guides; every mariner in the dark, watching, by the light in his binnacle, the little trembling finger ordained by a benevolent God to guide him over the deep, sails wrong; and in the morning Old Kinsale is heaped up with wrecks; the Bahama reefs have caught the keels of a fleet; many find themselves in strange ports, far off from their destined places; the explorers, the

surveyors on land, are all at fault; a vane cannot be set, nor a sundial; property, happiness, life, beyond computation, are sacrificed. All this would be less than the mischief of disturbing the power which the Bible has upon the hearts and minds of our fellow-men. A man had better be in his grave than to make men lose their implicit faith in the Bible. Call it "scholarship," "literary acumen," "discrimination," "hatred of superstition," or by any other plausible name, — it is, in effect, cruelty; it carries desolation to the interests of men farther than any other form of infidelity. Every periodical, or column of a newspaper, or pamphlet, which professes to cast an honest doubt upon the inspiration of the Bible, ought to be compassed round with heavy black lines; the writer or speaker should bow down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother; his words should falter on his tongue; his lips should quiver; "I am sent to thee with heavy tidings," should be his preface and his peroration. Instead of this, what do we find? Sarcasm, ridicule, insinuations, a titter, pity, a sneer, wonder, amazement, at the intrepidity, or weakness, of those who will persist to regard the Bible, the whole Bible, as the word of God. This is the shape in which deism is now showing itself among us. The battle was formerly on questions of interpretation. Every proof text of every great doctrine of the Bible, especially such as relate to the deity of Christ, has been disputed. Some of them, and the attempts to destroy them, make one think of noble hawsers and chain cables bearing the marks of teeth which nibbled where it was hard to bite. But the supreme deity of Christ, and its kindred doctrines, maintain their hold upon the understanding and heart; and the most effectual way to impair them would, certainly, now be, to cast suspicion on the book which seems to teach these doctrines. Give us liberty to regard the Bible as imperfectly inspired, and our own tastes and our various disposition to believe

will dictate what doctrines, or precepts, we shall regard as of divine authority. And thus, every man will make his own Bible, as every heathen has his own little god. If one ever hears a religious teacher throw doubts upon the supreme authority of the Scriptures, or detract from their plenary inspiration, he should give no sleep to his eyes or slumber to his eyelids, but deliver himself as a roe from the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler. Once admit that the Bible is any thing less than "the word of God," and the voice of God no longer speaks to the conscience authoritatively from its pages; but men, fallible while they wrote, have merely given us their best recollections and impressions.

CONFESSION AND TESTIMONY OF THE JEWS TO THEIR BIBLE.

One of the most remarkable things in regard to the Bible is this — that while the Old Testament is to a great extent a record of the sins and follies of the Jewish nation, setting them forth in the most odious light, as a nation of fickle, ungrateful rebels against God, the Jews regard the Old Testament with little less than absolute worship. Here is a singular spectacle — a whole nation binding to them, and wearing, as a diadem of glory, a book which exposes their sins and chastisements before all nations. Were they a humble, pious nation, we might account for this from their humility and godly sorrow. But they are proud and scornful towards all other people. Yet they had kept the Old Testament so pure that Christ did not reprove them for making the least alteration in their sacred canon, nor in the text of Scripture; and to this day their Bible is their glory and joy. It is not usual for men to prize so highly the indictments which are found against them. If the Bible were ordinary histories by uninspired men, like the histories by Herodotus or Josephus, it

could not have acquired such sanctity, and have kept it for so many centuries. He who says that the Bible was written, like all other books, with no supernatural aid and guidance, or superintendence, does not account for this prodigy.

The Pharisees were the Romanists, and the Sadducees were the Protestants, of their day, with regard to the Scriptures. The two sects originated soon after the return from the captivity, the Pharisees being in favor of traditionary additions to the word of God, and the Sadducees being their opponents, not chiefly on the question of "angel or spirit," but, on the subject of the corruptions of Scripture. We have in this a strong warrant for believing that the canon and text of Scripture were watched with jealous care.

"ALL SCRIPTURE GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD."

In the original, this verse reads as follows: "All Scripture given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished to every good work."

The word, *is*, in the first two lines, is not in the Greek. The reader of the English Bible can readily find many a case where the word, *is*, is Italicized, showing that it does not occur in the original, but is supplied by the translator. Now, the question arises, whether it is to be supplied in this case; if not, how shall the verse be rendered?

Some eminent scholars render it thus: "All Scripture given by inspiration of God is also profitable," &c. The learned Greek scholar, Bishop Middleton, says, that the Greek word, *and*, does not allow of this rendering. The more common way of rendering the passage is that adopted in the English Bible, supplying the word *is*, in two places. "All Scrip-

ture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable," &c. Professor Stuart says, "all Scripture" here means, in the original, every constituent part or portion of the Scriptures. The famous De Wette, the foe of supernaturalism, says of the word *theopneustos*, (translated, — "given by inspiration of God,") — "here it means *inspired, durchgeistet*, i. e., animated through and through by the Spirit; *geistvoll*, i. e., full of the Spirit." Looking back, we find that Paul had been speaking to Timothy of "the Holy Scriptures," which "from a child" he had known; of these he speaks when he says, "All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God." Such, in Paul's view, was the Old Testament, with all the books which it now contains.

INCIDENTAL EXPRESSIONS.

"*The Scripture cannot be broken.*"

Such is the declaration of Christ. It is a hard saying for some of his readers. Oftentimes an incidental remark has as much power as a labored argument. It would not be possible to add any thing to the effect of these few words of Christ. He here propounds a general truth; he declares that whatever was within those parchment rolls on which their Scriptures were recorded, was incapable of refutation, and left no room for doubt or cavil.

"*Doth* GOD *take care for oxen? or saith* HE *it altogether for our sakes?*"

Here it is implied that it was God who spoke in the law of Moses.

"*Searching what or what manner of time the Spirit which was in them did signify,*" &c.

Here we see men, under a supernatural guidance, endeavoring to find out the meaning, in some particulars, of that

which they themselves had uttered! "Unto whom it was *revealed* that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you," &c.

"*Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his sayings, how shall ye believe my words?*"

We have here an indorsement of Moses from the Saviour's own lips! "*He wrote of me.*" Christ is in the pentateuch, therefore. Some cannot find him there. They need the disciples' walk to Emmaus, in which Jesus, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."

"*They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.*"

So spake Abraham to the rich man "in torment." Moses and the prophets are all sufficient, if obeyed, to save a soul from future punishment; and their testimony is such that one reappearing from the dead could add to it nothing effectual.

"*We have a more sure word of prophecy.*"

This is the assertion, respecting the Old Testament, of the apostle Peter, who is here giving precedence to the Old Testament, as a guide, in comparison with all that he saw in the holy mount.

But these will serve for a specimen of the ways in which the inspiration of the Bible is continually taken for granted, or asserted, by the various writers. And yet some say that we set up claims for the Bible which it does not make for itself. If the attentive reader will examine any Epistle, for example, or one of the Gospels, he will be surprised to find how often the divine inspiration of the Scriptures is brought to view.

PRETERNATURAL POWER OF THE BIBLE.

The picture galleries of the old world are full of Scripture scenes. The works of the great masters are scriptural subjects. Those fishermen, those humble "reporters and note takers," as they are called, those careless, unaided evangelists, and the writer of the Acts, have touched the genius of Raphael and Rubens. One of the greatest evidences of power is to awaken great conceptions in other minds. None have done so much for the fine arts as the writers of the Bible. One cannot believe that they were "unaided stenographers," without risking his literary reputation.

The books which the Bible has caused to be written are evidences of its being supernaturally inspired.

The Paradise Lost and Pilgrim's Progress could not have been written but for the Bible. The literature of the Scriptures, — the books which have been written to illustrate its language and history, as well as its doctrines, is of astonishing extent. In the library of a Theological Seminary containing, perhaps, fifteen thousand volumes, as one looks round on the array of learning and talent and remembers that the Bible gave existence to the greater part of it, he is impressed with the thought that such a book is wholly different from any which men wrote, or could have written, from their own suggestion. We understand the secret of its prolific power by reading such passages as these: —

"The Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend."

"And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord."

"After the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Joshua."

"When the Lord raised them up judges, then the Lord was with the judge."

"The Lord revealed himself to Samuel."

"The Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind."

"David, the son of Jesse, said, The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was on my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me."

"Well spake the Holy Ghost by the mouth of Esaias."

"The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel."

"The word of the Lord came unto Hosea, Joel, Amos, Micah."

"God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

Remembering that the New Testament records the fulfilment of prophecies, in which the truth of God is involved, we perceive that such a record could not be permitted to be made carelessly, and without divine superintendence. Therefore Christ said to the writers, "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, shall be in you," and "will guide you into all truth." "He shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Surely, then, we must write upon our Bible the words of John in the Revelation: "*These are the true sayings of God.*"

An argument for the inspiration of the Bible may be founded on the actual place which the Scriptures have obtained. For eighteen hundred years, at least, they have been the only guide of generations to heaven. All which they have known of God, and truth, and duty, and future retribution, and the way to be saved, they have derived from the Bible. So it will be till the end of time. May we not confidently say that a book which God foresaw, to say the least, would thus affect the destinies of millions, would not have been permitted to reach the place which it has obtained, unless it had his sanction, and was substantially that which men take it to be — The Word of God? Some one asked Joanna Baillie and Dr. Lushington, when

they were together, "Do you believe in special providence?" "Yes," said one of them, "on great occasions." — Even they could have found such an 'occasion' for divine interposition, in the history of the Bible.

THE ENGLISH BIBLE.

Our present English version of the Bible was made by order of King James of England, and was completed in 1611. Forty-seven of the best scholars and divines were employed. They were divided into six companies, varying from seven to ten men in each. The eighth rule prescribed by the king was, that every man of each company should take the same chapter, or chapters, and having translated them, "all to meet together, to confer what they have done, and agree for their part what shall stand." The result was, that every part of the Bible was considered, first, by each of the translators in the company to which that portion was assigned; then, by that company revising the work of each of their number; then, by every one of the six companies, each company revising the doings of all the rest; and finally, by a committee of revision, consisting of the chief persons of all the companies. There being six companies, each composed of from seven to ten men, it follows that each part of their work was examined at least fourteen times, many parts fifteen, and some seventeen times. These men were eminently good, as well as thoroughly versed in Hebrew and Greek;[1] and we have, in the English tongue, a version of the Holy Scriptures which comes as near to the mind of the Holy Spirit as can be expected in

[1] See an interesting and valuable little work, "*The Translators Revived*," by Rev. A. W. McLure, D. D. New York: Charles Scribner. Also, "*The Mine Explored:* A Help to the Reading of the Bible." American Sunday School Union.

a translation. When we think of the past influence of the Bible on those who use the English tongue, — while some even venture to predict that this is to prevail greatly over other tongues, we cannot doubt that, as the Bible is the gift of God, he would have specially directed the translation of it into a language which was to bear his messages to such a portion of the human family. Its influence on the language itself is wonderful.

INSPIRATION AND ORTHODOXY.

We shall not continue to believe in the deity of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, nor in the system of truth associated with a belief in their deity, unless we believe in the divine and plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. A belief in the doctrine of the Trinity is generally accompanied with an acknowledgment of the Bible as wholly inspired; and the rejection of the plenary inspiration of the Bible is generally followed by a disbelief of the Trinity. Just before the walls of Jerusalem were carried by the Roman arms, it is said that a voice was heard in the Holy of Holies, saying, "Let us go hence." Begin to invade the defences which a belief in the inspiration of the Scriptures throws around the Bible, and the Father, Son, and Spirit will, in effect, say, Let us go hence. We may search for them with all candor and supposed willingness to believe, but we shall not find them there.

There are, in some minds, honest doubts respecting the genuineness of particular books, or portions of books. But this, and all the questions which may divide good men, are different from recognizing no inspired revelation, or from rejecting the Bible as being the word of God.

