

THOUGHTS ON BEING;

SUGGESTED BY MEDITATION

UPON

THE INFINITE, THE IMMATERIAL,

AND

THE ETERNAL.

17
BY

EDWARD SHIRLEY KENNEDY.

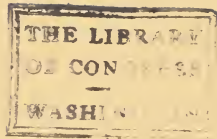
“ Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.”—1 PETER, iii. 15.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1850.

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LONDON :
SPOTTISWOODES and SHAW,
New-Street-Square.

P R E F A C E.

THE following pages, like a great majority of books, were not written in the first instance with a view to publication.

They had their origin in a casual conversation, in the reading which this induced, and in the reflections which thence arose. These reflections were by no means foreign to the writer's temperament, and he has followed them out from time to time, and noted down the results of his reading and meditation, as opportunity or inclination tempted him. The true nature of Eternity and Time was the first subject of his thoughts: and he has found it difficult to limit the topics which meditation upon the abstruse truths of metaphysical and psychological science suggests.

It has occasionally been his lot to wander through romantic districts of foreign lands, with no companion but the star-lit canopy of heaven, and to find his mind wrapt in the contemplations which its infinite and mysterious being so naturally inspires. When nature is seen displayed

upon her grandest scale, her influence is powerfully exerted in tempting both mind and body to try untrodden paths, to aspire to high positions, and to labour onward through difficulties and dangers to the highest elevations that the powers of man can possibly attain. He who gives himself up to this inspiring impulse is sometimes pained to find himself enveloped in clouds, and sometimes rewarded with brilliant sunshine; but he uniformly finds both body and mind invigorated by the exercise.

In these scenes the writer has found how false lights, deceptive appearances, diversities of power of vision, and even liveliness or lack of imagination, lead men who stand side by side to see differently the same thing. Since this is so when viewing terrestrial scenery, how much more so must it be the case when contemplating the remote objects of mental vision; and how great a diversity of opinion must be anticipated on nearly all the topics discussed in the following pages.

The writer has therein endeavoured to explain the true nature of Eternity and Time,—to point out certain phenomena of both,—and to examine certain doubtful or deceptive opinions respecting them.

The concluding part of the work is devoted to

pointing out the bearing which an accurate comprehension of these truths has on certain important questions touching the soul of man, that have been more or less agitated at nearly every period of the Christian era.

The desultory manner, and the broken intervals, in which the book has been composed, have rendered it more fragmentary and less regularly arranged than the Author could have desired; but as he never proposed to give to the world any thing that could be mistaken for a "system" of philosophy, this evil is of less moment.

In discussing the subjects that have suggested themselves, he has introduced many theological views and opinions which are different from those now generally received. In doing so, he is anxious to guard himself from the supposition of asserting that they are his, either by invention or adoption. He knows full well that many writers have put in print ideas which they erroneously, but sincerely, believed to be original, and that the great bulk of "new lights" in theology are but exploded heresies; yet the doctrines herein discussed, whether true or false, appear to him worthy of further consideration.

As in their fruitless search for the philosopher's

stone, mediæval chemists made many of the great discoveries on which modern chemistry is founded; so, in the elaborate and careful consideration of the difficulties of psychology, should those difficulties themselves receive no solution, important truths must be nevertheless incidentally discovered or confirmed. If so, the labourer will not be without his reward.

But, above all things, the writer is anxious to guard himself against any suspicion of dogmatizing or laying down the law certainly or conclusively on any of the topics discussed.

He proposes to examine, to discuss, to sift them; but, while he is ready to point out the conclusion to which the examination appears to him legitimately to lead, he has earnestly endeavoured to express his opinions in that spirit of respect for others, toleration, and Christian charity, which a mind engaged in the earnest and honest search after truth learns from the very nature of its labours.

To suggest an elevated train of thought, and to promote an earnest inquiry after truth in its purity, are the main objects of his work.

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INTRODUCTION.

“ Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.”^a

To exercise reason is the privilege of man : to him alone has it been given to explore the groves of knowledge, and ascertain the virtue of every tree and plant that grow therein. Countless are these in number, infinite in variety, but conspicuously and far above all others one proudly lifts its head to heaven : —

“ In the mid-garden tower'd a giant tree,
Rock-rooted on a mountain-top it grew,
Rear'd its unrivall'd head on high,
And stretch'd a thousand branches o'er the sky,
Drinking with all its leaves celestial dew.”^b

Very beautiful and pleasing to the sight is this monarch of the grove. In grandeur he rises from the ground, piercing the highest region of thought, and spreading his arms abroad in the vast expanse of the ideal. Difficult is the at-

^a 1 Thess. v. 21.

^b Southey.

tempt to climb, for every branch extends beyond the reach of sense and demands especial exertion of the intellect; but to overcome all difficulty, and gain the top, exceeds the power of man. Perfect attainment of knowledge dwells with the unfettered spirit of immortality.

Such is the philosophy which seeks to learn the nature of the infinite, the immaterial, and the eternal; and such is the tree to the contemplation of which we are about to direct the utmost power of mind. But we must first weigh the words of those who shun its presence as that of the fabled Upas, regarding it either as the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil, or as one of those, pleasing but delusive, which breathe the murky vapours from the sea of Sodom; the fruit thus being the cause either of sin or disappointment. Among the opponents to these branches of knowledge, there are those who believe that the study of them involves no actual sin, but consider that the result obtained, after long and arduous inquiry, is not of sufficient importance to justify the length of the examination, and that the time so occupied might have been more profitably employed. There are, too, those who regard the wish to

explore a distant country as a possible transgression; and they consequently look upon every attempt to raise the thoughts into regions where their flight can be but with difficulty sustained, as an act of presumption by which man approaches too closely those things the nature of which has not been revealed, and therefore (as they believe) forbidden to be sought after.

It is true that the uncertainty and contradiction which have attended the researches both of ancient and modern philosophers sufficiently prove that an ill-regulated or too ardent pursuit of this study must be attended with many evil effects; and from this cause probably it has been too hastily regarded by some as an amusing speculation, serving only to sharpen the intellect, without aim or purpose, and unproductive of benefit. But is not this result to be attributed principally to the mode in which the examination has been carried on, rather than to the nature of the subject? With philosophers the lamp of revelation has, I fear, but too often burned in vain; they have too frequently relied upon the unaided light of reason, and the overconfidence of the inquirer has supported that as a certainty which was in fact but the off-

spring of undigested theory. But by proceeding in accordance with Scripture, the Christian will not fall into the unbelief of the present German school; and by directing his thoughts to the contemplation of his high destiny, the man of cultivated mind raises himself far above the follies of those who take delight in frivolous pursuits, or pass their time in sensual gratification.

Thus we are taught that our earthly nature is twofold. It is in two separate and distinct spheres that "we live and move and have our being." In the one are found the desires and wants of outward sense, in the other dwell the aspirations of the inward spirit. "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit; for to be carnally-minded is death, but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace." "This I say, then; walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh, for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption;

but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”^a

And this higher life which thus earnestly seeks an immortal inheritance is likewise twofold. It is not only a trial of faith and charity, but it is also a preparation for that season in which those “which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more.”^b That study, therefore, is not of light value which teaches us how knowledge here obtained may influence our state hereafter; that study by which we learn carefully to distinguish that which relates solely to the present life, and will perish with it, from that which is not only co-existent with the continuance of time, but also embraces the whole duration of eternity.

The objects of sense, and the organs essential to their proper enjoyment, depend upon each other, and are mutually adapted. At least a portion of these material objects, and the corresponding modes of perception, will pass away. Many causes of sensible pleasure and pain have arisen from the spread of civilisation, and have

^a Rom. viii. 8.; Gal. v. 16., vi. 8. ^b Rev. vii. 14. 16.

increased far beyond the original provision of nature ; but they are of man's formation, and, whether they be useful or the reverse, necessary or artificial, all are temporary. The knowledge, therefore, which is applicable to their consideration can be but evanescent, and will hereafter become useless. "But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none ; and they that weep, as though they wept not ; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not ; and they that buy, as though they possessed not ; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away." ^a

Concentration of thought upon subjects the most abstract may with some fail to produce any tangible result, any result of practical benefit ; but by it alone can man exercise, to its fullest extent, his power of reasoning—that most noble attribute, which entitles him to his proud pre-eminence over all created beings. We must, however, emphatically deny that this absence of useful application is inevitable ; we believe that great good may be derived from the unflinching

^a 1 Cor. vii. 29.

prosecution of such inquiry, and we look forward with confidence to a time when the importance of these subjects will be more generally acknowledged. This branch of study already possesses the sanction of antiquity, for Aristotle has said that when the investigation of subjects demanding the purest intellectual research is conducted with propriety, the inquirer is raised above mere physical knowledge, and is carried into the highest domains of science. But it has been reserved to the Christian alone to reject at once that which is opposed to revelation, and thus to define the extent of those regions to which the mind of man may aspire.

In those calm moments when the soul holds communion with herself, desire for information attains its most ample development. It is amid the solitude of the mountain fastness, and under the dark star-lit vault of heaven, that in midnight meditation this eager craving is felt within us, and the immortal spirit yearns for the knowledge of truth. Then it is that we fully feel that our body "is of the earth, earthy;" that, in its present form, it acts as an obstruction to the aspiration of the soul; and that, by its present wants, it continually compels us to

withdraw from the contemplation of heavenly things, and to direct our thoughts towards those which are temporary. This earnest contemplation of visible and invisible Being produces that disposition of mind which assists us in attaining and appreciating the highest intellectual and moral development; but, above all, it is eminently calculated to induce us trustfully to look forward to that time to come when all doubt shall be dispersed, and it powerfully strengthens the belief that our future state of bliss will not be one in which the pleasure of sense will be exalted, but will rather be a state in which all the mysteries of creation shall be made clear. Thus, while this application of the powers of the mind brings forcibly before us the many deep things which lie hidden beneath the surface, and brings home to our perception our own great want of knowledge as to their nature, it raises up an eager hope and craving for satisfaction; it points out the mode in which preparation is to be made for the reception of truth, and, with Divine guidance, it may possibly be a foretaste of that eternity in which the full flood of light shall be poured forth upon those who shall have walked worthily in the season of difficulty.