There is no certain foothold for faith the moment that we abandon a belief in the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. Unless we admit that, in composing the Bible, the writers were specially aided, guided, superintended by God, so that

the Scriptures are the word of the Lord, and of supreme authority, of essential accuracy, — unless we have a tribunal before which reason must bow implicitly, and, judging by the ordinary proofs that a thing is revealed, receive the revelation without cavil, — we are at once without any safe guide to faith or practice; we may believe any thing or nothing, as our depraved and deceitful hearts may choose. If a certain illustration does not happen to suit our taste, — "The writer was an uninspired man, and followed the suggestions of his own fancy." Does an argument press us too closely, — "Great allowance must be made for Oriental exaggeration." Is a certain truth inconsistent with our wishes, — "Our reason is as competent as that of Matthew or Peter." Is an assertion of Christ too solemn, too fearful, — "Mark may have taken notes inaccurately, or lost some of them, or copied them wrong." Where are we, then? What a wild, dark, howling ocean is around us! no sun, no star; the chart — who knows if it be all true? The very place upon it where my all is at stake, may be utterly erroneous; and as for the needle, it never had plenary magnetism; and if it had, the compass has been tampered with by so many ignorant hands that it cannot traverse. Here we are on the sea of time, driving out upon the ocean of eternity; and where we shall arrive God only knows. Has God sent me out upon this tremendous voyage, laden with that for which a world might not be given in exchange, and endless consequences depending on my safe arrival, and yet has he provided me with nothing but my poor reason, which never went on such a voyage before? We have been accustomed to believe in the benevolence of God to his creatures; but what do I need more than a perfect, unerring revelation of his will? And see! the ocean is white with sails, all of them tossed, and not comforted. O, send us a chart whose delineations shall be authentic, a compass whose needle shall, by its true magnetic

power, be like the voice of God to my ship, "This is the way; walk ye therein."

Blessed be God, we, who believe in the plenary inspiration of the Bible, have a fulfilment of this prayer. We have such "a sure word of prophecy." No "inaccuracies," "imperfections," "ignorance," "fallibility," of the writers detract in the least from the belief that this Bible is, in its truths and its essential expressions, deserving of the same reverence and submission as though it were written on the throne of God with his own hand, and had been visibly delivered, as the tables of stone were delivered in the presence of more than six hundred thousand witnesses.

THE DIVINE CURSE AGAINST DEISM AND FORGERY.

The "Revelation" by the apostle John was written last of the inspired books, and extends, in its predictions and directions, to the end of time. The impression which it makes upon us is, that it is the close of divine revelations. Now, it is noticeable that, at the close of this last book, there should be written these words: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from these things, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." This looks like a flaming sword turning every way to keep the inspired book from wilful additions and mutilation; and by implication it asserts that revelation is closed.

To this it is replied, that the book of Revelation was as distinct a thing, in its composition, from the rest of the Bible, as Luke's Gospel is from the five books of Moses. If this Reve-

lation happened, in after years, to be bound up with other writings, as men collect "Sermons on the Death of Webster," for example, and bind them in one volume, how absurd to suppose that the last paragraph in the last sermon of that volume could, in any way, have reference to the whole volume!

But some think that there was a providential design in causing the Book of Revelation to be written last, and in so directing affairs that it should stand as the last book of the Bible. Therefore they say, that the caution and threatening at the close of this book virtually apply to the whole Bible.

At the end of certain private grounds which terminate in an angle where two roads meet, we find the following conspicuous notice: "All persons trespassing upon these grounds will be dealt with according to law." The grounds of this owner are known to extend an eighth of a mile; but they are divided into orchard, pasture, and fields for tillage. Stone walls separate them.

Certain men are overheard, near the orchard, debating whether the notice at the end of the farm is designed to protect the whole of the premises, or merely the pasture land at the angle where the farm ends. Stone walls, it is argued, separate the piece in which the notice stands, from the other portions. Besides, they distinctly remember that the owner came into possession of these several portions of his estate at times considerably distant from each other. One says that he is sure of this; for he has examined the registry of deeds on this very point. Had the owner enclosed the whole property at one and the same time with one wall, they argue that there could be no question how much the warning was intended to protect; but they conclude that if trespassers poach on the hill, or take any thing in the fields, they are beyond the limits which the cautionary sign-board was meant to cover, notwithstanding all the premises belong to one man.

That fearful curse against those who tamper with the book to which it is appended, occurring at the very close of Scripture, raises one of those questions which no arguments can determine, but which every one is disposed to answer according to the amount of faith which he may have in the Bible as an inspired book. Some regard it as a literary accident, that those words stand where they do. Others cannot resist the belief that, virtually, they reach back to the first chapter of Genesis, and that providence intended that they should be a sort of curfew, or a burglar's alarm bell, for the whole Bible. They who wilfully derogate from the Bible, they who knowingly add their inventions to it, are alike the objects of this fearful anathema. — We must not impugn another's motives in his opinions with regard to the Bible. While we may deprecate their influence, we must make allowance to each other for differences of education and association; and we shall do well to bear in mind the words of Jesus himself on this very point: "If any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, it shall judge him in the last day."

It is apparent that the Bible was made for faith. While it is so arranged as to regard our doubts and difficulties, nowhere do we find it suspicious or jealous of artifice and cunning in its readers; but, with consciousness of honesty and truth, it speaks as to those who wish to be informed and instructed.

"WORD OF GOD;" — TWOFOLD APPLICATION OF THE NAME.

There is a happy coincidence, and it is eminently suggestive, in the two great meanings, in the Scriptures, of the term, "The Word of God."

It belongs by prior right to Him who is before all things, and by whom all things consist; who, "in the beginning, was the Word," and who, in the New Testament, is represented to us as acting with the prerogatives of Deity, in such ways that we may well inquire what is left to the Supreme God, if this Word himself be not God. All things being "made by him and for him," "upholding all things by the word of his power," "Lord of all," the final Judge of men, he may be said to be the acting Deity as to our world; and being, as he surely is, the exponent of the Godhead, its revealer, its great manifestation, he is appropriately called "The Word,"—for the reason, perhaps, that a *word* is the exponent of the secret thought, the enunciation of the will, the executive act of the reason.

We also apply the term, *word of God*, to the things which holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and which were committed to writing. One of the most unworthy efforts of modern insidious jealousy of the Bible is, to destroy its commonly received title, "the word of God." If Jesus Christ sanctioned the Old Testament as a divine guide, it is as much "the word of God" as certain ten paragraphs inscribed on two tablets are "the law of God." Peter says, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." This is a plain reference to Holy Scripture. He does not mean, of course, that every religious teacher shall imitate the voices and modes of utterance by which God spoke, but conform his teachings to the things uttered; and these things are as properly called "the word of God" as a certain book is called "Speeches." Would "oracles" be more agreeable to those who wish to disfranchise the Bible of its old name? But this is nearly synonymous with "word of God." To the Jews, Paul says, "were committed *the oracles of God;*" they "received the *lively oracles*, to give unto us," evidently in a written form. "The first principles of *the oracles of God*,"

are spoken of, intimating some systematized, codified records; and we are told to speak according to them. If the Scriptures be not worthy to be called "the word of God," let it be proved; but if they are, the exception which is taken by some to the name, is whimsical; an exaggerated idea of the "corruptions of Scripture," so called, infests the imagination; and the best cure is, to let the word of Christ dwell in us so richly that we shall cease to dwell unduly on the literary imperfections which, after all, cannot mar its original purity.

Our Redeemer and our Bible, then, are connected together by a term which illustrates and enhances the character of each, by the mutual reflection of their attributes and object; the Bible, with its blending of divine and human characteristics, symbolizing Him that was from the beginning — the Word of life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us; and in like manner, the Word made flesh is an impressive illustration, in one important respect, of that other word, the Bible. For of Him the prophet says, "He shall grow up as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground; he hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no beauty in him that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men." Now, the natural heart of man is sometimes offended because such a book as the Bible professes to be, should have so much that is human about it; come into existence, in its various parts, so incidentally, and almost accidentally; be, for some time, in many portions of it, doubtfully received; and afterwards be disputed as to its claims; and at last be subjected to such accidents of translation, and all the vicissitudes of its long history, that (as it was said of the Messiah, "His visage was marred more than any man's, and his form more than the sons of men,") the "*hundred thousand various readings*" which, Gilbert Wakefield says, are connected with its several passages, seem to many a

sufficient reason for rejecting it as a divine book; and men say to it, as they did among the crowning scenes of redemption to Him who was the Word of God, "Save thyself!"—imputing injury and the seeming absence of divine interposition to imposture.

But the afflictions of the Bible and their results are, like the scenes of Calvary, among the chief evidences of a divine original. Notwithstanding the "hundred thousand various readings," the received meaning of the Bible has been substantially the same from age to age. As the distinct existence of the Jews is a standing confirmation of the truth of Scripture, so the integrity of the word of God, surviving the persecutions, wars, fires, floods, of so many ages, the carelessness and fraud of men, is a standing argument in favor of its divine origin. If God has thus interposed to preserve a book amid such perils, and while it has been the object of human and infernal malice, of mistaken zeal, and the betraying kiss, it is not too much to believe that He interposed in its composition. The various alterations and the partial injuries which it has received, are strong proofs of the protecting care which has watched over it. We are told, we will suppose, that the most perfect steamer which ever floated is now on her way to us from some port in the East Indies. She arrives at one of our docks; but, as men examine her, some say, "Is this a perfect ship? Her chimneys are white with dried salt spray; some of the rigging has been spliced; some of the spars are strained; some of the copper is started; barnacles are on her hull." The reply is, She has come across the ocean. It would not be the identical ship of which we were told, if the sea had not thus marked her.

Does any one say, The Bible has signs of injury upon it? We answer, It has come to us across the ocean of time; it has been around the globe; its "hundred thousand emenda-

tions," trivial or bad, show that the hands of generations have been upon it. Every form of peril has assailed it in ages of darkness and violence; it has been hated, cursed, chained, banished, burned; floods of ungodly men have compassed it about; friends have proposed to leave out one part, enemies have torn out another. But here it is, on its way to the end of time, with its "hundred thousand various readings," uncorrupted in every one of its essential truths. Discoveries in science and history have sometimes cast shadows upon it; astronomy, geology, hieroglyphics, exhumed cities, have made its friends anxious for its credibility; but in every instance, thus far, the shadows have passed away, and left it "forever settled in the heavens." God, who made the sciences, chose, in writing the Bible, to describe natural things according to their universal appearance, not as they literally are. Hence, the Bible will always be true to nature and science, so long as the sun and moon endure. Wonderful book! "God is in the midst of thee; thou shalt not be moved; God shall help thee, and that right early." Thou art that river which is to make the nations glad, till the ocean of eternity drinks up thy stream, and all thy revelations give place to the full vision of God.

Suppose that some time, as you returned to your house, a friend should meet you, and say, The chamber is full of light; I am afraid to go in. You approach, and the impression made upon you is, How dreadful is this place! this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. Every morning and evening, if not many times a day, you would stand at the door of that chamber, and commune with God. But now, God is in that chamber, though in a different form of manifestation. Where is your Bible? God is in that book, as he is in no other revelation. Perhaps your Bible is outwardly poor, time-worn, and, like Jesus when on earth, has

no form, nor comeliness. Go to that Bible, and open it; a man will seem to be telling some narrative; the Psalmist will be complaining to his harp, or sounding its prophetic strings; but to your conscience, to your heart, if you are still, and listen, a voice will come, like the breathings of the wind, — the voice of the Spirit that breathed inspiration or controlling influence around its every thought, — reminding you of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, of the love of God, of forgiveness through Christ, of fleeting time, of death, of heaven. The name of a departed parent, brother, sister, companion, child, friend, in it, links it, for you, with heaven. As you come nearer and nearer to the close of life, you will find that its value rises in your esteem and affection. "Bring me the book," said Sir Walter Scott, on his dying bed. "What book, sir?" said his son-in-law, Mr. Lockhart. "There is only one book, sir!" said that dying man, who, more than any other modern writer, has filled the world with his fame.

When it is daybreak on the sea, the sailor no longer turns his eye to the friendly lighthouse. It has served its purpose for the night, it is eclipsed by the morning, and is withdrawn. "WE HAVE A MORE SURE WORD OF PROPHECY; WHEREUNTO YE DO WELL THAT YE TAKE HEED, AS UNTO A LIGHT THAT SHINETH IN A DARK PLACE, UNTIL THE DAY DAWN, AND THE DAY-STAR ARISE IN YOUR HEARTS."

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Truths for the Times.

A

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FOR

'UTURE, ENDLESS PUNISHMENT.

BY

NEHEMIAH ADAMS, D. D.,

PASTOR OF THE ESSEX STREET CHURCH, BOSTON.

BOSTON:

J. E. TILTON & COMPANY,

161 WASHINGTON STREET.

NEW YORK: SHELDON, BLAKEMAN & CO.; A. D. F. RANDOLPH.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE previous numbers of these Tracts have appeared at the suggestion of parishioners, who, on hearing them in other forms at different times, have expressed a desire to see them in print, for the benefit of those who wish to be more acquainted with evangelical doctrines, and with our reasons for believing them.

The present number is a reprint from a Universalist paper in this city, for which it was written, as will be seen by the introductory note on the next page. The article appears simultaneously in this form and in that paper.

BOSTON, Dec. 10, 1858.

NUMBER I.

THE REASONABLENESS OF FUTURE, ENDLESS PUNISHMENT.