The bold swimmer delights to breast the curling breakers, and thus prove his mastery over the rage of ocean. The rower, conscious of power and confident in skill, steers his frail bark amid contending currents, and carries her with safety over the broken waters. The man of cultivated mind, accustomed to turn his thoughts inwardly upon self-examination, and thus reflect upon their inmost nature, finds his own reward in conscious improvement, while all rejoice exultingly in the proud feeling of success over difficulty. But when the spirit of man rises to the contemplation of the hidden mysteries of Being, and when, with each return from the regions of the Ideal, she wings her flight with increasing confidence, and gains new courage as the multiplying stores of knowledge are poured forth, what language can describe her ecstasy!

Thus would I answer those who assert that this branch of study is without aim or purpose. But there is one other consequence, which only becomes apparent as we continue to accustom ourselves to reflect upon these questions, as our thoughts consequently acquire a tendency to shape themselves in a particular form, and as we

habitually estimate all things by the unchanging standard of their eternal value. A new sense, or rather a faculty beyond all sense, is actually called into existence. Not only are our affections weaned from the frivolous and temporary pursuits of this transitory state, and fixed upon things above, but we are slowly though surely led to form a true and more elevated idea of a part of those joys which will be our portion when we shall be no longer tied and bound in this prison-house of flesh. It is by these thoughts that we are led, step by step and hour by hour, far from those scenes of strife which take from life's short span, and leave the trace of sin as a blot to stain the soul. It is by these thoughts that we are taught how slight should be the weight of those fears, for the ills of this life, which seem at times to drag us to the grave and plunge the soul in death. These thoughts, too, it is which show us the small worth of those vain hopes for the bright things of earth which we have drawn close to our hearts, and which are in our eyes the pearls of great price, that with toil and care we weave with a web of life, which it may be shall this hour pass from us. Surely, then, these are fruits well worth the time

bestowed, and ought alone to be sufficient inducement for perseverance.

The devout Christian may perhaps hesitate to penetrate deeply into the nature and grounds of his belief, fearing that he might thus put reason in the place of faith. But that determination of spirit, which blindly and without examination adheres to an article of belief for which it will not attempt to give a reason, is not faith, but superstition. It is but one degree, if any, above the blind ignorance of the unenlightened heathen, who clings to the ancient and time-honoured rites of his forefathers, who believes in the power of stocks and stones, and imitates in sensual pleasure the supposed nature of his deities. And yet to him we are accustomed to send forth missionaries, whose first duty it is to impress upon him the necessity of examining most closely the peculiarities of his own religion, while we ourselves hesitate to do that which we require of him. We deem it dangerous to inquire into the mysteries of creation, and we refuse to examine rashly the foundations of our Christian faith, fearing that, urged on by the intoxicating influence of human pride in human intellect, we should place confidence in our de-

ductions above our faith in God's teaching, and substitute the vanity of intellectual power for the humility and teachableness of those "little children of whom is the kingdom of God."

A careful examination of the first principles of the philosophy of religion, conducted in a spirit of humble reliance upon His teaching, so far from leading us into idle and deluding speculations, may, and with God's blessing should, enable us to give a reason for the faith that is in us, and supply us with the means of satisfying the doubts, not only of ourselves, but of others: "for the two great lights of God, reason and revelation, never contradict each other, though one be superior to the other." ^a

It is by the light of reason that we are enabled to preserve undefiled that invaluable heritage of religious freedom which Luther bequeathed to us, when, with the mighty energy of an enlightened mind, he had shaken off the trammels of the Church of Rome. We inculcate the duty of a reasoning inquiry, and insist upon the benefit which it confers, when we seek to turn the heathen from the error of his way and to bring him within the fold of the One Shepherd.

^a Dr. Watts's Strength and Weakness of Human Reason.

And we ourselves, by continually advancing in widening fields of knowledge, by exercising with greater diligence the Divine gift of reason, by receiving the immutable principles of justice and mercy as guides to the study of "the Law and of the Testimony;" — we ourselves, by constant prayer that the Divine teaching may accompany our efforts, hope thus gradually to reconcile the apparent contradictions of Scripture, to clear away the clouds which still overshadow our present existence, and to confirm our faith in the everlasting truth of that religion which is founded upon the "Rock of Ages."

But if it be not intended that this noble gift of reason should be exerted to the utmost when directed to questions upon which Scripture is silent, who shall affix the limit? Who shall set bounds to the manifestation and development of that "indefinite feeling of profound desire, which is satisfied with no earthly object, whether real or ideal, but is ever directed to the eternal and divine. . . . In certain happy temperaments, under circumstances favourable to their free expansion, this vague longing is peculiar to the age of youth, and is often enough observed there. Indeed, it is in that soft melancholy which is

always joined with the half-unconscious but pleasant feeling of the blooming fulness of life, that lies the charm which the reminiscence of the days of youth possesses for the calm and quiet contemplations of old age. Here, too, the distinctive mark between the genuine and spurious manifestation of this feeling is both simple enough and easily found. For as this longing may in general be explained as an inchoate state—a love yet to be developed—the question reduces itself consequently to the simple one of determining the nature of this love. If upon the first development and gratification of the passions this love immediately passes over to, and loses itself in, the ordinary realities of life, then is it no genuine manifestation of the heavenly feeling, but a mere earthly and sensual longing. But when it survives the youthful ebullition of the feelings, when it does but become deeper and more intense by time, when it is satisfied with no joys and stifled by no sorrows of earth—when, from the midst of the struggles of life and the pressure of the world, it turns like a light-seeing eye upon the storm-tossed waves of the ocean of time, to the heaven of heavens, watching to discover there some star of eternal hope—

then is it that true and genuine longing, which, directing itself to the divine, is itself also of a celestial origin. Out of this root springs almost every thing that is intellectually beautiful and great—even the love of scientific certainty itself, and of a profound knowledge of life and nature. Philosophy indeed has no other source, and we might in this respect call it, with much propriety, the doctrine or the science of longing. But even that youthful longing, already noticed, is oftentimes a genuine, or at least the first, foundation of the higher and truer species, although, unlike the latter, it is as yet neither purely evolved nor refined by the course of time.

“Could men’s eyes be but once opened to seek it, how would they be amazed at the infinity which they have neglected, and might have attained to, and which generally in the world remains neglected and unattained! But, of the many thousands whom this remark concerns, how very few ever attain to a clear cognition of their real destination! And the reason of this is simply the fact, that the faith of men is all too weak; and, above all, that it is too vaguely general, too superficial, too little searching or profound—not sufficiently personal and childlike.

. . . The longing after the eternal and divine which has been already described is the seeking of God; but this calm inward assent of the will, whenever, with a childlike faith and an enduring love, and in steadfast hope, it is carried through and maintained with unwavering fidelity throughout life, is the actual finding of Him within us, and a constant adherence to Him when once we have found Him. As the root and principle of all that is best and noblest in man, this divine longing cannot be too highly estimated; and nowhere is it so inimitably described, and its excellence so fully acknowledged, as in Holy Writ itself.”^a

The preceding reflections give us undoubted cause for the conviction, that not only is this contemplation of invisible Being attended by results beneficial in the highest degree to us all, but that it is in strict unison with the will of Him who has placed us here,—not that we may regard the things of earth, but that we may set our affections upon the things of heaven. That which has been enjoined is for our good; that which is for our good has been enjoined. “Man is evidently made for thinking; this is the whole

^a Schlegel's *Philosophy of Life*, pp. 34. 111.

of his dignity, and the whole of his merit. To think as he ought, is the whole of his duty; and the true order of thinking is to begin with himself, his Author, and his end. . . . Thus the whole of our dignity consists in thought. It is by this we are to elevate ourselves, and not by mere space and duration. Let us, then, labour to *think well*: this is the principle of morality.”^a “Reason is the light of the soul.” “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good;” but “believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God;” “and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.”^b Spare therefore no effort of the intellect. Seek earnestly to distinguish truth from falsehood, the just from the unjust.

Withdraw the thoughts unflinchingly from frivolous and temporary pursuits, and concentrate the utmost attention upon that which is spiritual and eternal. Penetrate unweariedly into the mysteries of creation, and search the Scriptures thoroughly that they may assist the light of reason in reconciling all things with the

^a Blaise Pascal: *Thoughts on Religion*, pp. 50. 118.

^b 1 Thess. v. 21.; 1 John, iv. 1.; 1 Peter, iii. 15.

marvellous attributes of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness.

But as the material and temporary sun of heaven shines upon the just and the unjust, so must the light of reason bring before man's spiritual and eternal consciousness both good and evil; and the wider his thoughts expand, and the higher the realm in which they take their flight, the greater are their power and their means both for good and evil. Temperately, therefore, and with moderation, let us begin our course; and then, with the silver lamp of revelation in our hand, and the divine manifestations of peace, goodwill, and charity to all men, as unerring guides through every difficulty, we may surely, without presumption, entertain the hope that we are not about too rashly to traverse realms of inquiry which man in his present state will probably never be permitted thoroughly to explore.

THOUGHTS ON BEING.

ETERNITY.

What is Eternity? can aught
Paint its duration to the thought?