NUMBER II

INSTANTANEOUS CONVERSION, AND ITS CONNECTION WITH PIETY.

NUMBER III.

JUSTIFICATION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

NUMBER IV.

GOD IS LOVE.

NUMBER V.

OUR BIBLE.

NUMBER VI.

SCRIPTURAL ARGUMENT FOR FUTURE, ENDLESS PUNISHMENT.

NUMBER VII.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE THREE IN ONE.

(In Preparation.)

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1858, by J. E. TILTON & COMPANY, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the District of Massachusetts.

PREFACE.

It being thought desirable to reprint the article from the paper for which it was written in the form in which it originally appeared, the following Note and Introductory Remarks are here prefixed, being the preface to the article in that paper: —

Note. — The following letter will sufficiently explain the occasion of the present communication: —

Boston, July 6, 1858.

Rev. S. Cobb, *Editor of the Christian Freeman.*

Dear Sir: I have received your printed note in your paper of the 25th ult., in which you say, —

"And now I respectfully invite you, and proffer you the columns of the *Christian Freeman* for the work, to show the *Scripturalness* of future, endless punishment. This will afford you an opportunity to carry your strongest reasons into several thousands of Universalist families; and I earnestly hope that you will accept my proposition."

The form in which you propose that I should do this, viz., by an exposition of isolated proof texts, each to be debated by you before I proceed to another, does not strike me favorably. I will comply with your invitation, if you will allow me to do it in my own way, — upon one condition, that there shall be no notes or comments on what I write in the number or numbers of your paper containing my communication.

Very respectfully yours, N. ADAMS.

Representations have been made in some of the public prints respecting the nature and intention of the following article, which are wholly at variance with my design. I am entering into no controversy, — this being the only article which I have at any time expected to prepare for the paper. Having been invited to preach in Hollis Street Church a sermon, prepared for my own congregation, on the Reasonableness of Endless Punishment, I was not at liberty, of course, to present any other view than that which the sermon contained, incomplete as all such presentations must be without a scriptural argument. While I was purposing to make, on some future occasion, a statement of the scriptural view, both of the nature and extent, of future retribution, an invitation to write on that subject in this paper unexpectedly occurred. I proceed, therefore, to fulfil my original purpose, and respectfully submit the following statement, with no thought of continuing the discussion. N. A.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

The invitation from the editor of this paper to make a statement of views which the "several thousands of families" who, it is said will read this paper, repudiate, imposes a responsible, yet, for some reasons, a gratifying task. The names of not a few among my ministerial brethren occur to me, in whose able and more competent hands I would gladly place this labor, both for the gratification of the reader, and, as I view it, for the truth's sake. I feel encouraged in this work by the comparative regard which many in this denomination profess for the Bible. They do not assail it, as the

manner of some is who differ from us; but their desire to make it speak in their favor secures for it an acknowledgment of its authority. As an illustration of this remark, I refer to a Review of Rev. T. S. King's "Two Discourses," by Rev. Dr. Thomas Whittemore, in the *Universalist Quarterly and General Review*, October, 1858. Dr. W. says: "It seems to us impossible to preserve the public reverence for the Bible, if we suffer ourselves to speak about it as Mr. King has done." "The four Gospels, according to Mr. K., are mere shreds and tatters of what Christ taught. His manner of teaching was so peculiar, and so poetical, and fanciful, that it is quite a wonder that we have even those tatters." "He (Mr. K.) speaks of God choosing to instruct the Church through a few fragmentary flashes of poetry. Good God! What an idea of revelation! What an idea of Jesus as a teacher! He has lost sight of 'the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.'" — p. 377.

Inasmuch as nothing but the clearest conviction that this doctrine of endless retribution is revealed in the Bible would allow us for a moment to believe and inculcate the fearful truth, which all who believe it receive with the most solemn awe, it awakens confidence and friendly feeling to think that the most of those who will read this article, thus regard the testimony of Scripture, explained by the ordinary rules of language, to be of binding authority.

I have also been led to think of this denomination as including many who are much exercised in their minds on the subject of future punishment. It is a welcome effort to show such individuals that some of their thoughts with regard to this subject and its advocates are, perhaps, disproportioned and exaggerated. The most of those who believe in future, endless punishment, have far more peace of mind with regard to it than they appear to have who deny it; for with evangelical believers it sinks into its just proportion in the universal government of God, as the State's Prison, Courts of Law, Offices of Justice, blend, like the tonic element of iron in the blood, into the life of a commonwealth with its virtuous and happy homes, its hundreds of thousands of joyous children, its churches, its products, its whole prosperous tide of affairs. Though hell is not the central figure in the religious ideas of evangelical Christians, the belief in future, endless retribution does exert its powerful influence upon us. We know that it is capable of vast abuse, as we see illustrated in the direful influence of its perversion by the Church of Rome. But we find it explicitly revealed, and "knowing, therefore, the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men." If it were preached still more affectionately and plainly by us, conscious of our ill desert and of our obligations to redeeming love, there would be a nearer approach to the apostolic model. Our prevailing associations with this doctrine, we are happy to say, are those of deliverance, through the atoning death of the Son of God. It is in connection with his sacrifice for us that we always endeavor to preach it; so that we trust we may say concerning our system of faith, as it is said of heaven, "the Lamb is the light thereof." While we believe that the contemplation of future misery, apart from the cross of Christ, would be hurtful to the mind and heart, we also feel that it cannot be of healthful tendency with our moral natures to base our religious associations mainly on the one idea of opposition to endless punishment. An evil thing, real or imaginary, which we inordinately, or upon wrong principles, oppose, has a retroactive influence on our minds and hearts, corresponding to its own baleful nature.

It is with such views that I now write, — not, principally, with antagonists in my mind, though my statements will meet with antagonism, — so that if any are persuaded by counter statements that these views are unscriptural, they will do me the favor, at least, to think of me as their sincere well-wisher and friend, and as one who has the same eternal interests embarked in this question as themselves. Let us also keep in mind that mere argumentation never convinces men of scriptural truths, but that there must be on our part an experience, wrought by the Holy Spirit in answer to prayer, to interpret things aright, which otherwise will be stumbling blocks and foolishness. But, without further preface, I proceed to my argument.

SCRIPTURAL ARGUMENT.

I. The Scriptures teach that there is a penalty for disobedience awaiting the finally impenitent.

This is plainly declared in Rom. ii. 5–12, 16: "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil; of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honor, and peace to every man that worketh good; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law," "in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." The parenthetic passages omitted here, which occur before the last of these sentences, are a direct assertion of the full accountableness of the heathen world to the tribu-

nal of God, for their sins against their consciences and the light of nature. I take this whole passage of Scripture as a revelation of a future judgment and retribution, in which all men are to be judged and treated according to their works.

The ideas which are presented of heaven, both by Christ and his apostles, come to us through objects of sense. Every one supposes that by these images, as, for example, "sitting with Christ at his table in his kingdom," "new wine," "beholding his glory," and "gates of pearl," "streets of gold," "harps" and "crowns," it is intended to give us the idea of the highest pleasure of which our natures, body and soul, shall in another world be capable. We never subtract any thing from these images of heavenly joy, saying, They are only metaphors; we rather say, Language here is intensified, to convey the ideas of future happiness. And as we believe that we shall have bodies in heaven "like unto" the Saviour's "glorious body," we are never unwilling to think that there will be enjoyments adapted to the body with the soul — spiritual, of course, in both cases, and yet beautifully distinguished, but capable of blending, as in this world. This way of representing unseen things to us is not so much "Oriental" as the only possible way, at present, of communicating spiritual objects to our understanding.

But while the attractions of heaven suffer nothing by reason of criticisms upon the language in which they are presented, some do not use the same tolerance, nor apply the same principles of interpretation, when they read or speak of future punishment. Here, they say, all is metaphorical, Oriental; they select certain images, and ask if any suppose that the wicked are, literally, to suffer such things, from just these elements of pain. But the representations of heaven are certainly obnoxious to the very same criticisms, and sim-

ilar questions may be asked concerning them. But being of a pleasurable nature, they escape criticism. Therefore, if we are inquired of in either case, Do you believe that these things are literally so? the proper answer seems to be in both cases, Either these things, or things which now can only be expressed by them. Those earthly symbols approach nearer than any thing with which we are now acquainted, to the things signified.

The condition of the wicked after death is represented through such symbols by Christ and his apostles as a state of positive punishment. With a desire to speak cautiously on such a point, and to follow only the most obvious leadings of Scripture, very many are constrained to believe that while the finally impenitent will experience the consequences naturally flowing from their moral condition, those consequences of their sins will be kept alive by the power of God, and that continual sin will receive continually new punishment. In the sermon on the reasonableness of endless punishment, (see the preface,) I assumed, for the sake of the argument, that future misery should consist only in the natural consequences of evil, and then argued that it was reasonable that these should be endless. I also deprecated any inquiry beyond the plain language of the New Testament as to the elements of punishment. The subject forbade any extended consideration of the nature of future punishment, nor did I undertake to state my own belief on that point. In attempting now to show that the Scriptures represent the future condition of the wicked to be a state of punishment, it will be submitted to the reader whether infliction from the hand of God be not necessarily involved in the language of the Bible.

One of those indirect proofs of a thing which sometimes are more forcible and convincing than direct statements, occurs in the words of Christ which I will refer to as proving the future

punishment of the wicked, in which he tells us to "*fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*" [1]

If God has merely the natural ability to do this, while his character makes it morally impossible that he should ever do it, the illustration is singularly at fault. It would never be proper to tell a child, as a reason why it should fear its father and mother, that they have power to inflict a punishment which we know is morally impossible. Their mere natural ability to inflict it would not justify the exhortation, "Yea, I say unto you, fear them." To associate the idea of destroying both body and soul in hell with our proper fear of God, our heavenly Father, if he would do no such thing, would not be in accordance with truth.

Some, to avoid this difficulty, say that the passage means merely that God can destroy life. But so can they who kill the body. There is something more which God alone can do, and which we need rather to fear. Others, knowing that the original word for *hell* in this passage cannot mean *the grave*, propose to render the warning thus: that God can cast those whom he kills into the valley of Hinnom. But so could assassins or judicial executioners. We still look for that which God alone can do. Some say it must be annihilation. But the valley of Hinnom is notoriously symbolical of perpetuity — the fire always burning, the worm ever breeding. Why, moreover, should any *place* be specified in which the annihilation, which is the same thing every where, should occur? Or what appropriateness is there in speaking of the soul as being annihilated there? Destroying both soul and body in hell seems to be equivalent to that expression, "everlasting destruction" — an apparent contradiction of terms, but conveying the idea of perpetual loss and misery.

We get no relief from these difficulties with the passage if

[1] Matt. x. 28.

we turn to the milder form in which the idea is expressed in Luke xii. 5: "Fear Him which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him;" for Gehenna, understood literally as the valley of Hinnom, presents to the mind the most terrific image of positive misery. Nothing can be more revolting or fearful. Let those who are jealous at imputations cast upon the character of God by the doctrine of endless punishment, explain how Jesus could even suggest the idea of the Father casting his offspring into a place, the name of which was borrowed from the most fearful object then known to his hearers. Until this passage is shown to imply no punishment from the hand of God, we must regard it as an impregnable proof of future visitations of misery upon the wicked.

Some who believe in future punishment seek to mitigate the influence of the dread truth upon their feelings by the theory that future punishment will consist only in the natural effects of sin. This relieves them of the necessity to think that God will inflict any thing directly upon the wicked.

One thing seems incontrovertible, viz.: the Bible does not teach us that sin is its own complete punishment. It is true that without the elements of misery in themselves, the Bible tells us, sinners could not be made miserable; nor would outward inflictions constitute punishment, unless there were something within for the fire to kindle. But it admits of a question whether, if the sinner should be left entirely to himself, undisturbed by any external power, adding new energy to sorrow, or opening new sources of it, he could not in time adjust himself, as in this world, to any circumstances. Even in this world, trouble, or the infliction of pain and sorrow, is necessary to rouse the conscience. To some extent God punishes men in this world, for this purpose. "Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God." "Moab hath

been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel." The seventy-third Psalm describes the wicked who "are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men." Hence "their strength is firm." But even tribulation is powerless in many cases, and the sinner is either emboldened by temporary respite, or provoked by the rod to further opposition. Pharaoh is an eminent example of this. It is said of another, "And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord; this is that king Ahaz." Other passages in accordance with these, to prove the positions just laid down, might easily be cited.