Tell all the sand the ocean laves,
Tell all its changes, all its waves,
Or tell, with more laborious pains,
The drops its mighty mass contains :
Be this astonishing account
Augmented with the full amount
Of all the drops the clouds have shed,
Where'er their wat'ry fleeces spread,
Thro' all Time's long-protracted tour,
From Adam to the present hour ;—
Still short the sum, nor can it vie
With the more num'rous years that lie
Embosom'd in Eternity.
Attend, O man, with awe divine,
For this Eternity is thine !^a

“ Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. I am that I am, which is, and which was, and which is to come.”^b

WITH the word Eternity are associated the earliest ideas of childhood. But this familiarity

^a Gibbons.

^b John, viii. 58. ; Exod. iii. 14. ; Rev. i. 8.

with the expression too frequently causes forgetfulness of the depth of meaning which it represents. We are satisfied with that which lies upon the surface, and have no desire to plunge beneath.

We are conscious of time, for our senses note its passage; but eternity appeals to the inner thought, and by an effort of the mind alone can it be perceived. Nay, I know not that the voice of reason herself speaks of eternity, for we find that its existence has by many been denied, while a belief in the immortality of spirit, and that in the fleeting nature of sensible objects, has each at times been rejected and received. By the philosophic schools of antiquity the eternity of spirit was more frequently denied than that of matter. Aristotle and the Peripatetics believed the vital heat of the body to arise from an ether which they called a fifth element, "neither heavy nor light, but of which the heaven and the stars are composed, and which, like them, is eternal." But in his treatise on courage this philosopher also remarks that "death is formidable beyond most other evils, on account of its excluding hope; since it is a complete termination, and there

does not appear to be *any thing, either of good or evil*, beyond it." ^a The Sceptics, if indeed they had a fixed belief, preferred death to life, because it offered that "complete state of calm indifference which, in their opinion, constituted happiness." Epicurus taught "that death was not the end of misery only, but the utter destruction of existence." He, with Democritus, however, believed in the eternity of matter. "The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit." ^b

A belief in eternity is of necessity held by all Christians, and indeed to the reality of its existence but few infidels of modern days refuse assent.

"'Tis the Divinity that stirs within us,
'Tis heaven itself that points out an hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man." ^c

But there are some of us who are looking forward to an indistinct future when eternity shall appear, who believe that it will be created, but deny its present existence. Every doubt on this point is, however, removed by the words of that book in which we read of the "High

^a Arist. Eth. Nicom. b. iii.

^b Acts, xxiii. 8.

^c Addison.

and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity.”^a From that source, therefore, and from that alone, we draw full assurance that eternal Being, to which we are about to direct our thoughts, is not the uncertain creation of the imagination. There we learn that eternity is Being which now is and is now present.

The nature of eternity we will not now attempt to define, for we must “regard the definition as rather the end of our inquiry than its commencement. Indeed this may generally be observed of metaphysical, or rather psychological, inquiries: they are not like those of the mathematician, who must begin by defining; but that is because his definition is in fact a statement of part of the hypothesis in each proposition. Thus whoever enunciates any proposition respecting a property of the circle, predicates that property of a figure whose radii are all equal, and it is as if he began by saying, ‘Let there be a curve line such that all the straight lines drawn from its points to another point within it are equal, then I say that the rectangles are equal; which, &c.’ The general definition only saves the trouble of repeating

^a Isa. lvii. 15.

this assumption as part of the hypothesis in each proposition. But the nature of any thing of which we discourse in psychology is not the hypothesis we start from ; it is the goal or conclusion we are seeking to arrive at. Indeed, so it is in physical science also ; we do not begin, but end, by defining the qualities of bodies, or their action on one another. . . . But there must be a definition of terms which does not imply our stating the nature of the thing defined ; it only implies that we must understand what the thing is to which the given word applies." ^a Thus, although we are as yet unable to give a satisfactory definition of that of which it is our object, in the course of inquiry, to obtain a clear idea, it is necessary to understand what that Being is which we propose to contemplate.

Now a full and complete idea of the word Eternity is, I think, given by the conception of Being which has had no beginning, and which will have no end of Being, which includes in its duration the infinite past and the infinite future. It is in accordance with this meaning of the word that we find that those who have endeavoured

^a Lord Brougham.

to obtain clear ideas upon this subject have usually considered the whole duration of eternity as formed of two parts:—

Infinitum a parte post: a beginning and no end, or the infinite future.

Infinitum a parte ante: an end and no beginning, or the infinite past.

By the earnest contemplation of these two divisions we hope to attain a full and perfect knowledge of the meaning of the word.

But, as we advance in the examination of our subject, we shall be obliged to allude to the course of Time. It will therefore be necessary to obtain clear ideas of its nature, and a short digression must then be made for this purpose, but it will lead us back better fitted for resuming the contemplation of Eternity. After having thus dwelt upon the nature of time and of eternity we shall be prepared to consider whether there subsists between them any proportion or relation, or whether they be absolutely different and distinct.

THE INFINITE PAST.

WE have now to contemplate the Infinite Past and the Infinite Future. Many may be inclined to rest satisfied with the first ideas which these expressions are calculated to raise, and they may believe that their further development would lead to results of little importance, while the attempt would be attended with great difficulty.

But let these words pass slowly before the eye of contemplation, and perhaps attention may suggest points for consideration which easily escape careless observation ; and let us hope that the results drawn from a careful examination and full developement of the subject will induce us to look upon eternity with feelings of more than usual awe, and lead the mind to a more perfect comprehension of subjects calculated to inspire feelings of solemn admiration and hopeful confidence.

What is the Infinite Past ? The conception generally entertained by those whose inclination leads them to the consideration of such questions,

is that the Infinite Past represents a point of duration infinitely remote from the present, a point which is endeavoured to be made appreciable by the mind by the adoption of a negative mode of explanation, by the statement of that which is in reality a succession of points, not one of which truly represents the Being of which we are in search. The imagination is called upon first to realise the idea of an instant of time at the greatest possible distance backwards from the present; and when we believe that success has attended this attempt, it is necessary to make a further effort in order to look upon the Infinite Past as a point still more remote.^a I have endeavoured to state shortly and fairly this mode of realising the idea; and I think that even those most disposed at first to deny the correctness of the explanation so given will, after consideration, acknowledge that, however the most usual modes of attempting to convey an idea of the Infinite Past may be varied,

^a “We can only judge of time by a *succession of impressions on the mind*, and it is usually by supposing an infinite succession that we arrive at our notion of eternity.”—*Hind's History of the Rise and Progress of Christianity*, vol. i. ch. v.

they must, when rigidly examined and dissected, end in the same result.

I find it impossible to realise the idea of this supposed point; it is to me one utterly inconceivable by the imagination, for, however disposed the mind may be towards the investigation, and however ardently it may wish for enlightenment, and however sincerely it may hope, and even believe, that success has attended its efforts, there must necessarily always exist this difficulty, — that to whatever remote distance in the past the imagination may travel backwards, and were it even then to proceed to a point, or to ten thousand points, each still further distant in the past, there must still be a point in the Infinite Past infinitely more remote. We have, in truth, been attempting continually to add to the duration of Being without beginning; of Being, the past duration of which is infinite, and therefore immeasurable and not susceptible of increase. Thus the Infinite Past cannot be represented by any point, real or imaginary; so that, while we have perhaps fondly indulged the hope that reason and examination would remain satisfied with the idea which we had been taught to form, reflection at length awakens us to the certainty

that our success has been failure, and that our hopes have been as those of the "foolish man which built his house upon the sand." Now this apparent inability to realise a correct idea of the Infinite Past, and the disappointment which has attended our attempt, cannot arise from the nature of the subject, for the actual Being we must admit to be real.

We have seen that the explanation of the Infinite Past, which we have just considered, not only does not convey an adequate idea of that which it endeavours to make plain, but that it gives us reason to believe that our eyes have been dazzled by a false and uncertain light. We will therefore endeavour to acquire a more satisfactory idea of the Infinite Past; but, before making the attempt, let us devote a few thoughts to the nature of Time.

TIME.

Two meanings have been attached to the *word* Time, and between these we must carefully distinguish. One meaning is understood when the word is applied to those arbitrary divisions which we call days, years, &c., and which we have adopted in order that we may have a fixed standard to which we may refer as admeasurements of any limited amount of duration. It is when used in this sense that Locke calls time "the measure of duration," not meaning thereby that a day or a year is the measure of indefinite duration, but rather of proportional duration; as an inch or a foot is not the measure of space or indefinite extension, but rather of proportional extension. Time used in this sense means one of those artificial divisions which are adapted to the powers and wants of man, and give us a "mode by which the human mind perceives the occurrence of events." The other, which may be called the absolute meaning, is understood when the *word* is used to embrace that which is

of the past, the present, and the future, and not to define a particular admeasurement. It is then the representative of a duration regarding the nature of which our ideas may perhaps be somewhat uncertain. It is not an hour, nor a day, nor a year :

“ For time, though in eternity, applied
To motion, measures all things durable
By present, past, and future.”^a

It is Time when thus generally applied that will be the subject of reflection in the following pages, and it is the active cause of its manifestation which we shall now attempt to ascertain.

Now, we find that the appearance of time is modified in every conceivable way by the various aspects under which it is presented to the observation of our senses. When we pass round the globe from west to east or from east to west, the watch gives no correct notion of local time. This can only be ascertained by the aid of an astronomical observation. For were we to start at noon and travel westward, so as to return to the same spot in twenty-four hours, the sun would appear stationary during the

^a Parad. Lost, book v. l. 581.

whole time; and upon a sun-dial carried with us the shadow would always remain the same length, always point in the same direction. Were we similarly to start at noon and travel eastward, so as to return to the same spot in twenty-four hours, we should twice pass through every hour of the day and night, twice should we see the sun set, twice should we see him rise, twice would the shadow upon the dial point towards the pole, twice would it increase in length, twice diminish.