So that however terrible and bitter the condition of the sinner might be at first, it is not inconceivable that he should at last say, with Satan in Paradise Lost, "Hail! horrors, hail! and thou, profoundest hell!" if God would but depart from him. Sinking into a torpid, brutish state, or rousing themselves into defiant forms of hatred and blasphemy, occupying themselves with plots and counterplots in their strife with each other, the wicked in hell, like bad or abandoned people here, might make their condition tolerable. They would, for example, feel the need of subordination among themselves for their own protection; selfishness would suggest many alleviations of misery by mutual forbearance; and as the worst of men — pirates, gamblers, debauchees — have codes of honor, and ambition its fawning flatteries, and pride smothers its resentment, and selfishness in all its forms is compelled to put on the mask of submission and obeisance, so the wicked, if left to themselves, even with their wickedness festering and their crimes becoming gigantic, might manage, by self-control, to reduce things into a system which to their wretched natures might, in very many cases, be even tolerable. Sin itself is no misery to a sinner; it must meet with ill success, it must be compelled to feel a superior power

acting contrary to itself; then, indeed, it is the occasion of misery. It is no sorrow to wicked men here for God to depart from them; it is rather their desire; "therefore they say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Saul never would have uttered that bitter cry, "God is departed from me, and is become my enemy," if the Philistines had not pursued hard after him. God and he had been for a long time far apart; but very little did Saul care for this, until the day of his calamity made haste.

If, therefore, there is to be, in the strict sense of the term, punishment, after death, it would seem that there must, in the nature of things, be visitations upon the wicked of that which the Bible calls "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish." While there must be in the sinner himself a state of things which will make these inflictions punishment, there must also be a mighty hand stretched out forever to make the future condition of the wicked one of retribution. There is both error and truth in the common saying with many that future misery will proceed from conscience; — error, if it be supposed that conscience left to itself will occasion torment; for, if in this world, with so much to stimulate conscience, it so easily falls asleep, the provocations, and the necessity of self-defence, and redress, and all the bad influences of hell, must have the power totally to sear it; — but there is truth in the saying, if it be allowed that God is to visit the wicked in ways that will excite conscience against them; this would be "infliction," compared with which fire and brimstone, though the most appalling images of torture we can easily conceive, do not convey more terrible ideas of retribution.

Now, the Bible is continually representing the wicked as receiving from God positive inflictions, and not merely as being abandoned to themselves. Even when it speaks of many sources of misery which might seem to be the natural conse-

quences of their sin, it often represents these consequences as being administered by the direct agency of the Almighty. So that the two things seem to be combined. "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup." "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." "God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow and made it ready." These passages teach that sinners will not merely be left to the natural consequences of sin. The ideas of arrest, and of execution, are here presented; the transgressor is not left to himself, with merely his sin for his punishment. Then, again, we read, "Woe unto the wicked; it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him." "Yea, woe unto them also when I depart from them." Even though the wicked should not suffer otherwise, nor to a greater degree, than they are capable of suffering in their minds here, yet, if they are to be punished, these sufferings must be kept active by an outward power; for their natural tendency is to harden and stupify, or to excite passions whose gratification affords a certain redress.

All this we may believe without venturing one step into the dominion of fancy to depict the kind and manner of those inflictions which are necessary to constitute punishment. Nor is it necessary; for knowing as we do by experience and observation what the passions of the human heart are when restraint is weakened or removed, we need no external images of woe to represent what it must be for God to minister excitement to them by his presence and his intercourse with them. In a sense he departs from them, as he did from Saul. By this is signified the withdrawal of every thing merciful, alleviating, hopeful, and of a restraining, reformatory nature. Yet he will always make his presence to be felt; for "if I make my

bed in hell, behold, thou art there." While, therefore, material images of woe, if too specific, seem to degrade the subject, and are apt to pass over, in their effect on some, from the extreme of horror to the grotesque, they are not objectionable on the score of over-statement; nothing which fancy ever depicted being capable of expressing the misery which must be felt by a depraved soul opposed to God and with God for its punisher. We have only to think of what is sometimes felt at funerals and closing graves, to see what future misery must be in one of its merely incidental forms — the loss of all good, forever. If God shall but keep perpetually fresh such sorrows as men feel here, he will fulfil a large part of that which the Saviour and the apostles have declared to be the future portion of the wicked. So that when good men, like Leighton, Baxter, Andrew Fuller, the Wesleys, Watts, and Edwards, portray, according to their several conceptions, the pains of the wicked, they fall far below the truth; and their representations, if at all objectionable, are not so for the reason that they surpass the dread reality; for that is impossible. Let us now consider the following passages: —

"As therefore the tares are gathered and are burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." These same closing words are used a few verses afterwards, in explaining the parable of the net. Not to burden the attention of the reader, there is one passage more which I will quote in connection with the preceding, for the sake of briefly remarking upon them, before passing to the next topic.

The passage to which I refer is, "And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, 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 forever 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." [1]

If the Bible says that angels, at the last day, inflict on the wicked that which can best be compared only to casting them into a furnace of fire, I will implicitly believe it. My reason ascertains whether this is said, beyond reasonable doubt; then reason bows to revelation. I will not object that such employment does not consist with my conceptions of angelic natures. If I did, the question would be appropriate, Do you consent that a holy angel should have cut off the hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrians of Sennacherib's army in one night, and that another should have directed the pestilence of three days in Israel? What will you do about these things? You are disposed, perhaps, to associate angels with "birds and flowers," with elves and fairies, and not with garments rolled in blood, or hands reeking with slaughter. My reply is, I will correct my natural or acquired feelings by the word of God. But the word of God says that angels will cast "all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, into a furnace of fire." Inanimate things are not meant; for it is added, "there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Moreover, the word of God says that the idolatrous worshippers of the beast shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb.

My only question will be again, Does the Bible mean by

[1] Rev. xiv. 9–11.

this that men will be made to suffer in a way which is most appropriately expressed by fire and brimstone; that even if it be not literally so, there would really be nothing to choose between the two things, the figure and the literal meaning? And does it say that holy angels, and the Lamb of God himself, will look on, approve, and confirm the infliction? If so, I fully and firmly believe it; — be it figurative or literal, I believe it, and I will take it to be the same as literal. And I will postpone the explanation to my natural feelings, till I know more. I find that when men fully understand the enormities of some outrage upon a fellow-creature, and the soul is filled with them, the punishment, swift or slow, meets with no repugnance in their nature. Perhaps when I know more about sin and unbelief, it will be so with regard to future punishment. Only let me be persuaded that the language of the Bible, properly interpreted, declares any thing; then there is no appeal.

But I now respectfully ask the attention of the reader, when I say, that if I did not believe in there being a state of future punishment which justifies such language, I fear that I could not stop short of the boldest infidelity. I might even assail the Bible as unfit to be read. It is no relief to tell me that the language does not mean all which it would seem to convey. I should reply, This is bad language, unless there be something which language of this sort only can express. But if it be an exaggeration of a truth, or if, for the sake of impression, an idea is conveyed which is false, a man may as well apologize to me for a profane blasphemer, saying that his oaths do not really mean all which they express, as try to reconcile me to the belief that such words as these are inspired. It is not the *truth* which offends me, but the *untruthfulness* of the language. The words are not decorous; my moral sense is abused, when I read such expressions, unless

substantial truth requires them. The sin is not against my faith, but against my understanding. If there be nothing in holy angels, and in the Saviour, which corresponds to these representations, I should be tempted to go at once from the Bible to the teaching and preaching of some man who rejects the Bible, and rejects it partly because it uses such language. But where should I find such a preacher, who would not trouble me with the inconsistency of taking his text every Sabbath from the very book from which I seek to flee? So true is it that the stoutest unbeliever cannot shake off the hold which the Bible has upon his moral nature. Absolute scepticism seems to be as impossible as universal knowledge.

"Cast them into a furnace of fire," "in the presence of the holy angels," "and of the Lamb." Some tell me that this is "Oriental;" some that it is merely "flame-picture;" some that it is "mere hyperbole." Now, if a mere show of displeasure is signified by this language, the objection is, not to the punishment, but, that such inappropriate, such defamatory representations should be used in connection with the holy angels and the Lamb of God. If you will insist that the words are true, I have no objection to make. But the Bible does not observe the ordinary laws of decorum in language, unless truth would be violated by the use of other and milder terms than these, in describing the future infliction of punishment upon the wicked.

The following Scriptures, teaching that the wicked are in misery after death, confirm the foregoing statements: "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness." "The ungodly are like the chaff which the wind driveth away." "The men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before God exceedingly." "And the Lord rained fire and brimstone out of heaven, and destroyed them all." "The rich man died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment." "Judas

by transgression fell, and went to his own place." "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." "And where I am, thither ye cannot come."

He who will say that such men as are here described meet in death with a change of character which prepares them at once for happiness, may as well assert, once for all, that delusion is practised upon us by the representations of the Bible; that the object is merely to frighten the living; that apparent judgments upon the wicked, death and its terrors, are merely a dumb show, a tragic demonstration, a dissolving view turning, within the veil, into manifestations of compassion and love. There have not been wanting men, who, in their concern for the character of God, have interpreted his words of vengeance, and his terrible acts towards the wicked, in this manner — as though such deception were any relief from imputations of undue severity. Archbishop Tillotson ventured such an explanation, and President Edwards's ironical reproof of him and others, for betraying their Maker's secret, is well known. There are some even now who, like the sect of Manichees, seem to hold that all evil resides in matter, and therefore that in the separation of the soul from the body, the soul becomes pure. But the question before us is, What do the Scriptures teach? If there be any thing conclusive in positive statements, this is placed beyond all reasonable dispute — that some men die in their sins, and that after death they have in themselves the elements of misery. The rich man surely is an instance of this. Judas's "own place" was not heaven.

We have seen thus far that, while the Scriptures represent the wicked themselves to be an essential source of their own misery, future punishment necessarily implies infliction, or excitation, from a source beyond the sinner himself. Some opprobriously call this "the doctrine of endless torture." But

there is something more terrible here than "torture." If the sinner were made to feel constantly that he is in the hands of a torturer, many a passion of his nature might minister strength to his resistance, and impart fortitude. But to have his own self excited against him forever, so as to seem the proximate cause of his misery, is the more helpless woe. But however the sources of it may be combined, we have seen that the wicked are in misery after death. The question now is, Will their misery remain for ever? Do the Scriptures teach that the punishment of the wicked, made up as it necessarily is from the natural consequences of evil doing and positive inflictions from the hand of God, will be without end? The affirmative of this question I have undertaken to prove.

But it may be said, You undertake an impossible task, because you know nothing of futurity. Principles may yet be evolved which now are slumbering in the bosom of God. You must journey farther than man has gone before you can decide this subject. "Have the gates of death been opened to thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?"

The only question to be considered is, What do the Scriptures now teach as to the future condition of the wicked? Do they, or do they not, represent it as unalterable? If we can ascertain this, we need not perplex ourselves as to ulterior revelations; nor should we refuse to receive the present testimony of God, with the objection that something more may possibly be said hereafter. What, then, does the Bible teach us as to the state and prospects of the impenitent after death?

Let the reader now endeavor to lay out of the question all considerations relating to the reasonableness or justice of future, endless punishment. Let him not foreclose the discussion in his own mind by saying that it is unreasonable and unjust, and therefore that it cannot be in the Bible. Rather let him first ascertain whether it be taught there, and then, if he

will, let him debate with himself whether finding it there, he will, or will not, receive the Bible itself.

In considering whether the Scriptures teach that the punishment of the wicked will be without end, we will see if the following proposition can be maintained: —

II. Redemption by Christ is represented as having for its object salvation from final perdition.

If upon the failure of all which is done in redemption to save men, they are to be subjected to another probation after death, there are powerful reasons to think that the surest way to effect their recovery is, to let them know beforehand that God will give them a second trial.

For this is manifestly the way in which God proceeded with the Hebrew people, whose reformation in this world, and whose allegiance, he was seeking to secure. In foresight of their apostasy and punishment, they were told beforehand that they should have a second probation. The following words are an explicit declaration to this effect, and are an instance of divine wisdom which man would never have devised, from fear of consequences. After telling Israel of the happy fruit which would attend their obedience, and the direful effects of their apostasy, instead of leaving them in doubt whether they will have a second probation, God expressly tells them that they shall be again restored. "When thou art in tribulation and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice, (for the Lord thy God is a merciful God,) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto thee." [1]

It might have been argued with much plausibleness that such an announcement would be inexpedient; that it would

[1] Deut. iv. 30.

have a direct effect to make men careless and presumptuous. But infinite wisdom judged otherwise, and proceeded at different times to say, "If his children forsake my law then will I visit their transgressions with the rod; — nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him." And again: "If my covenant be not with day and night, then will I cast off the seed of Jacob; — for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy upon them." Again: "I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not forever."

What principle in moral natures is there which makes this announcement, to sinners, of future clemency and restoration, wise and expedient? The obvious answer is, Hope. Whether or not there can ever be repentance without hope, it is certain that hope is a powerful means of repentance. "How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger. I will arise and go to my father, and say unto him, Father, I have sinned —." The promise of a future trial, the explicit avowal of relenting in his displeasure, with a view to the final recovery of the transgressors, was deemed by the Most High to be essential in the exercise of his administration in ancient times. The admixture of hope in his threatenings, the line of light in the horizon below the coming tempest, was regarded by Jehovah as a necessary means of effecting the ultimate restoration of the Jews, so that, to this day, provision is made for hope to fasten its hand upon exceeding great and precious promises, the moment that the thought arises of turning to God. He would have the sinners think, in their deep distress under the chastising rod, that he would be found of them, if they returned and sought him, and that he made provision for hope even while the terrible blow was about to descend.

In offering pardon and salvation to men through the sufferings and death of Christ, and in setting forth the consequences

of neglecting so great salvation, if God does not intimate that, nevertheless, the wicked shall not be utterly cast off, surely it is not because it would be inconsistent with the principles of moral government thus to mingle hope with chastisement. We have seen that intimations of future mercy were made to men who were abusing the most signal acts of divine favor; and that to secure their future repentance, God judged it wise and prudent to prevent the ill effect which wrath and punishment might have upon them, by so ordering it that they should recollect amidst their punishment that even long before the moment of descending wrath, he remembered mercy, and that, accordingly, when about to cast them off, he said, "How shall I give thee up? — my heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together." And the anointed prophet said in his name, "He will return, he will have mercy upon us; and thou wilt cast their iniquities into the depths of the sea." All this, it will be remembered, was not a sudden relenting; it was part of a plan announced so long beforehand as to give evidence of special design.

We, therefore, say, that if no such foretokens of far distant mercy and forgiveness are now made to those who reject Christ, it cannot properly be argued that it would be unsuitable, and that wisdom and prudence forbid. On the contrary, such promises would be in accordance with those former dealings of God with men in which he has manifested the most peculiar love for transgressors. It would be analogous to his former conduct should he intimate, in immediate connection with his threatenings, that if we neglect our present opportunity and means of salvation, and subject ourselves necessarily to a long and fearful discipline of sorrow, nevertheless the time will come when he will return and be pacified towards us for all which we have done. If no such intimations are given, we have strong presumptive evidence that it is because the condition of the wicked at death is final.

For, as we read the threatenings against Edom, and Babylon, and Egypt, and Tyre, we find no words of promise mingled with the predictions of their doom. Probation for them is past; hence, when God is declaring his vengeance against them, not one word is uttered which, in the hour of their downfall, would come to their memories as a ray of hope. The utter ruin and desolation of those kingdoms show the reason for withholding every promise of future mercy; it was intended that their destruction should be final.

But it may be said, Is God under any obligation to disclose all his future purposes with regard to the wicked? Surely not; but certainly he will not deceive us; he is not obliged to tell us any thing; but if he tells us a part, he will not make false impressions.

But some will say, It may now be wise in God to vary his plan, and suffer the wicked to "depart" with the full expectation that their doom is forever; and then he may interpose and save them. Who will deny that this is possible?

It is evidently the object of the gospel to save men here from their sins, and to rescue them from future misery, limited or endless. Is it honest, or, would it not be like "false pretences," to make the impression that there is to be no further probation after death, if the idea is utterly inconsistent with the character of God? We know what is thought of one who offers his wares as positively the last, and then produces more. The question is simply this: Would God seek to save men by making them think that this is their only chance of pardon, when he knows that it is not to be the last? But if God intended that we should believe this to be the last, who among the sons of the mighty is entitled to the merit of having undeceived us? It is impiety to assert that there is a future probation, against the plain declarations of the Bible, if such declarations are made.

Now let us examine the inspired record. At the very close of the Bible, we read, "He that is unjust let him be unjust still, and he that is filthy let him be filthy still, and he that is righteous let him be righteous still, and he that is holy, let him be holy still." As the "unjust" and "filthy" never could be directed to refrain, in this world, from efforts to become good, (unless their day of grace were past,) these words are obviously a declaration that character is unchangeable after death. In faithful consistency even to the last with the great distinguishing feature of the Christian religion, viz., regard for the individual, the closing words of the Bible have reference to each accountable member of the human family: "And behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be." Here is the place where we should look for intimations, if any could be made, of future probation. Here is the promontory which runs down to the unfathomable main, looks forth on "that ocean we must sail so soon;" and as it terminates all earthly efforts after salvation, does it give us one hint about some future method of recovery? Are there signals prepared on this cape and headland, indicating to the eye of despair, afar off, that the cross of Christ holds out proposals of reconciliation still, to those who trampled it under foot, on their way to eternity? On the contrary, every thing makes the impression on the vast majority of readers ever since these words were written, that the results of life are to be final. No hopeful class of probationers are represented as "without," when the righteous have entered through the gates into the city. All the sublime images in the last chapters of this book, come thronging down to that shore where inspiration lays aside its pen and looks towards the shoreless waste beyond time. It has been said that the Old Testament ends with a curse. This is a mistake. It ends with a promise of turning the hearts of fathers and children, to avert

a curse. But no prediction of any turning of hearts in eternity occurs at the close of that book which gives us the last information respecting the future. Its silence is as impressive as its few decisive words.

We can imagine how Christ would have drawn the picture of retribution had he followed the Old Testament, in doing so, in its hopeful and prophetic intermingling of light with the darkness. Making the prospect terrific, at first, beyond all human power of description, to enforce the duty of immediate repentance, and to deter from sin, then, appealing to our sense of propriety, our magnanimity, our shame, he would have told us how in the future, more or less remote, God would visit his erring and perverse children with his remonstrances; how he himself would weep over them and repeat the offers of pardon; and in view of all this we can imagine how he would expostulate. Such a procedure would accord with the principles of human nature and of the divine government, as illustrated in the history of Israel. Is the Saviour less compassionate and ready to forgive than the God of the Old Testament? — for we see God listening to catch the first sigh of repentance; and when he hears it, he proclaims, "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus: Thou hast chastised me and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; turn thou me and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God." Not one word like this do we hear from the lips of him who was the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person. Where is prophecy, with her glowing tongue, foretelling, at the hour of captivity, the sinner's final return? The opening of hell, and the final release of Satan and his angels, and of wicked men, would have been an anticipation sublime beyond most other visions; and, if allowable, it could not have failed to excite the imagination of seers and prophets. But where are the Isaiahs, stretching their vis-

ion beyond time and the captivity of hell, saying, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to the cursed, and say unto them that their warfare is accomplished, that their iniquity is pardoned; for they have received of the Lord's hand double for all their sins." Can it be that not even from you, beloved John, is there a vision or a word of hope for sinners after death? You saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, the books opened, and another book, which is the book of life. You saw the judgment, and the doom; the lake of fire was first prepared by casting death and hell into it, and when all was ready, whosoever was not found written in the book of life, you saw him cast into the lake of fire. No syllable of mercy? No visit from the angel that talked with thee, saying, Come up hither, to see, from a higher point, beyond that lake? Have you no yearning look? — not even one slightly musical dark saying upon the harp, to keep us from suspecting that God can ever be implacable? In the Old Testament he relents and repents. "His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel." "How shall I make thee as Admah! How shall I set thee as Zeboim! My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together." Is that Old Testament, which is represented by scoffers as "cruel," "sanguinary," "vindictive," actually more merciful in its expressions towards rebellious Israel than the New Testament is towards men who died in their sins?

How strange that He, who wept over Jerusalem, could say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," and let fall no expressions of com miseration or word of hope, nor leave some elliptical "notwith standing," — an unfinished sentence, a place with asterisks, a chance even for a guess that all would not be forever deter mined for the wicked, at the last day.

Mark the altered language, the different tone and manner

of the Saviour towards the wicked in the other world, compared with his words and behavior towards our sinful race when he was on earth. "The master of the house has risen up, and shut to the door." They knock; he says, "I tell you I know you not, whence ye are. Depart from me." The direction is, "Bind him, hand and foot." They "cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion," not with candidates for heaven under discipline, but "with the hypocrites." He is "thrust out." Christ uses the expressions, "lose his soul;" "be cast away;" "salted with fire;" "grind him to powder;" "son of perdition;" "slay them before me;" "seek me and not find me;" "gather the good, and cast the bad away;" "great gulf fixed;" "die in your sins;" "where I am ye cannot come." In various parts of the Bible we meet with phrases of the like tenor, — such as "wrath to come;" "shame and everlasting contempt;" "torment us before the time;" "reap corruption;" "wages of sin is death;" "more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment;" "mist of darkness forever and ever." Indeed, these incidental expressions, interwoven every where throughout the Bible, assume that the doctrine of future, endless punishment for sin is a matter of course. The common mode of referring to the future, implies it. "Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke;" "then a great ransom will not deliver thee." "I will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh." The numerous passages of this tenor do not suggest any idea of future clemency.

Paul thus declares the end of the wicked: "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that knew not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe,

for our testimony among you was believed, in that day." That this does not apply to the destruction of Jerusalem, as the Papists and some Protestants would have us think, appears from the next chapter, in which the Thessalonians are told that "that day" is not "at hand," because the "man of sin" was first to be revealed.

Then Peter follows him, and says, "But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."

Thus, while the Bible satisfies us that the redemption made by Christ is a final effort to save men, we do not wonder that those who reject the Godhead of Christ and his sacrifice for sin, reject also the idea of endless punishment. There is no adequate necessity for a divine Saviour with his vicarious sacrifice, if there be no such penalty annexed to the law of God. Every man is then his own redeemer, either by obedience or by suffering.

But the evangelical believer looks into the manger and upon the cross, and sees there his God incarnate. He sees, in that Christ, a sacrifice for his sins. The world laugh him to scorn. They demand whether he believes that his God is dying; and every form of intellectual ridicule is poured upon him. He steadfastly maintains that "the Word was God," that "the Word was made flesh," that this incarnate Word was on the cross, "a ransom for many," "a propitiation through faith in his blood," his sufferings a substitute for the sinner's punishment. The believer looks to find some necessity for such an incarnation, and for the sacrificial death of such a being. He cannot find it in the need of example, moral suasion, or representation of the divine interest in him; but, in the declaration that Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, he sees the appropriateness of the incarnation to give a divine worth and efficacy

to sufferings which are to atone for sin. There is no revelation to be compared with this: "God was manifest in the flesh," and, he "was manifested to take away our sins." By all the methods of imagery, symbolism, predictions, and most minute, pathetic delineations of his coming, his life, death, and resurrection, by appeals from his own lips, and those of men "in Christ's stead;" by that perpetual memorial of him, and of his sacrifice, the Lord's supper, men are admonished, and, "as though God did beseech them," urged to accept pardon through this infinite provision made for the forgiveness of sin. This produces the effect, generally, upon the mind, of a last effort.

It might have been supposed that the work of Christ would suffice for the present dispensation, and that men rejecting or neglecting it would, in a future state, be approached by those influences which belong peculiarly to the work of the third person in the Godhead. But Christ said, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for, if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." Something more than ordinary divine influence is meant here by the Comforter; for the Saviour's being in the world would not of course keep *divine influence* out of it, or prevent the disciples from receiving comfort in God. A special divine agency is here recognized, and, by all the laws of language, a special, divine, personal agent. His object is to reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. All which is implied in the idea of moral omnipotence is thus made to bear upon the hearts and minds of men, to effect their reconciliation to God, through Christ.

Resistance to these efforts in a certain way, it is declared, shall have the effect, however long a time before death it may

be made, to consign the sinner to hopeless condemnation; for "whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

It does not seem easy to explain how any one who "hath never forgiveness," "neither in this world, neither in the world to come," is to be saved; nor by what moral distinctions it can be made to appear that some who commit one particular sin are justly condemned to a hopeless, unforgiven state, and that all the rest of mankind are to be restored. The work of the Holy Spirit, and the unpardonable sin against him, convince us that the effort of mercy to save men ends with life. Such words as these from Christ, "hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation," admit of no appeal.