And, even in a physical point of view, distance does not make these cases absolutely impossible; for as we leave the equator, the circular length of each succeeding parallel of latitude continually decreases, until at each pole it becomes nothing. Were we then, as before, to travel westward or eastward within a certain moderate distance of the pole, in one instance the sun would appear stationary, and in the other he would twice be seen to describe a circle in the heavens. In practice, as is well known, a ship sailing round the world from east to west, or from west to east, either loses or gains a day in her reckoning, so that upon return to port her crew would find that a day had been taken from, or added to,

their length of life ; and let it be remembered that if (in order to remain day and night within the rays of the sun) the voyage were made within the polar circle, the accompanying dial would record each day as one of twenty-four hours, and the whole number of days as it would appear to the ship's crew.

We all know that electricity, light, and sound are not instantaneously propagated through space, but that they travel at certain known and different rates of speed ; and with a sensation of wonder we have all listened to the opinion of astronomers, that there are at this moment stars in existence within that range of vision which the telescope gives, the light from which has not yet reached our earth, — light which may this night meet the observer's glance, or which may yet require the lapse of untold ages before it falls upon his eye. Now, whether this opinion be correct or not, it involves a supposition the reality of which is not only perfectly and clearly possible, but is one which falls within the scope of probability. But while our thoughts are dwelling upon the fact that rays of light may be rapidly nearing us from unknown worlds, how strikingly comes home to us Dr. Babbage's beau-

tiful idea, that an undulation once given, although constantly and uniformly diminishing in intensity, is borne continually onward into the depths of space, carrying with it to the remotest orb tidings of earthly action!

Every one of us is familiar with that well-known example of an undulation which is given by the effects of a stone when dropped into still water. We can readily imagine a fish, while basking in the sunshine, to be somewhat startled by the close approach of the missile, and to make off at full speed so soon as he recovered from his alarm. He would quickly reach and pass beyond the outer circle of undulation; but if he then paused to consider whether there were just cause for fear, the same undulation in its extending circle would overtake him and pass beyond. Should the fish not happen to be of a very courageous temperament, and should he consequently determine discretion to be the better part of valour, he would again take to flight, again place himself within the influence of the undulation, again go beyond its power. And the limit to the repetition of this process is clearly only to be found in the physical properties of matter. If we were in a railway train upon the Great

Western that left Exeter immediately after an explosion of gunpowder, and travelled at a rate a little greater than that of sound, we should overtake the undulation, hear the report, and pass beyond its reach. If our pace then slightly slackened upon an adverse gradient, the undulation would overtake us, we should again hear the report, and the sound of it would then be carried on to those beyond us. If we then got up the steam and increased our pace, we should once more reach the undulation, hear the report, and pass on to localities the inhabitants of which were yet to hear tidings of the explosion. And the number of repetitions of the same report which one individual might thus hear is clearly limited only by the penetrating power of sound, and by the perceptive power of our own faculties.^a

Upon the naked eye, a ray of light which has travelled a "distance inexpressible by numbers

^a Sound travels 1142 feet in a second, or thirteen miles in a minute; and railway speed has not yet, I believe, exceeded two miles in a minute, — so that at present we are unable, practically, to illustrate these facts. We can, however, place ourselves in such a position that the same sound shall return to our ear after having passed over different amounts of distance. Hence the pleasing effect of the repeating echo.

that have name" cannot produce a perceptible impression; and when we remember the depths of infinity and the velocity of light, we at once see that these undulations must be rapidly carried far beyond the limited reach to which our present senses extend; and we may perhaps hesitate to believe that a sentient being can equal in rapidity of progression the phenomena of a material creation. But we can readily realise the idea of a being possessing senses similar to our own, similar in kind but immeasurably superior in degree. Let us imagine two beings, A and B, thus endowed, at a station S before a clock in action situated at any distance from them. If, then, we imagine A to approach the clock with the velocity of light, he would see the hands pass over exactly double the space that they would appear to B to pass over; and if B receded from the station S with the velocity of light, then would the hands of the clock appear to him perfectly stationary. Let us suppose S to be opposite a point from which drops of water are uniformly falling; then if A, as before, similarly approached that point, he would see twice the number of drops fall that B would see if he remained stationary; and in order to see as many drops as A

saw, he would be obliged to recede from S at a rate three times that of light; but the drops of water would appear to him to be rising and not falling. It is true that perception of this apparent difference in that which is a reality, is utterly beyond the limits of our faculties; but we can conceive such an enlargement of their power, or such modification of matter, as would bring the occurrence of these appearances (which have here been introduced as undoubted facts, and not as the speculations of a visionary theory) strictly within the bounds of probability. And it is mathematically true, that to an individual approaching a clock, the hands must appear to move faster than they would appear to do to one who is receding or even stationary.^a A

^a Let a = the rate of travelling in feet per hour of A, who is approaching an ordinary clock; let $\frac{r}{6}$ = the length of the hour-hand in feet; and let P be its point: then r = the rate of P (nearly) as seen by a stationary observer in feet per hour; and let b = the velocity of light in feet per hour.

Required the ratio of the apparent difference of r as seen by A who approaches the clock, and by B who remains stationary at any distance from it.

Let r_1 = the rate of P as seen by A: then $\frac{r_1}{r}$ = ratio required.

Now in order to ascertain the position of P as apparent

familiar practical illustration of this idea, as applied to sound, is afforded by the fact, that soldiers marching in column, with the band

to A at any given point in his approach, the time occupied by him in travelling to that point must be added to the time required by light to travel the same distance, and this sum will be the amount of time apparently described to A upon the face of the clock :

$$\therefore r_1 = r + \frac{a}{b}r = \left(\frac{a}{b} + 1\right)r = \frac{a+b}{b} \cdot r;$$

$$\text{and } \frac{r_1}{r} = \frac{a+b}{b}.$$

Let A approach the clock with a velocity equal to that of light;

$$\text{then } \frac{a+b}{b} = 2, \text{ and } \frac{r_1}{r} = 2.$$

That is, P would appear to A to move with double the velocity with which it would appear to B to move. It would occupy the same length of time, and appear to pass over twice the space.

Let $a = 4.5280 = 21,120$, the ordinary walking pace of a man in feet per hour;

let $\frac{r}{6} = 5$, the hour-hand of a church-clock in feet;

then $r = 30$;

let $b = 200,000.5280.60.60$, the rate of light in feet per hour;

$$\text{then } \frac{a+b}{b} = \frac{3,801,600,021,120}{3,801,600,000,000} \text{ and } \frac{r_1}{r} = 1 + \frac{1}{180,000,000}$$

nearly.

In any given amount of time, therefore, P would appear to A to pass over a space greater by one 180 millionth than that which it would appear to B to pass over.

leading, are unable to keep time and step simultaneously.

We have said that it is possible to conceive the existence of beings "possessing senses similar to our own, similar in kind but immeasurably superior in degree;" but such beings are not purely imaginary, for have we not been taught that we ourselves shall be such when we "arise with our bodies" from the power of the grave, and ascend into everlasting habitations? If we, then, should pass from earth to heaven, and move at a rate alternately faster and slower than that of light, then would one and the same occurrence upon earth appear to our perceptive faculties as if repeated *ad infinitum*. And were we to travel to the sun at any speed whatever, we should, at our arrival there, have seen occurrences taking place in a duration of time (say) ten minutes less than they would have appeared to have occupied to a stationary observer, whether he were placed upon the earth or upon the sun, or remained in any other spot throughout space that was within the range of vision. And if we were to leave a star situated at such a distance from the earth that the passage of light from one to the other would occupy one hundred years,

and were to travel to our earth in one second of earthly time, we should in that single second perceive all the daily and annual revolutions of the earth, and all that had occurred among its inhabitants during the previous century. And if light travel (say) at ten times the speed of sound, we should hear all that had occurred during the previous thousand years. Were we then to return from the earth to that distant orb in one hundred years of earthly time, then should we hear distributed through those hundred years all that had taken place upon the earth during the preceding nine hundred, and a century would be the time given to us in which to observe the minute changes which would take place among visible objects during a single second.^a

^a “ Lord Rosse’s great telescope may at this very moment positively look backwards through time by the space of thirty millions of years, and be now revealing to us a star in the position it occupied at that vast distance in the past. Now we know that the sun, with his revolving planets, is approaching that star at a rate which will carry us through the whole intermediate distance in 250 millions of years, so that, if such star continued to exist, those identical changes in its aspect which, to the eye of a stationary observer, require 280 millions of years for their manifestation, would, to one who should accompany our earth in her immeasurable orbit, occupy but 250 millions of years

These views have been very ably and fully exemplified in a little work called "The Stars and the Earth," by an anonymous writer. And it is in his words that I propose to conclude this short inquiry into the nature of time:—

"We have to show that the phenomena of the universe which are referable to space and time may be . . . well conceived, as forming together a single point; . . . that a space of time which we call long or short, is actually and really caused by our human mode of comprehension.

"Let us suppose that from some given time, for example from to-day, the course of the stars and of our earth becomes twice as rapid as before, and that the year passes by in six months, each season in six weeks, and each day in twelve hours; that the period of the life of man is in like manner reduced to one half of its present duration, so that, speaking in general terms, the longest human life, instead of eighty years lasts for forty, each of which contains as many of the new days of twelve hours as the former years did when the days were twenty-four hours long; the drawing of our breath and the

in their occurrence, and would yet present the same proportional lengths of duration."

stroke of the pulse would proceed with double their usual rapidity, and our new period of life would appear to us of the normal length.

“ The hands of the clock would no longer make the circuit in one hour and in twelve, but the long hand in thirty minutes, the short one in six hours. The development of plants and animals would take place with double their usual speed, and the wind and the lightning would consume in their rapid course but one half of their present time.

“ With these suppositions, I ask in what way should we be affected by the change? The answer to this question is, We should be cognizant of no change. We should even consider one who supposed or who attempted to point out that such a change had taken place, was mad, or we should look upon him as an enthusiast. We should have no possible ground to consider that any other condition had existed.

“ Now, as we can determine the lapse of any period of time only by comparison or by measuring it with some other period, and as every division of time which we use in our comparison or in our measurements has been lessened by

one half its duration, the original proportion would still remain unchanged.

“ Our forty years would pass as the eighty did; we should perform everything twice as quickly as before; but as our life, our breath, and movements are proportionately hastened, it would be impossible to measure the increased speed, or even to remark it. As far as we could tell, everything had remained precisely as it was before, not comparative but absolutely, provided we had no standard external to the accelerated course of events in the world, by which we could perceive the changes or measure them.

“ A similar result would follow if we imagined the course of time reduced to the fourth, instead of to the half, so that the year would consist of three months, — the greatest age of man would be reduced to twenty of the present years, — and our entire life, with that of all the creatures about us, would be passed in a proportionately shortened period. In this case we should not only not perceive the change, but we should in reality suffer no change, since we should live to see every thing which we should otherwise have seen, and all the experience and the events of our life, in their duration and with their con-

sequences, would remain unchanged in the relations which they bear to one another.

“For the same reasons, if the period and processes of life, and the course of events in the world around us, were accelerated a thousand or a million times, or, in short, if they were infinitely shortened, we should obtain a similar result; and we can in this way imagine the entire course of the history of the world compressed into a single immeasurably short space of time, without our being able to perceive the change,—in fact, without our having undergone any change. For, whether any space of time is longer or shorter, is a question which can only be answered, and which can indeed only be looked upon, as reasonable, if we are able to compare the time to be measured with some other limited period; but not if we compare it to the endless duration which is looked upon as without beginning and without end, which we call ‘Time.’

“Hence the proposition that for the occurrence of any given event a certain lapse of time is requisite, may be altogether rejected. This time which elapses during the occurrence is rather accidental than necessary, and it might as easily

be any other period. . . . From all those considerations it becomes sufficiently clear that Time is merely a mode and condition by which the human mind, with the assistance of human senses, perceives the occurrence of events, whilst the events themselves, in all their fulness and perfection, may occur in a longer or a shorter time, and thus must be looked upon as independent of time. A thought or an idea is something momentary. He who has such an idea, has it entire and at once. But he who wishes to communicate it to others, requires for the purpose a certain time, just as such a space is also necessary for those to whom it is communicated. Hence time is not necessary for the origination or existence of the idea, but only for its communication and comprehension; and the idea exists as independently of time, as, according to the points we have discussed before, the entire history of the world can and must be looked upon as independent of time. *Time is only the rhythm of the world's history.*"^a . . .

The preceding facts and suppositions, which have been brought forward with the view of illustrating what we believe to be the true

^a The Stars and the Earth, p. 32.

theory of Time, will by some perhaps be thought uninteresting and visionary, while others may consider that they have little connexion with the subject. They have been designedly varied, and, upon careful examination, all will be found of greater or less force. But in this diversity it is hoped that every mind will meet with a point of view from which the real nature of Time may be seen in the wished-for light, and that we all, though selecting different roads, may together reach the same conclusion. Satisfactorily, however, to bring home to the mind all the illustrations that have been advanced will, it is true, demand from some a certain slight exertion of mental power; but their consideration will therefore form a fitting preparation for any effort of the intellect which may be required for the contemplation of Being purely immaterial in its character.

This, then, is the result when the word Time means one or more of those divisions which we have adopted for our own convenience; it is then, in the words of Locke, "the measure of duration." But when, irrespectively of any certain known amount of duration, it is used to give an idea either of a *part* or of the *whole* of

that passing Being itself which is of the past, the present, and the future, then time is not "the measure of duration;" on the contrary, continually broken succession is the measure of the whole duration of time, and of each arbitrary portion into which it has been divided. Each defined and limited portion,—a century, or ten thousand years, or that unknown length to which the whole duration of time shall have extended,—is pointed out not by unchanging duration, but by the broken and ever-changing succession of events which thus becomes a measure and an indicator.

It is change in succeeding events that determines the length of a day and of a year, that affixes their beginning and their end. It is the rotation of the earth that measures out the day; it is by the sun's apparent path among the constellations of the zodiac that the year is measured out and defined.

Time, then, is the result of successive changes in material form. As it is the chronicle in which these are recorded, so it is also measured by their duration; and as the aspect is varied under which these changes are presented to the observation of our senses, so must also vary the

apparent duration of that time of which they are measure. "The relation of these changes to each other is termed *the time of their occurrence*; that which changes the least frequently is said to be of *the longest duration*."^a

We must be careful to bear in mind that change in immaterial Being can give no idea of time. The consciousness that ideas now exist in the mind is independent of matter; and neither the contemplation of those ideas, nor the succession of others which arise from reflecting upon their mutual relation, can give any knowledge of time. If the mind take no note of material objects, the lapse of time cannot be perceived. In deep thought, in dreaming, and when the succession of ideas is rapid and their impression vivid, then is the mind far from all sensible objects, and all knowledge of time, nay, time itself, is lost. It is true that frequently we are conscious that a portion of time has passed by while we have been earnestly thinking; but this knowledge arises solely from the imperfection of mental operation. During the season of even most intense thought, momentary glimpses are caught of the outward world around us, and thus

^a Principles of the Human Mind, by Alfred Smece.

we obtain a faint and imperfect notion of the passage of time. And in those seasons which occur at least once to all, and it may be oftener, when the mind is entirely abstracted from all connexion with this material world, then it is that the events of a life pass before us in time the duration of which is inappreciable. "For the brief continuance at least of such moments of intense existence, the limits of time seem to be broken through or removed. To this class belong those brief intervals of rapture which are enjoyed in the midst of deep and earnest devotion, — or of proper ecstasy, which, so far as it is genuine and real, we cannot but consider as [the enjoyment of] an interval of eternity in the midst of time, or as a fleeting glance into the higher world of full and unchecked spiritual life. Even the inward wordless prayer, in so far as it is preceded by a real emotion of the heart profoundly agitating its inmost feelings, is, as it were, a drop of eternity falling through time into the soul."^a

It is thus evident that if we were totally unconscious of material change we should be unable to perceive succession, and could have no know-

^a Schlegel, p. 425.

ledge of time ; and that to a spiritual Being so placed, whether in his own nature good or evil, temporary or eternal, existence would occupy a continual present.

We find no difficulty in conceiving the idea of a greater or of a less duration of time. We perceive that an addition to time necessarily causes an increase in its duration ; we readily admit that the abstraction of any amount of time would necessarily cause a decrease in its duration. And successive additions and subtractions, by which we thus vary the whole duration of time, must necessarily be attended with increase or diminution proportional both to every single change and to the whole of time itself. When unlimited addition does not cause increase, such duration is not time, but eternity. When, after unlimited subtraction, duration still remains unchanged, such duration is not time, but eternity.

That Being which would be decreased by the continuous successive division of a limited portion must always remain in existence ; for, could it become nothing, there would be an end of the divisions, and they would not be continuous. That Being which may be increased by the suc-

cessive addition of limited parts must always remain limited, because were it to become infinite continued addition could not produce increase, nor could subtraction then cause diminution. Therefore, the addition or multiplication of limited Being, repeated without limit, does not equal the infinite. An unlimited number of feet is not infinity; an unlimited number of hours is not eternity.

We are utterly unable to imagine any limit to extended space. We naturally adopt the idea, incorrect though it be, that our earth is a central spot, and suppose that space extends equally in every direction. We are ever eager to penetrate deeper and still deeper into its illimitable bosom, and ever find the immeasurable still deepening before the utmost flight of imagination. Thus, even with our limited powers of mind, we have not the slightest difficulty in comprehending either the reality of infinitely extended space, or in admitting the possibility, and even high probability, that the suns and planets which throughout infinity follow out their appointed courses are endless in repetition. Now, as these orbs, infinite in number, do not, and cannot, fill the infinite space in which they

are revolving, we have here an evident illustration of our foregoing conclusion,—that the infinite repetition of limited Being does not equal infinity. “Time, however exaggeratedly it may be increased, never becomes eternity; for time is made up of a series of events, each having a beginning and an end. Eternity is not made up of events, and has therefore no beginning, no end.”^a

When stated portions of time are compared together, a certain fixed and unchanging proportion is the result; but we are accustomed to hear that the whole of time, and, consequently, that any portion of it, “becomes nothing when compared with eternity.” This reasoning, or rather assumption, appears to me the fruitful cause of difficulty; for we cannot, by any effort of the mind, really and truly understand how that which, when viewed in one light, is seen actually to exist, and to possess a fixed proportion, could, when viewed in another light, lose all its former properties, cease to be, and become as nothing. I hope that the reader who shall accompany me in the following pages will find in them, and in his own reflections,

^a Smee, p. 281.

sufficient reason for believing in the absolute difference of time from eternity: he will then remember that no comparison can be instituted between those things which are totally dissimilar; and he will readily see that, since time and eternity are in every respect different, they cannot be compared, and, consequently, that it is incorrect to state that "time becomes nothing when compared with eternity." It probably may, however, be considered that we have not proved the assertion that time and eternity are distinct. But as the reflections which are about to pass before us will throw additional light upon the question, it will be more satisfactory if we postpone its consideration for the present. We must therefore now proceed rather upon assumption than conviction, and recur hereafter to the contemplation of time, as distinguished from eternity. With those ideas, therefore, which we have obtained from the preceding views of time, let us once more return to the contemplation of the Infinite Past.

THE INFINITE PAST, OR BEING WITH-
OUT BEGINNING.