In this connection let it be observed that evangelical Christians regard the work of the Holy Spirit as of equal importance with the death of Christ, and as essential a part of the work of redemption. It is from sin that we are to be redeemed; it is to holiness that we are to be restored; hell and heaven are a consummation, respectively, of sin and holiness. But we notice that those who reject the idea of future punishment dwell much on sin and holiness as being the sole objects of redemption, irrespective of the future state to which they lead. Olshausen says, "The Scriptures know no such pretended divestment of all egoism, that man needs as motives neither fear nor hope, whether of damnation or eternal happiness; — and rightly; for it (i. e. this notion) exhibits itself either as fanatical error, as in Madame Guyon, or, which is doubtless most common, as indifference and torpidity."[1] However some may regard it as a narrow and selfish thing to make so much, as evangelical Christians do, of "salvation" and "safety," we find that the New Testament sets us the

[1] Commentary, v. 302.

example. Its chief burden is holiness, likeness to God; but it appeals to our love of happiness and dread of pain; sentimental philosophy would substitute for these instincts a perception of the "good, the beautiful, and the true;" the gospel insists on these, but the way to reach them is through the natural constitution which God has given us. Inspiration does not disdain to say, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." "We shall be saved from wrath through him." "Who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us." "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" The attempt to show that all this is unworthy of our "noble aspirations," is only professing to be wise; but "the foolishness of God is wiser than men." The work of the Holy Spirit in applying the redemption by Christ to the souls of men has for its object not only to save them from sin, but from its "wages," which "is death."

All having failed, and men going from under the concentrated influences of redeeming mercy into a future state, if then the God who has provided such a plan of redemption, is to meet them, and, rather than have them perish, abandon all his terms, and admit them to heaven upon their own conditions, rather than see them suffer; if he who became flesh and died for them, will then consent that punishment shall try to effect that which love and earthly discipline, together, failed to accomplish, and punishment proves to be the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation, and sinners will therefore have more powerful means of grace in hell than under the gospel, we, for our part, need another revelation to inform us of it, and then to explain its consistency with our present Bible.

III. THE FALL OF ANGELS, AND OF MAN, IS A CONFIRMATORY PROOF OF FUTURE ENDLESS RETRIBUTION.

This will of course have weight only with those who believe in the existence and fall of angels, and in the fall of man. To prove either of these here, would be out of place; and, indeed, the necessity of proving them would show that every thing which has thus far been said in this article is superfluous, because it takes for granted many things generally believed, which rest, however, on the same kind of evidence with the existence of angels and their fall. The apostles, the scribes and Pharisees, I have not thought it necessary to prove had a real existence, and that they were not merely personified principles of good and evil. If the reader be one who rejects the doctrine of fallen angels, and of the fall of man, he will read what is here said merely as showing the way in which those who believe these things are confirmed, by them, in their belief of endless retribution. Peter says, "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."[1] Jude says, "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."[2]

If God did not keep angels from falling, we are not constrained to think that he will restore them. If he will hereafter reinstate them by a direct act of power, the same power could have kept them from falling, with no greater interference with their free agency. If he allowed them to fall with a view to some great good in their natures, suffering them, in the progress of their experience, to ruin this world, and bring in such a fearful plague as sin has been to our race, all to be compensated for in the great sweep of ages by this

[1] 2 Peter ii. 4. [2] Jude 6.

beneficial knowledge of evil, we are led to the conclusion that sin and suffering are the necessary means of the greatest good. But what manner of Supreme Being have we here for a Universalist to love and worship? His government, it would seem, cannot proceed without suffering a host of angels, falling from their thrones in heaven, to pass through centuries of sin and mischief. This seems neither benevolent nor wise.

In the exercise of their liberty we are told that angels kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, and that God hath reserved them in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. If they are finally to be restored, God will restore them, or they will come back of themselves. If God foresaw that he must finally restore them, he would have kept them from falling, unless sin and misery are, under his government, the means of the greatest good. If so, this may be one of the cases in which if a little is good, more is better; and perhaps the best interests of the universe will be promoted by protracting this sin and suffering indefinitely.

It is a wholly gratuitous assumption that fallen angels and men will at last, of their own accord, repent. Who has travelled so far as to know this? What reason have we to think that hell will finally convince and persuade men? All our present knowledge respecting it contradicts this expectation. Satan and his angels have tried its redeeming power, if it has any, for at least six thousand years. We see no premises, therefore, on which to base the assertion that men will at last universally repent. It does not appear that being in torment, even, will have any better effect, forever, on men, than it seems to have had on "the rich man," whose only prayer to Abraham was for mitigation of pain, and for a warning to be sent to his brethren. He seems to think that if one went to them from the dead, they would repent. Why had he not repented

himself, among the dead? Surely the very experience of hell itself must be a more powerful means of good than a mere apparition. But as suffering had not made him penitent, it must be that it has no such effect after death. Hell seems a very cruel means of effecting the reformation of sinners, when we think that, if employed for this purpose through such great periods of punishment, it will be employed by Him who so easily converted Saul of Tarsus, and the woman that was a sinner, and Zaccheus, and the thief on the cross. This is, to my own mind, one of the insuperable objections to the theory of future disciplinary punishment. I can readily yield my assent to the declaration that "he that believeth not the Son shall not see life;" it does no violence to my understanding that those who refuse salvation by Christ, when notified that their refusal will be fatal, should reap forever that which they sowed, and continue hereafter to sow that which they reap, and thus without end. I read this in the Bible. I have no controversy with it. But that a human soul should need ages in hell, with Satan and his angels, to be made contrite, is as contrary to all analogy as it is destitute of scriptural proof. Besides, if God does all in this world which he can do without destroying free agency, to convert certain men, it is difficult to see how the use of superior power in hell can fail to destroy it utterly. If God does not use all proper means here to save men, how is he infinitely merciful? But if here he goes to the very boundaries of their free agency, which, it is said, he never passes over, and yet fails to subdue them, it is gratuitous to say that he will certainly succeed any better hereafter.

How much longer than these six thousand years past, angels are to suffer, we cannot tell; but the consignment of wicked men at the last day to such company as that of "the devil and his angels," looks fearfully unlike a remedial measure for angel or man.

The last sentence is utterly inconsistent with any expectation, or intention, on the part of Christ, that those on whom it is pronounced will return. Otherwise, he would not have pronounced them cursed. Probationers are not accursed. They are prisoners of hope. Every thing in the last words of Christ to the wicked is as final as language can make it.

But if the wicked are to be punished until they repent, we say, punishment thus far has not reformed the original inhabitants of hell. It is incumbent on those who advocate final restoration on this ground, to prove that punishment will at last have a restorative power, or they must show how long the wicked must sin and suffer to make it wrong to punish them any more, even if they continue to sin.

IV. THE TERMS USED WITH REGARD TO THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, ARE PROOFS OF ENDLESS RETRIBUTION.

In the "Child's Catechism," by Rev. O. A. Skinner, I find the following: —[1]

"Q. Will sin exist in the resurrection?

"A. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.[2]

"Q. What does the Saviour say respecting our condition when raised?

"A. Neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being children of the resurrection."[3]

Here, it will be seen, it is assumed that Christ refers to all the dead, and that all, when they are raised, will be the children of God. This, it is understood, is the prevailing belief of Universalists.

[1] Page 24. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 50. [3] Mark xii. 25.

We read that "no Scripture is of any private interpretation;" in other words, that the meaning must be ascertained by comparing the Scriptures one with another. The parallel passage in Luke reads, "But they that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." [1]

Our esteemed friend, Mr. Skinner, it seems to me, is led into a mistake by regarding the expression, "children of the resurrection," as meaning all who have part in the resurrection; and since Jesus declares "the children of the resurrection" to be synonymous with "children of God," Mr. S. naturally concludes that all who rise from the dead will be the children of God.

Now, allowing me, for the sake of the argument, that the wicked are raised from the dead in their sins, they are not, in the scriptural sense, "children of the resurrection." Rising from the dead does not make us "children of the resurrection." Being the offspring of God does not make us the "children of God;" the wicked would not "come forth to everlasting life," though coming forth to live forever. The term "children of the resurrection," connects with itself the further idea of being qualified for heaven, — "counted worthy to obtain that world." This is confirmed, it seems to me, beyond all question, by one word of the apostle Paul, "I count all things but loss, &c., *if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.*" [2] If, on being raised from the dead, all men are to be fit for heaven, Paul need not have used such "means" to "attain" to it, nor, indeed, any "means" whatever; for he was sure to be raised, like the rest of man-

[1] Luke xx. 35, 36. [2] Phil. iii. 8-11.

kind. Adopt the interpretation just given, viz., that to be accounted worthy to obtain the resurrection from the dead includes the idea of a distinguishing fitness for heaven, body and soul reunited, and we can see why Paul should say he was willing to count all things but loss to attain unto it, — rising from the dead with his perfected nature, body and soul being, in his view, the consummation of preparedness, in every respect, for heaven. If such be Paul's meaning of "attaining unto the resurrection of the dead," the wicked, in their sins, though raised from the dead, do not attain unto the resurrection, and they are not, therefore, in the Saviour's sense, "children of the resurrection."

The Sadducees had said, "Whose wife shall she be in the resurrection?" I will paraphrase the reply of Christ according to my interpretation of his words: "It is, of course, no use for me to answer your question on the supposition that the woman and her seven husbands are not among the saved. They that have done evil 'shall come forth,' as I once said, 'to the resurrection of damnation.' Conjugal relationships among them, or any thing relating to happiness, are not supposable. Your inquiry, therefore, relates, of course, to those who are supposed to be in a condition to admit of friendly and loving relationships. As to them, I say, that being accounted worthy to obtain that world, and afterwards such a resurrection as is worthy of the name, they stand in no need of earthly joys, and as they die no more, the necessity for reproduction ceases; they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being in distinction from the rest of the risen dead, 'children of the resurrection.'"

This meaning of the phrase is also illustrated by the expression, "children of this world." Good people are, in one sense, "children of this world," equally with the bad; that is, they are *natives* of this world; and yet we read, "*the*

children of this world are wiser in their generation than *the children of light.*"

Thus, the good only are "children of the resurrection," though all are raised, as the wicked only are "children of this world," though bad and good live here together.

Paul said before Felix, and declared that the Jews "themselves also allow" it, (for the Sadducees were small in number, though high in rank and power,) "*that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.*"[1]

The idea advanced by Mr. Skinner and others, that all who are raised from the dead are children of God, grows, therefore, out of his mistake, as I view it, in interpreting the expression "children of the resurrection" to mean all the risen dead. Enough has been said in explanation of the opposite, and, as we believe, the more scriptural sense of the phrase. It seems to us unaccountable that any should adopt the idea that all who are raised from the dead will be the children of God, if they have ever read the parables of Christ in Matt. xiii. How does he there say it shall be in the end of the world? "So shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire, there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." The same words are repeated at the close of the parable of the net. Surely there will be some of the risen dead who will not be "children of the resurrection," because they will not be the "children of God."

I proceed now to the argument to be derived from the declarations of Christ in connection with the resurrection. Christ said, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." This he said to illustrate his commission to bestow

[1] Acts xxiv. 15.

spiritnal life on those who are dead in sin. Then he proceeds at once to assert a power in confirmation of this, in the way of miracle. "Marvel not at this" — (at my power to regenerate the soul), "for the hour is coming" (notice that he does not here add — "and now is") "when all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation."

"All that are in their graves" includes all who die, from Abel to the last victim of death and the grave. "They that have done evil," of course, then, are there. Now, it appears that they who have done evil will not have atoned, in the intermediate state, for the deeds done in the body, because the Saviour says they will come forth "to the resurrection of damnation." But some of them will have been for a very long time in the separate state. Wherever the rich man went at death, he was "in torment;" there were men before his day, and there have been men since his time, who were as wicked as he. But can sin be punished "in torment" so long? Peter tells us that there were "spirits" in his day "in prison," to whom Christ preached by the Spirit in the days of Noah, — that is at least three thousand years before. That is a long time for sin to be punished, or even for a sinner to be detained, under the government of a good God. Now, these are yet to "come forth unto the resurrection of damnation." If sin can be so punished by the Infinite Father, and if bodies are to be added to these souls, notwithstanding this already protracted experience of misery, and if they, body and soul, are at the last day to be doomed to "fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," on what principles can all this be explained? Does sin merit such punishment, as the Bible declares has already been inflicted? 'Would an earthly parent punish thus?' Is there not enough, in this ascertained infliction of punishment for sin,

to destroy all confidence in the government of God, unless sin deserves it all? And if it deserves all this, we know not how much more it may deserve.

It will be observed, in addition, that Christ does not tell us, *they that have done evil, but by the power of discipline, shall have repented*, shall come forth to the resurrection of life, and the incorrigible *to the resurrection of a further discipline.* How is this? Has not the long interval between death and the resurrection resulted in the salvation of any? Strange that some of the more hopeful of the wicked should not have availed themselves of the opportunity between death and the judgment, to confess and repent.