AND we now find that the Infinite Past is wholly distinct from Past Time, — that they bear no proportion, nor even mutual relation, whatever. Instead, therefore, of endeavouring to imagine some one point infinitely remote as the correct representative of the Infinite Past, let us rather regard it as Being continuous to the present, so that, when speaking of the Infinite Past, we may not form an incomplete and uncertain idea of some one point infinitely remote, but rather, if it be possible to conceive this idea, of a Being the duration of which is present and yet without beginning.

The Infinite Past! Being without Beginning; Being which has been from the Infinite Past; Being which has therefore never ceased; Being which must have existed in the instant immediately preceding the present; Being which was present as this thought floated in the imagination, but which was of the Infinite Past before

that thought was present; Being which is therefore not an infinitely distant point, but rather an infinite diffusion existing in the present. Such is the Infinite Past. Such is Being without beginning. The possibility may occur to some that, in the hidden depths of the future, changes may take place sufficient to alter the very nature of "Being without beginning." Although the Infinite Past exist as such up to the present, yet may Imagination possibly depict some point in the future at which Memory might recal the knowledge of Being without beginning, while from the same point she might also recal a certain period between that point and the existing present, at which Being without beginning had ceased to be without beginning. This view may not present itself to the mind of every one who contemplates the subject; and to many before whose vision it may have passed, the feature thus disclosed may not appear of sufficient importance to justify a pause in our onward course for its special examination.

But as it is expedient in long and abstruse arguments that the first principles should be apprehended with clearness and certainty, I proceed at once to examine this doubt. I

propose to inquire whether, notwithstanding the termination, such Being must still be regarded as without beginning.

It is to be admitted that we know neither the nature nor number of the attributes or properties which constitute Being without beginning. We are unable to distinguish those which are essential from those which are accidental, for such Being may be material or immaterial, ever-changing or throughout eternity the same, limited in extent or the occupant of infinity; but, however these may vary, it cannot possibly ever lose its peculiar property of being without beginning. That only can be called into existence which does not now exist. Therefore, that which does now exist cannot be called into existence. But to be called into existence is to receive a beginning.

That which now is cannot receive a beginning either in the present or in the future :

Being without beginning now is :

Therefore, Being without beginning cannot receive a beginning either in the present or in the future :

It therefore cannot be created in the past, in the present, or in the future :

Therefore Being, which is without beginning now, must ever be without beginning ; and could it possibly cease at an imagined point in the future, notwithstanding the termination, such Being must still be regarded as without beginning. So that, however other attributes of Being without beginning may throughout eternity vary in their nature or in their number, that peculiar attribute of duration in the Infinite Past which Being without beginning must have once possessed it now possesses in the present, and will possess in the future ; therefore the reasoning which we employ in the consideration of this peculiar attribute must ever be applicable, and the results we obtain correct, at whatever point that consideration may take place, for, whether contemplated from a point in the past, present, or in the future, Being without beginning is for ever without beginning.

There is, therefore, no point so far distant in the future but that Being without beginning must exist in the whole of the Infinite Past as contemplated from this point ; that is, since Being without beginning is now the Infinite Past, so must it also be the Infinite Past when that Infinite Past which continually receives addition

without increase includes not only the immediate Present, but also all that duration which is included between the Present and the Infinite Future. In other words, that which exists in the Infinite Past is now, and can never cease.

We have necessarily been led away from the immediate subject of discussion, and have indirectly and unintentionally arrived at the same conclusion to which we should have been conducted by the direct thread of argument. But the train of thought which this short digression has enabled us to pursue has effected the object of its introduction, and has convinced us that the truth of all ideas relating to the peculiar property of duration in the Infinite Past must be always the same, at whatever point of duration those ideas may be conceived. Let us now, therefore, return to the point of interruption, and ascertain whether there be any point at which Being without beginning can terminate.

We must now regard Being without beginning not only as that which has existed in the Infinite Past, but as that which is actually so existing, because we have seen that it is now, and must always continue, without beginning. Now we know that this property of existence without

beginning can never vary; consequently, from whatever point this Being may be contemplated, its aspect must ever be similar to that it now presents, that is, it must ever possess the property of existence; for if Being without beginning could by possibility have terminated at a certain point in the Past, then we should now be inquiring into the nature of Being having in the Present no actual existence, but yet continuing to possess that property of existence in the Infinite Past which, having once been possessed, can never be absent. Therefore, that which we should have been thus examining would be Being which is existing in the Infinite Past, but supposed to have ceased to exist at a certain point in the past, and therefore not now in existence.

The mind is naturally inclined, when discussing metaphysical questions, to seek assistance from the analogy of sensible objects. Nothing can be more erroneous. We are probably, at this moment, forming to ourselves some vague image of a chain, endlessly extending away from us, and we find no difficulty in believing that it may have a commencement at any certain distance. But that which we are

now attempting to comprehend must not be compared with a material object, or even conceived of as an imaginary mathematical line in space. We are speaking of duration, of Being without beginning, Being which, throughout eternity, is now enduring, is still forming a portion of existence, which is therefore now in existence. Now present existence, as a property of duration, proves presence, although it is probable that it is only in reference to duration, whether of time or eternity, that this reasoning is true, and that it cannot be correctly applied to any other object of thought, whether visible or invisible. But Being without beginning is now in existence ; it is therefore now present.

Again, if Being without beginning could terminate at a point in the future less distant from us than the Infinite Future, there would necessarily be a point in Time or in the Infinite Future yet more distant, from which Being without beginning could be contemplated, as continuing to exist in the Infinite Past, but as having ceased to exist at a certain point in the past, and, therefore, not in existence at that then present, but now future, imagined point of contemplation.

But we know that Being without beginning

does not and cannot terminate in the Infinite Past: however, therefore, we may assume its imaginary termination at some point of past, present, or future time, and consequently at some point describable by number, its existence must ever remain in the Infinite Past. Consequently such Being must be in existence at every imagined point of contemplation, whether that be past, present, or future. Thus at any point, however remote in the past or the future, Being which we now contemplate as without beginning must retain so much of its peculiar attribute as to enable it to be then similarly contemplated as without beginning, and consequently as existing in the Infinite Past. Being without beginning must therefore be in actual existence at that most remote past or future point of contemplation. It is Being which cannot be effaced; it is Being which has always existed, is now existing, and must always exist. As we thus see that the termination or destruction of any portion of Being without beginning is impossible, so also is it clear that all further beginning or creation of Being without beginning is likewise impossible, because the very act of creation would be the bestowal of a

beginning. Therefore the whole of Being without beginning is now present and can never cease. It can therefore neither be increased nor diminished; its duration is therefore infinite, and therefore equal to that of eternity. It is therefore equal to eternity, and therefore eternal.

Thus has there passed before us one of those two portions of duration which, at the commencement of our inquiry, we selected as together constituting Eternity. We have attempted to penetrate the mystery which overshadows the Infinite Past, and the truth of our conclusion is, I think, as evident as the abstruse nature of the subject will permit.

A similar chain of reasoning may be applied to the second part into which we have divided Eternity, and will prove that Being without end is now and has always been. But as the admission of this general proposition leads to important reflections, it is advisable to enter more fully into its examination.

THE INFINITE FUTURE, OR BEING
WITHOUT END.

WE are now about to consider the Infinite Future ; the Infinite Future, or Being without End.

There are three points of view from which Being without end may be regarded. It may be contemplated from a point in the past, in the present, or in the future ; for it must ever retain its peculiar attribute of Being without end, because, of whatever changes in its nature or its attributes eternity may be the witness, the Infinite Future must ever be without end. So that were Being without end possibly to receive a beginning in the past, present, or future, we are assured that, even admitting the possibility of that imagined point of creation, it must retain its peculiar attribute of Being without end : thus, as the property of Being without beginning cannot be bestowed, in the past, present, or future^a, so neither in the past, present, or future can be be-

^a See p. 55.

stowed the property of Being without end. Thus, however other properties of Being without end may vary, it must ever possess that of continuous existence. At the first glance, no difficulty appears to interfere with the supposition that Being without end can be created at any future point of time ; but, remembering that such Being is essentially different from all ordinary subjects of contemplation, let us endeavour to ascertain whether the facility with which assent to this supposition is yielded arises from a conviction of truth, or from carelessness in inquiry.

Now, if Being without end could be created at a point in the future, then we could readily imagine a point still further in the future at which Being without end would be in existence, but from which could be contemplated a point in the past beyond which such Being would have no existence. We should then be contemplating a point in the past beyond which Being without end had not existed, and we should perceive in the past the termination of such Being. But Being without end can never terminate, there can never be an end to its existence. Being without end is that which exists in the Infinite Future, and must for ever remain

so existing. If there exist a moment in the present, or a moment after the present, in which Being without end could not exist, then would there clearly be a portion of the future in which such Being is without existence; and it could not then be said to be the occupant of the Infinite Future, because before its birth a portion of that future would have passed away.

If such creation were possible, we should now be inquiring into the nature of Being which, according to the supposition, is not now in existence, but which must ever possess the property of Being without end. We are not speaking of a sensible object, or of imaginary extension, but of Being an end to the existence of which, were we to search throughout eternity, we should never find. It is Being which is now enduring without end, which is continually forming a part of existence, which, in its never-ending duration, is now actually in existence. But, in reference to duration, whether of time or of eternity, present existence proves presence. Being without end is therefore now present, and that which exists in the Infinite Future must exist in the whole of the future.