It is contrary to all analogy that it should be necessary to punish men so long before they repent. On the deck, or in the rigging, of a burning vessel at sea, when death is absolutely certain, it is to be presumed that it does not take a wicked man very long to decide with what feelings he will meet his God. When the soul, after death, finds itself on the way to hell, can we suppose that an opportunity to escape, by repentance, if it were offered, would be rejected? If the only object of God is to reclaim the sinner, he will release him the first moment that he repents. It is so in this world. "And when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." If the soul, at the sight of its punishment, relents and agrees to the terms of pardon, does a Universalist believe that God will say, "No; you must suffer in hell for your sins, even though you have now repented"? Would an earthly father inflict punishment in such a case? But the Bible represents the wicked to have been in hell from the time of their death till the resurrection, and at the resurrection they must yet come forth "to the resurrection of damnation." It is incredible that so much time and so much suffering should

be necessary to make sinners repent. Either they repent, and God still continues to punish them "ages on ages;" or they do not repent between death and the resurrection, nor at the judgment seat of Christ, nor in the immediate prospect of going away to the society and the punishment of the devil and his angels. If a soul which is finally to be reclaimed, can pass through such experience and not repent, it requires larger hope and faith than is common to men to expect that future punishment can be a means of salvation.

That the guilt of a finite creature, man or angel, should merit thousands of years in hell, or that thousands of years should be requisite to bring him to his right mind, no more accords with our natural feelings, nor with what we call "reason," than does the idea of endless punishment. But if the Bible conveys any thing intelligibly to our understanding, it teaches that angels and men have been subjected to punishment for a longer period than is "reasonable" for mere discipline.

Surely, the end of future punishment cannot be merely the recovery of the sinner. Were it so, moreover, it would follow that sin injures no one but the sinner himself. It violates no duties towards God, no interests of fellow-creatures. But the law of God refutes this; the threatenings against those who cause others to fall, and the frequent punishment of men who made others to sin, prove that the punishment of the sinner will have some other end than his reformation.

It being frequently argued that the sins of a finite creature cannot be punished forever, because a finite creature cannot merit infinite punishment, it will be enough to meet this, in passing, with a single remark, viz.: That, if this be so, then, even if the whole universe should sin forever, the whole universe cannot be punished forever, because the whole universe, after all, is but finite.

V. THE SCRIPTURES TEACH THAT THE LAW OF GOD HAS A CURSE: — WHICH IT HAS NOT, IF FUTURE PUNISHMENT BE DISCIPLINARY.

The punishment, however long and severe, which shall result in restoring a soul to holiness and an endless heaven, under the kind and faithful administration of its heavenly Father, it would be unsuitable to call "a curse." The theory of Restorationists is, that mercy, having failed to recover sinners in this world, will go on hereafter, in the same direction, with more vigorous methods, till it succeeds, — the same undying, unfaltering love pursuing the wanderer, which here never ceased to plead. Hereafter it will mingle stronger ingredients, and cure the disease of sin. What "curse" there is in such loving kindness, it is hard to see. In this world we experience just this treatment, —

> "Afflictions sorted, anguish of all sizes,
> Fine nets and stratagems to catch us in;"

and sometimes all the waves and billows go over us. Men are stripped of property, family, health, reputation, and finally they turn to the hand that smites them, grateful that God did not spare the rod for their crying; and they testify that through the loss of all things they have gained eternal bliss. Do they call their afflictions their "curse"? Have they suffered "the curse of the law"? All the ordinary medicines having failed, the physician brings some extreme remedy and saves the patient. Was that a "curse"? He amputates the limb, and thus prolongs a precious life. Did he "curse" the man, in doing so? We must, therefore, expunge large parts of the Bible, if future punishment be only a wholesome discipline. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." No, he has only redeemed us from a further dispensation of infinite mercy, if punishment be only

for discipline; indeed, he prevents the bestowment of a greater proof of love than he himself gave us in dying on the cross; for if, after all his love for us, he will persist in disciplining us in hell, willing to see us suffer that he may finally save us, "herein is love." The cross is not the climax of his love, but the lake of fire. How it is in any sense a curse, we fail to see. Christians here never look upon the means of sanctification as "the curse of the law." The sinner who by the severest discipline is brought to Christ, feels that he thereby escapes "the curse of the law." But we cannot find that curse, neither here nor hereafter, unless there be punishment which is not intended for the recovery of the sinner.

VI. THE SENTENCE PASSED UPON THE WICKED INDISCRIMINATELY, FORBIDS THE IDEA OF DISCIPLINE IN FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

Among the impenitent at death and in eternity, there is, of course, great variety of character. If the object of future punishment be to reclaim them, the wise and considerate methods of earthly discipline seem to be utterly discarded after death. We hardly need to be reminded how indiscriminate are the threatenings which are said to be inflicted on the wicked. The last sentence evidently regards none of them as probationers; there is no forbearance in it towards the more hopeful; they are all addressed as "ye cursed." We are considering the testimony of the Scriptures. What evidence do they afford of any discrimination in the treatment of the finally impenitent, notwithstanding the vast variety which must exist among them? I answer, Not any. But the following passages, among others, teach plainly that the doom of the wicked will be indiscriminate, without regard to hopeful diversities of character.

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened, and another book was opened,

which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the book, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works." Then follows this declaration: "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." Some say, death and hell are annihilated. But this is not the idea intended, unless the wicked also are then to be annihilated; for the next verse, concluding the subject, says, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." The obvious meaning is, Death and hell, whatever they represent, will then be added to the lake of fire, whatever that is, as new ingredients, and to constitute "the second death," and as a final gathering together of all the elements of sorrow and pain, with all the wicked, into one place. With this passage agree the words of Daniel: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." The parables of Christ relating to the end of the world recognize only two great divisions of men at the last day. Wheat and tares only are to be in the "field;" good and bad only, in the "net." The wheat is saved, the tares are burned; "the good" in the net are gathered into vessels; "the bad" are none of them dismissed for amendment, or growth, but are "cast away." And Christ tells us that every human being will stand at his right hand, or left hand, "blessed," or "cursed."

Now, when we call to mind the justice of God, and reflect that undue severity, or the laying on man more than is meet, would alienate the confidence of the good from the Most High, and when we consider the declaration of Christ, that sins of ignorance shall receive but "few stripes," and we still perceive

that the human race are evidently to fall at last into two divisions, which will include the whole, with their countless diversities and degrees as to character in each division, we infer that no provision is made for a more hopeful class to enjoy a further trial. All upon the left hand are doomed alike. If there is to be a new probation after death, the Bible surely does not teach it.

VII. The duration of future punishment is expressed in the New Testament by the terms employed to denote absolute eternity.

There is, we all admit, such a thing as *forever*. If the Bible speaks of the natural attributes of God, his eternity is of course brought to view, and there must be a term, or terms, to convey the idea.

Now it is apparent to all, that the words *eternal*, *everlasting*, *forever*, never of themselves signify a limited duration. No one ever learns *from these words* that the duration to which they refer is less than infinite. The idea of limitation, if it be obtained, always is derived from the context.

It is moreover true, beyond the possibility of dispute, that the words *eternal*, *everlasting*, and *forever*, always mean *the whole* of something. There is no instance in which they are used to denote a part of a thing's duration. It is always the entire period for which that thing is to last. This no one will call in question.

It is well understood that the words "forever," and "everlasting," are used to express a duration commensurate with the nature of the thing spoken of. "Everlasting mountains," are coeval with creation, and are to endure as long as the earth. "A servant forever," is a servant for life. We cannot take the sense which the word has in connection with a certain thing, and by it prove or disprove any thing relating

to a totally different thing. We cannot prove, for example, that mountains will not last to the end of time, because *forever*, applied to a servant, means only *for life*. We must consider the nature of the object to which the word is applied. When it is applied to the Most High, of course it means unlimited duration. Now the words which convey the idea of absolute eternity are applied, for example, to mountains, and to future punishment, and to the being and government of God. This, then, is certain: Because *forever*, when applied to some things, does not mean absolute eternity, it does not follow that it does not mean eternity when applied to future retribution. If it were so, we could not convey the idea of the eternity of God; for it could be said that *forever* is sometimes applied to a limited duration. That is true; now if this proves that future punishment is not forever, it must also prove that the being of God is not forever.

Two things are beyond dispute: 1. *Forever* and *everlasting* are applied to future retributions. 2. These terms always mean *the whole*, as to duration, of that with which they stand connected. If applied to life, it is the whole of life; if to the existence of the world, it is the entire period of its existence; if to a covenant, the covenant is either without limit as to time, or it is the whole of the duration which the subject permits; and when applied to Jehovah, it refers to his whole eternity.

What, then, does it mean, when applied to future retribution? It always means *the whole* of something. Is it the whole of future existence? No one can base a denial of it on the ground that the word, when applied to human life, means only a few years, or a limited duration when applied to the earth. For, how is it when applied to God and the happiness of heaven? It is certainly the place of any who deny endless retributions, to show that the words cannot mean *the*

whole of future existence when applied to punishment. The words mean the whole of future existence when applied, by the use of the same Greek words in the same passages, to the happiness of the righteous. The objector must show that when applied to the future life, they mean only a part of it, notwithstanding they always mean *the whole* of every thing else with which they stand connected.

Such are some of the considerations, drawn from the word of God, which satisfy my own mind that retributions after death are without end. Mr. Foster speaks of it as "the general, not very far short of universal, judgment of divines." Such multitudes of the best of men and women are still firmly persuaded of its truth, that we are led to say, there must be a foundation for it in the word of God, — and for this reason: If mankind could have divested themselves of the conviction that it is not found in the word of God, it is reasonable to think that it would long since have been discarded. Nay, rather who would have invented such a doctrine? Good men would not have palmed it upon the world, for more reasons than one. Besides, many an error has been exploded; it is unaccountable, if this be error, that it should have kept its hold upon the human mind. No Protestant, it would seem, would quote a belief in purgatory as a parallel case. We have no coercion, nor any kind of motive to bias our minds towards this article of faith. We use no terms on this subject, — certainly we approve of none, which are not derived from the Bible. We are not superstitious, nor fanatical, nor priest-ridden, nor cruel; and we think we have far more exalted reasons for believing in the infinite love of God than any have who do not see it, as we do, in the atoning cross. However good and amiable the opposers of this doctrine may be, they will not assume that they are more humane, more pitiful,

more gentle, more the friends of God and man, than those who believe it. In view of the hold which it has on the minds of men, it would be so great a marvel that the doctrine should not be found in the Scriptures, that nothing could be more astounding, not even the fearful truth itself.

And that it may be seen, further, how we are confirmed in our persuasion that we read the Bible aright, I refer not only, as above, to the convictions of believers that the doctrine is scriptural, but to the positive statements of some who have rejected it.

Mr. Foster tells us, "And the language of Scripture is formidably strong, — so strong that it must be an argument of extreme cogency that would authorize a limited interpretation."

Dr. Thomas Burnett, an English divine, writing in favor of final restoration, says, "Human nature revolts from the very name of future punishment. But the sacred Scriptures seem to be on the other side." [1]

One effect of the recent discussion of this subject in this city has been to elicit from a distinguished advocate of final restoration, the following statement: —

"And yet I freely say that I do not find the doctrine of the ultimate salvation of all souls clearly stated in any text or in any discourse that has ever been reported from the lips of Christ. I do not think that we can fairly maintain that the final restoration of all men is a prominent and explicit doctrine of the four gospels." [2]

To this, I am able to add the explicit testimony of Rev. Theodore Parker. Wishing to verify a quotation which a

[1] "Natura humana abhorret ab ipso nomine pœnarum æternarum. At Scriptura sacra a partibus contrariis stare videtur." —*De Statu Mort. et Re surg.*, p. 228, 2d ed.

[2] Rev. T. S. King's Two Discourses, p. 5.

friend had tried in vain to find for me in one of Mr. Parker's volumes, I addressed a note to Mr. P., asking him to give me the reference. The following polite and obliging answer will speak for itself. All the Italics are Mr. P.'s.

"Boston, Dec. 1, 1858.

"Rev. Dr. Adams,

"Dear Sir, — I am ill now, and cannot recollect that the passage you refer to occurs in any of my volumes; yet it might, in several. I am sure it does in some *printed sermons* — pamphlets, but cannot now say which. I will try to find the passage.

"*To me it is quite clear that Jesus taught the doctrine of eternal damnation*, if the Evangelists — the first three I mean, — are to be treated as inspired. I can understand his language in no other way. But as the Protestant sects start with the notion — which to me is a monstrous one — that the words of the New Testament are all miraculously inspired by God, and so infallibly true; and as this doctrine of eternal damnation is so revolting to all the humane and moral feelings of our nature, men said 'the words must be interpreted in another way.' So as the Unitarians have misinterpreted the New Testament to prove that the *Christos* of the fourth gospel had no preëxistence, the Universalists misinterpreted other passages of the gospels to show that Jesus of Nazareth never taught eternal damnation. So the geologists misinterpret Genesis to-day — to save the divine infallible character of the text.

"Yours truly, Theodore Parker."

It was but fair to let Mr. P. state his whole belief on this subject. Thus, in his view, if the Evangelists are to be believed, Christ taught that future retributions are to be endless.

There is nothing to be surprised at in this; but it will be seen that it is not without good reason that those who receive the Bible implicitly as the word of God have so generally believed in endless retribution as a doctrine of Scripture.

The question then arises, whether our human instincts, or divine revelation, whether man the sinner, or God the sovereign, shall dictate the penalty of sin? Mr. Foster, seeking relief to his mind from the terrible idea of endless sin and misery, says of the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked, "It would be a prodigious relief." Some one respectfully replies to him that "the divine government is not for the relief of the imagination, but for the relief of the universe."

The question is often asked, How, allowing endless retribution to be a scriptural doctrine, can you have peace of mind in your belief?

I answer, We believe that no one will perish who does not reject the Saviour of the world; or, if he be a heathen, does not sin against light and conviction sufficient to save him.

It has an effect to quiet our minds when we reflect that our thoughts and feelings at the loss of the soul were surpassed in Him whose soul for us was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. Tears were shed by him over sinners — "God hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." If the thought of endless retribution is so terrible to us who know so little about it, we are constrained to think that there was never any sorrow like unto the sorrow of him, who loved us and gave himself for us, when he sees that he must, nevertheless, pronounce upon any for whom he died, the sentence of that everlasting punishment from which he became incarnate, and died to save us. Great as our astonishment and

sorrow are, we cannot forget that they are infinitely less than his. If, through grace, we are saved, we look to him, who knows what his own tears have been, to wipe away all tears from our eyes.

We also consider that the basis of future punishment is a chosen and cherished state of mind, which leads men here to reject Christ, notwithstanding his known character and his efforts for them. This may lead them still to reject him; for, as already stated, we do not find that even the loss of heaven and the experience of chains under darkness, have reconciled lost angels to God. While they choose to sin, therefore, we see no injustice in their being punished, even if they sin forever.

That the Bible contains forewarnings and instructions which ought to be sufficient to deter men from future misery, we learn even from the reply of Abraham to the rich man in hell. The rich man desired that Lazarus might be sent to his father's house with testimony concerning that "place of torment." Abraham replied, that "they have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them." The rich man could have easily reminded Abraham, if truth permitted, that there is nothing about that place in the Old Testament. He makes no such answer, but pleads the supposed efficacy of a visitor from the unseen world. Abraham replied, that such a visitor could have no effect on those who do not believe the testimony of the Old Testament on that subject. All this is from the lips of Jesus Christ.

Inasmuch as we cast no blame on God for the present condition and conduct of cannibals, and pagans, and atheists, and blasphemers, and slave traders, and every other description of wicked men, (neither do they themselves impute blame to him,) we do not feel that God will be responsible for the endless wickedness and misery of sinners; nor will they charge him with injustice more than they now do.

We believe that the God of the New Testament is the same unchangeable God of the Old Testament; that Christ has not modified the divine character nor altered one principle of the divine administration; but that the New Testament reveals the mercy of God in full orbed beauty, though its outlines were always visible from the beginning; that all which was terrible in the God who destroyed the old world, and Sodom and Gomorrha, and cast down rebel angels from heaven to hell, is still the same, and that when mercy has failed under the New Testament to recover sinners, the God of the Old Testament and of the New will be their Judge and King. We read that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." — "For our God is a consuming fire." And we have our choice, to love and serve such a God as this, or to reject him and take the consequences. Our private experience persuades us that He is good. He has always been just and kind, gentle, easy to be entreated. In all our afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved us. Knowing this, his stern, uncompromising hatred of sin, his power to inflict suffering and to look upon it forever, if necessary, give us confidence in Him. We may need such attributes for the foundation of our safety and of our confidence in God, as much as that attribute which we now separate from the rest of his character and call his love.

We believe that the Bible teaches, — for surely it follows of course from all which has now been adduced, that some proportion of pain and misery will forever exist under the government of God. The idea that they are to be wholly expurgated is contradicted by the Scriptures, and is mere fancy. But the scale of things being hereafter enlarged to our apprehension, and the reasons for one thing and another which are now but partially explained, being more fully apparent, we

think we see in the present feelings of good citizens with regard to law, and punishments, and the officers of justice, how future pain and misery, in their relation to the infinitely blessed system of government over a universe of free agents, will by no means diminish the happiness of that multitude of obedient souls which no man can number.

I have always been struck by the consideration, that the passages from which Universalists infer the final happiness of all men, do not occur in the Bible in connection with the punishment of the wicked. This is of the utmost importance. It is one presumptive proof that, occurring as they do apart from any mention of the punishment of the wicked, they belong to other subjects. And so we find them, in connection with the blessedness of the righteous, the ultimate victories of Christ over his enemies, his final reign, and the happiness of heaven. But we look in vain for passages where promises, prophecies, hints of ultimate restoration, occur in connection with the subject of future punishment. It will not be disputed that there are passages which seem to teach future, endless punishment; and the attempt is to show that they are "metaphorical." But some appear to think that "*metaphorical*" means "*fictitious*," "*unreal;*" on the contrary, "metaphorical" language is generally the stronger way of asserting any thing, being resorted to for the purpose of intensifying the expression. But how remarkable it is that we find no clause nor phrase, neither literal, nor "metaphorical," limiting the main drift of a passage which speaks of future, endless punishment, or suggesting the idea of restoration. The bold, terrific language of Scripture, asserting the future punishment of the wicked, has not one word of qualification.

We frequently meet with such representations and illustrations as the following, in modern writers, — from whom I had

intended to quote several passages; but the following statement of their views will suffice: The soul is God's child. Will a good mother ever cast away her offspring? No, neither will the great "Mother of us all," — the love of God. The worst of men — the Judases, the Neros, and Caligulas, will at last fulfil their career of sin and sorrow, and return to the bosom of God. As the earth in some parts of its orbit drives away from the sun, but soon comes "rounding back again," so every creature that God ever made, Satan and all, (if there be any Satan,) will at last accomplish its terrible career, and, passing its solstice, rejoice in a new moral existence.

The brief reply to all such fancies, is this: Have we a Bible? Does it give us any intimation of such a revolution, such an orbit, for the lost soul? We read of "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the mist of darkness forever and ever;" but where does the Bible, in speaking of the spirit launching forth on its aphelion, intimate that its path is a cycle, and not a straight line?

We see one part of the race "go away into everlasting punishment." But this is said to be merely "a metaphor." We will be grateful even for "a metaphor," if there be any, representing their return.

We have lately been furnished, from high authority in the Universalist denomination, with some of the principal proof texts in the discourses of Christ in favor of the salvation of all men. They occur in the review already spoken of, (in the preface to this article,) written by Rev. Dr. Thomas Whittemore, in which he endeavors to answer Rev. T. S. King's assertion, that he could not find any text or discourse of Christ which contains the doctrine of the final happiness of all men. Dr. Whittemore, of course, would here bring forth some of his strong proofs, for he says of Mr. King's discourses, "We think

they will do as much to break down Universalism as to break down the doctrine of endless misery." The following are Dr. Whittemore's quotations from the words of Christ, to prove that he taught the final salvation of all men.

1. "This is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."[1] Dr. Whittemore gives an extended exposition of the discourse of Christ at the well of Samaria, which gave occasion to these words of the Samaritans; and he says, "Jesus Christ, let it be remembered, is declared to be the Saviour of the world; and how could he be justly called the Saviour of the world if the world shall never be saved?"[2]

2. "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." This is a major premise. "All that the Father hath given me shall come to me," is the minor premise. "To come to Christ is to become a Christian."[3] This involves the *ergo* of the proposition. — He adds, "We have by no means exhausted our proof,"[4] and he gives us

3. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." We have the word of Christ for it, — 'will draw all men unto me.'"[5]

4. "Jesus answered, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." "If angels are holy, mankind are to be holy; if angels are to be happy, mankind are to be happy." "This is a distinct and positive declaration of the purity and happiness of all men." "How, then," Dr. W. says, "can we adopt the language of Mr. King, and say, 'I do not find the doctrine,' &c. Strange declaration! Jesus joined two great facts together, the resurrection of all men, and their exaltation to the condition of angels."[6]

[1] John iv. 42.
[2] p. 390.
[3] p. 391.
[4] p. 392.
[5] p. 395.
[6] p. 395.

Such passages are, in the opinion of Dr. Whittemore, a plain, obvious refutation, from Christ himself, of that, in Dr. Whittemore's view, dangerous assertion by Mr. King, viz., "the ultimate salvation of all souls is not clearly taught in any text or discourse in the gospels."

The principal topics which have now been considered are these : —

The Scriptures reveal a future state of reward and punishment.

They teach that the body and soul will be joined in future happiness and misery.

Christ teaches that God can destroy both body and soul in hell. If God cannot morally do this, the declaration is unintelligible ; it answers no purpose of instruction.

Future punishment will therefore be a natural operation of moral laws, sustained and made effectual by the hand of God upon the sinner, who, by his state of depravity, will be made susceptible to misery forever.

The essential elements of misery remain in the wicked after death.

Redemption by Christ is represented as having for its object salvation from final perdition.

The work of the Holy Spirit as a part of redemption, and the unpardonable sin against Him, prove that the present is the final effort to save men.

None of the passages relied on to prove final restoration occur in connection with the subject of future punishment, but with the reign of Christ, and the happiness of the righteous.

No passage in the Bible discloses the future repentance of the wicked.

Promises of restoration, made to sinners who in this world

were to become penitent, always occur in connection with threatenings and doom. No such promises are made in connection with the threatenings of future punishment, or with the final doom of the wicked.

The Bible closes with an express declaration of the future unchangeableness of character.

There are no prophetic visions in the New Testament which contemplate deliverance from hell, and corresponding to visions of God's ancient people in captivity, and of their release and restoration.

The fall of angels, and of man, is a confirmatory argument in favor of future punishment, seeing that if God did not keep them from falling, he can consistently refuse to restore them.

The terms used with regard to the resurrection of the dead, show, that the wicked will have experienced no change since death, but will come forth from their graves to the resurrection of damnation.

If the wicked are punished hereafter merely for their own good, there is no such thing as sin against God or our neighbor; — which is contrary to Scripture.

The law of God has no curse if future punishment be in all cases disciplinary.

The sentence passed upon the impenitent indiscriminately, forbids the idea of discipline in future punishment.

It is inconceivable that fallen angels and "the spirits in prison," who were on earth "in the days of Noah," should not long ago have repented of their sins, if repentance were the object sought by their punishment.

If death, and the scenes within the veil previous to the judgment day, do not effect the repentance in the wicked, there is no ground to think that their banishment from Christ with the fallen angels, at the last day, is intended for their reformation, or would effect it.

"Forever" and "everlasting" always denote *the whole*, as to duration, of that with which they stand connected.

If a finite being cannot justly be punished forever, then, if the whole universe should sin forever it could not be punished forever, because the whole intelligent universe also is finite.

The duration of future punishment is expressed in the New Testament by the terms employed to denote absolute eternity in cases which are never questioned.

The provision made in the incarnation, sufferings, and death of the Son of God for pardon and salvation, and the abundant calls to repentance, and offers of eternal life, through Christ, to all, will make the final impenitence of sinners inexcusable, and their misery will be of their own procuring.

I may be allowed, in closing, to quote the words of the apostle Paul, which those who preach and are set for the defence of the gospel, must not hesitate to adopt: "For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish. To the one we are the savor of death unto death, and to the other, the savor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?"[1]

Pursuing my ordinary labors, a Universalist and Unitarian clergyman of this city invited me to repeat, in his pulpit, a sermon on this subject, to which he had listened in my church. As I profess not to be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, which, in my view, involves the doctrine of endless punishment, I complied with his request. This has led to the present communication. Had mere controversy been my object, I would not have sought to discuss the scriptural view of this subject, with such admissions before me as those of Rev. T. S. King and Rev. Theodore Parker. When I read them, I thought

[1] 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

that one whose only object was to get the advantage of an opponent, might be justified in feeling with regard to the doctrine of Restoration, as Joab did when he found Absalom in the tree, and he blew a trumpet, and all the people returned from the battle. Such men as Mr. King and Mr. Parker, seeing the doctrine of endless punishment in the literal speech of the Bible, as interpreted by us, and rejecting its inspiration, partly because they find it there, relieve us greatly from the need of holding controversies on this subject. Controversy has not been my motive. I have sought to persuade my reader to flee with me for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.

In the foregoing discussion, I am not aware that there is any thing which intentionally reflects upon the understanding or motives of others. It has cost no effort to abstain from being, in any way, derisory, or satirical, or contemptuous. Conscious only of kindness and good will to all, and grateful for this opportunity to state and defend important principles, I am,

The reader's friend and servant,

N. Adams.

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