The present existence of Being without end

is an undoubted truth, and it is manifest that such Being must be not only existing in the present, but also that it must exist at every possible point in the future. Now, if this Being were created in the present, or had been created at any point in the past less distant from us than the Infinite Past, there must necessarily be a point or many points still further distant in the past that must have existed previously to its creation. Let the imagination travel back to this point in the past, and thence contemplate the future prospect. From that imaginary present but past point of contemplation, we should perceive another point in the future from which Being without end is to take its rise, and beyond which it would be existency in the Infinite Future — Being, be it remembered, not yet in existence at the point of contemplation, but nevertheless Being which cannot have an end. We have seen that the property of existing in the Infinite Future can never be absent ; that the property of Being without end can never be lost or destroyed. The Being therefore, the beginning of which we imagine at a point in the future, must be Being without end. But Being without end must be now present, and cannot receive a be-

ginning in the future ; there is, therefore, no point so far distant in the past but that Being without end must still be then existing.

Since, then, Being without end must exist in the Infinite Future, is now existing in the Present, and must have existed at any point in the past less distant than the Infinite Past, there remains no point of time in which it could have been created. Its duration, therefore, is the Infinite Past, and the Infinite Future must be Being without beginning.

ETERNITY.

ALTHOUGH it is always dangerous to treat subjects of this nature mathematically, it might, however, be satisfactory to some if the true nature of Eternity could be thus illustrated. We therefore propose to introduce what is in fact merely an attempt at such an examination, expressing a doubt as to its aptitude.

But, before we attempt to enter into this mathematical inquiry, let us turn our attention to a mode of expression which, although it may be well adapted for ordinary discussion, appears to be susceptible of improvement when applied to the subject now under consideration. The sense will not be altered, but we shall make use of language which carries clearer meaning, and is, I think, calculated to lead us more readily to a correct result. I propose here to employ the word *end* (the term of logicians) whether alluding to the beginning or to the termination of any portion of space or of duration. A short illustration will explain my intention. Let us imagine

in the past, present, or future, a material object O, which during the continuance of its limited existence occupies a portion of space or a portion of duration, and let us in each case suppose this portion to be included between A and B. Now, with reference both to space and duration, it is manifestly of no importance whatever whether A or B represent that point which would ordinarily be called the end of O, because while we dwell upon the portion of space included between A and B we are regarding that amount of extent which O occupied; and when we pass either A or B we enter that portion of space wherein O has no existence, or we are regarding that portion of duration wherein O existed; and when we pass either A or B we enter that portion of duration wherein O has no existence: that is, both A and B represent the termination of the existence of O, whether considered in reference to space or to duration.

Therefore, in this sense, the word *end* may be correctly applied to the beginning and to the termination of any portion of space or of duration.

Let us once more conceive the idea of Being without beginning, that is, the idea of a portion of duration which extends into the Infinite Past ;

and let us also once more conceive the idea of Being without end, that is, of duration which extends into the Infinite Future; and, if it be possible, let us conceive the termination of the Infinite Past or of the Infinite Future at some fixed point in the past, present, or future. And let us represent this portion of duration by the letter E, and let the point of termination be represented by T. That is, E has existed in the Infinite Past, or will exist in the Infinite Future, but terminates when T is present. Now if, as before, we suppose this space to be included between A and B, then T must coincide either with A or B. If T coincide with A, that is, if E cease at A, then B must represent continuous duration, or eternity. If T coincide with B, then A must represent continuous duration, or eternity. First let us suppose that T coincide with A, that is, that the duration of E is limited by A; but, by our hypothesis, E is without termination towards B, for B must represent infinite duration either in the past or in the future. Now, how far soever we may imagine B to recede, E still continues in existence, for it is without one end; it therefore never ceases to be, it actually and really endures. It is not of a material

object of which we now speak, but simply of a duration; so that by finding there is no limit to the extension of E in the direction indicated by B we cannot avoid the conclusion that E now is, that is, is present. Now exactly the same mode of reasoning may be applied to the second supposition, that T coincide with B, and the result will be the same: so that we have in a general form examined the question under both aspects, — the one upon the supposition, according to ordinary language, that A represented the beginning and B the end, and the other that B represented the beginning and A the end, of the supposed duration E. We have thus proved that neither the Infinite Past nor the Infinite Future can terminate in any point, whether past, present, or future. Therefore that which exists in the Infinite Past is now, and can never cease:

That which will never cease is now, and is without beginning.

Hence we derive two further conclusions:

It cannot be possible that Being which will have an end can be without beginning, for if so it would then possess the character of the Infinite Past without existence in the Infinite Future; and since we know that that which exists in the

Infinite Past is now and can never cease, we also learn, 1st, that

That which will have an end in duration may be now, but must have had a beginning in duration.

2nd. We learn similarly, that

That which has had a beginning in duration may be now, but must have an end in duration.

It thus appears, that by travelling into the Infinite Past or into the Infinite Future we arrive at the present ; that the Infinite Past and the Infinite Future are literally and absolutely present.

Being without beginning is that which exists in the Infinite Past, and must be for ever so existing there ; it is now actual living Being. It cannot be measured by time, for infinity is its dwelling-place. It therefore cannot be divided into limited parts, because time would thus become its measure, and the repetition of limited Being would thus be made to equal that which is infinite. But if Being without beginning could have ceased (in some point of the past), then would time become its measure, for it would be time that measured, pointed out, and recorded its termination.

Thus, too, Being without end is that which exists in the Infinite Future, and must be for ever

so existing there ; it is now actual living Being. It cannot be measured by time, for infinity is its dwelling-place. It cannot be divided into limited parts, for the repetition of limited Being would thus be made to equal the infinite, and by time would the duration of each be measured. It cannot begin to be at any point in the past, present, and future, for it would then be time that would record, measure, or point out its commencement.

Since, then, Being without beginning embraces the Infinite Past, and cannot be measured by time, it cannot be increased by addition. Its duration is therefore infinite, and therefore equal to that of eternity, and therefore eternal.

Since, too, Being without end embraces the Infinite Future, and cannot be measured by time, it cannot be increased by addition. Its duration is therefore infinite, and therefore equal to that of eternity, and therefore eternal. Thus, Being without beginning is eternal and indivisible ; Being without end is eternal and indivisible ; therefore also is Eternity indivisible. Thus, then, we learn that Eternity cannot in truth be divided into the Infinite Past and the Infinite Future. It is one single duration, an Everlasting Present, without past and without future.

“We cannot, indeed, understand what it is to exist without any relation to Time; yet we cannot but conclude, both from reason and revelation, that with Him, the great I AM, there can be no distinction of past, present, and future, but that all things must be eternally present; since all our notions of time may be clearly traced up to the *succession* of ideas or impressions on our minds, which succession cannot be supposed to take place with an Omniscient Being: so that the couplet of the poet Cowley, which has been by some laughed to scorn as absurd, will be found, if we duly consider it, to be the most appropriate expression possible of such imperfect and indistinct notions as alone we can entertain on such a subject.

‘ Nothing there is to come, and nothing past,
But an eternal *now* does ever last.’^a

Thus, while time is fleeting by, leaving in the far distance that which has been, approaching ever nearer that which is to come, and is thus recording upon its rapid pages the scenes of the past, the present, and the future, still does Eternity know no change, still is it one and

^a Essays on the Christian Religion, by Richard Whateley, D.D. (Archbishop of Dublin).

indivisible, still does it remain immutable, an infinite, everlasting Present.

This idea of Eternity, then, which we are contemplating as the representative of the absolute Present, very closely approaches to that entertained by Boethius, who defines eternity as "*Interminabilis vitæ tota simul et perfecta possessio*;" the perfect possession of a whole endless existence altogether:^a and it is perhaps exactly represented by the "*perpetuum nunc*" of an earlier philosophy.

It is therefore clearly incorrect to speak of that which takes place in eternity either in the past or in the future tense: and in great probability it may be similarly so to speak of it even in the present tense, for the past, the present, and the future are properties of time; and as we believe that time and eternity are distinct, the assumption that they possessed any property in common might be productive of error. But language is for a finite capacity, and fails at once when she attempts to describe the infinite. We are, however, compelled to adopt some mode of expression; and if, in all further consideration, we select the present tense, we shall, I think, be less open to error, and convey the full meaning

^a Boethius, De Consol. Philos. lib. v. par. 6.

of our ideas in terms the most expressive that can be attained. Indeed, after the conclusions to which we have arrived, we must conceive Eternity as Being absolutely and always present : but we must bear in mind that this expression may not be logically correct ; for we cannot but be aware that there is something wanting that would enable us perfectly to succeed in description. But if the reader feels with me the insufficiency of language, and it may well be that of mental power also, I am content. I shall rest in the belief that his ideas are in unison with my own. Thought is more subtle than speech, and can alone satisfy the comprehension.

“ Before Abraham was, I am ; I am that I am, which is, and which was, and which is to come.”

I will here introduce, from Dr. Adam Clarke’s analysis of Genesis, a few words which, although proving that the view we have taken of Time presents no feature of novelty, add materially to its effect, and increase the probability that it has been correctly drawn : —

“ Before the creative acts mentioned in this [first] chapter [of Genesis], all was eternity. *Time* signifies *duration* measured by the revolutions of the heavenly bodies ; but prior to the

creation of these bodies there could be no measurement of duration, and consequently no *time*; therefore, *In the beginning* must necessarily mean the commencement of time which followed, or rather was produced by God's creative acts, as an effect follows or is produced by a cause." But from this passage we may also learn how great is the caution required in treating of such subjects as time and eternity. Since "in the beginning" must mean "the commencement of time produced by creative acts," it can scarcely be correct to say that "*before* these creative acts all was eternity," or that "*prior* to the creation of the heavenly bodies there could be no measurement of time." We cannot speak of existence or of Being previous to the creation of time, neither can we speak of Being subsequent to its destruction; for we can conceive neither priority nor consequence without entertaining the idea of time. We should, in fact, be describing the existence of Being in relation to time, and as measured by it previous to the creation of time and after its termination. We must therefore be careful not to imagine that time has been created and will end in the midst of a continuous existence of eternity extending itself in the past

and in the future beyond the beginning and end of time.

Neither the end of time nor its beginning is the beginning of eternity ; for eternity now is. Neither is it the beginning of our perception of eternity ; for the believing soul during the short season of her mortal imprisonment succeeds at times in throwing aside the fetters which chain her to this world of sense, and soars again amid the infinite. Then it is that she breathes the air of immortality, and knows that she is a participator in the eternal. But we are looking forward to the end of time in the hope that in that moment the full unclouded light of the now present ever-existing perfect Eternity will be poured forth upon us, and that then we shall know even as we are known.

REPEATED MANIFESTATION OF TIME.

AND here the ever-flowing stream of thought brings before us another idea for contemplation. The beginning of succession in the change of material objects was the beginning of time, and the end of that succession will be the end of time. "We . . . believe that matter owes its properties to a power conferred upon it by the omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, eternal Creator, who first by His almighty fiat commanded matter to attract, and who, by the same almighty fiat, may at any instant will attraction to cease; when worlds would end, when time would be no more. As far as regards all material properties, He must have absolute power. At any moment He may dissolve the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, and as instantaneously summon their particles to assume new shapes, to occupy new positions. This infinite power, or omnipotence, is totally of a different character from our power, which is derived from the properties of matter. Man's boasted power is derived from

availing himself of attraction. The Deity can control that property, and from that we infer the attribute of Omnipotence." ^a By Omnipotence were and are all things created. By that same infinite power, and by that alone, can be destroyed all that has been, that now is, or that ever shall be; and that same Omnipotent Will can again create a repetition of that which is destroyed. All created things, and time itself, then, look to the Great First Cause from whom they have their being. He willed that material form should be, and that time should be the consequence. His will it is that, at the appointed hour, created form should be destroyed and time should end. And at His will can created form and time itself be again created.

May not, then, all-revealing Eternity be witnessing the creation of yet another Time, distinct from that which we now perceive,—the second creation of Time,—of another, yet of one in all respects the same? Is, then, this our present Time the first that has been created? May it not be that very second creation the possibility of which we have just admitted? Nay, not the

^a The Sources of Physical Science, by Alfred Smee, p. 282.

second, nor the third;—it may be that number is insufficient to determine its order. To Omnipotence all things are possible. Who can affix a limit to the repetition of creation? Who can tell the times that form may have arisen out of chaos? or who can count those days that may have witnessed again and again the end of all things, that may have seen the elements of former creations melt again and again with fervid heat, and yield to the formless void? Who, then, are those angels and ministering spirits of whom we read as of beings of another creation? May they not be erring spirits who have passed through their season of trial, in an order and in time essentially distinct from our own? It may be, that they have been embodied spirits who have lived in unconnected durations of time, each distinct and finite in itself. And the repetition of such durations of time may in themselves be unnumbered; for we have already seen that even the infinitely repeated multiplication of limited Being cannot produce infinity. The unlimited repetition, therefore, of portions of time cannot be eternity.

The supposition, therefore, of such infinitely repeated creations of time is not a hypothesis the

possibility of which is doubtful. On the contrary, we cannot but understand the ideas which this train of thought has suggested; and the possibility of such acts of Omnipotence is, to all believers in revelation, clear and undoubted. Before the mind of all such they will assume a form of greater or less probability. Many, assuredly, are indisposed to limit the works of Omnipotence to a single creation of material form, and consequently of time. With the greater joy, then, will they hail the idea of infinite repetition, believing that it shadows forth faintly, yet worthily, one mighty attribute of their Creator. And yet further may it be permitted for such with reverence to direct the eye of thought, and to look upon the angels of heaven as beings who have in other time passed through that same valley of the shadow of death which is our lot, and who are now enjoying the same light of truth which will be our reward.

The repeated manifestation of time is a dispensation in accordance with the conclusion which we have formed in relation to the nature of time and eternity. Were this otherwise, those conclusions would be at once proved

erroneous, because every Christian admits the possibility of such repeated creation.

We now proceed to consider the question of probability.

We have absolute knowledge of the existence of two forms of duration. We believe in Eternity, and we know that Time has had a beginning and will have an end, and is therefore not eternal. Now, if the whole of all time be one fixed and determinate duration, eternity could not have existed before its beginning, since, if the whole of time that has ever been began six thousand or any fixed number of years ago, it is manifestly and utterly impossible that there should have been any existence whatever before those six thousand years began, because the very expression "before" implies necessarily the previous existence of succession, and therefore of time. Eternity manifestly cannot be before or after time, because it is time alone that can give priority or consequence. Neither can time be before or after eternity, because eternity is an everlasting present. Time, therefore, is essential to the presence of eternity. Time and eternity dwell each in the presence of the other. Where time is, there must eternity be also. But if the

whole existence of time, which must thus be manifested throughout the infinite eternity, were not broken into distinct and independent parts, parts, it may be, unlimited in number, then would such Being be one continuous duration, without beginning and without end; that is, time would be eternity, which is absurd. There must therefore be more than one distinct duration of time. But since eternity is Being everlastingly present, embracing the Infinite Future and the Infinite Past, it must be present when our now present duration is without existence; it must be present in the duration of yet another time, the end of which was the beginning of the present æra of creation. This other duration of time must likewise have had a beginning, pointed out by the end of a duration still more remote. Thus, too, will the end of our present temporary creation be the beginning of another similar creation of form, and of yet another duration of time. The present dispensation will pass away, and then "blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection."^a He will behold how "the heavens shall wax old as doth a garment, and shall be changed;"^b and his speech will be of

^a Rev. xx. 6.

^b Heb. i. 11, 12.

praise and thanksgiving, as the words of the Apostle are fulfilled, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away."^a

The creation of two distinct manifestations of time is, then, a reality; but it is clear that one cannot be before or after the other, because, between the separate duration of each, time would not be in existence, and, consequently, succession could neither be measured nor defined. But we are compelled to apply the same chain of thought to every distinct creation of time; and however great a number we may assign to these durations of time, there must, if that number be limited, be a beginning and a termination to the series. If the repeated creations of time could be described by number, then would they be limited in amount, and the difficulty which opposes the idea of existence before the beginning of time, or after its destruction, though thus removed to a greater distance, would still remain insuperable. The distinct and separate durations of our earthly sensible time, each limited in itself, are therefore un-

^a Rev. xxi. 1.

limited in number, and are all manifested in the presence of indivisible eternity.

We have now finished our separate examinations of Time and Eternity, and it only remains for us to bring both into the same point of view; and this I propose to do by introducing the words of Schlegel, which point out the way in which he seeks to establish a certain relation—for proportion there can be none—between Time and Eternity.

TIME AND ETERNITY.

“ So long as we believe in a great and irreconcilable contrariety between time and eternity, . . . we cannot hope to extricate ourselves from the labyrinth in which external things and our own internal reflections involve the mind. This can only be effected by the idea of a two-fold time, such as it is our purpose accurately to define and bring before you. And this notion of a two-fold time arises from the difference between the one perfect and blissful time which is nought else than the inner pulse of life in an ever-flowing eternity, without beginning and without end, and that other time which is prisoned and fettered in this lower world of sense, where the stern present alone is prominent. . . . But now, if eternity is nothing else than time vitally full, illimitably perfect, and blissfully complete, who, we may ask, first of all caused or produced this earthly, fettered, and fragmentary time, which seems but the great bond-chain of the whole world of sense? and what then is this time

itself? I might answer this latter question by the words of the poet, that it 'is out of joint.'^a

“Now if eternity is in itself and originally nothing more than the living, full, and essential time which is still invisible, and if our earthly, shackled, and fettered time of sense is but an eternity ‘out of joint’ or fallen a prey to disorder, it is easily conceivable that the two do not stand apart and have no mutual contact. On this hypothesis they may possess many a common point of transition from one sphere into the other. At least, such a point of transition is in general experience afforded us by death, which is mostly looked upon and regarded in this light.”^b

In denying absolute contrariety between time and eternity, the supporters of this line of argument are compelled to admit a two-fold time; that is, the simultaneous existence of two perfectly distinct kinds of time, between which there is no opposition nor contrariety. The one form represents that time which is perceptible to our senses, which we have defined as the result of successive change in material forms; the other

^a Hamlet, Act 1. Sc. 5.

^a Schlegel, p. 416.

form of time is called eternity, our idea of which appears exactly to correspond with that entertained by Schlegel.

“The question, therefore, is properly to determine whether there exists such an absolute opposition between time and eternity, that it is impossible for them to subsist in any mutual contract or relation but the one necessarily leads to the negation of the other, or whether at least there is not some conceivable transition from one to the other.”

Here the view which we have taken is, I think, to a certain extent the same as that of Schlegel, for the course of our reflections has led us to believe with him “that time and eternity are not incompatible with, or in hostile and irreconcilable opposition to, each other;” that “their ideas do not mutually destroy each other;” and that they dwell each in the presence of the other. We both believe that time is a characteristic feature of “this world of sense,” and that “eternity is infinite, not only ‘*a parte externâ,*’ i. e. everpassing yet everlasting, without beginning and without end; but also infinite ‘*a parte internâ,*’ so that in the endlessly living, thoroughly

^a Schlegel, p. 416.

luminous present, and in the blissful consciousness thereof, the whole past and also the whole future are equally actual, equally clear, and equally present as the very present itself.”^a

Eternity is Being which can receive neither increase nor diminution. No amount added to or taken from eternity can produce change in duration. Eternity endures for ever, and can therefore neither be lengthened nor shortened; but whatever may have been the duration of time, addition would cause increase, subtraction, diminution.

Eternity has neither past nor future; for we have seen that the Infinite Past and the Infinite Future meet and are united in the Eternal Present. Neither does eternity know aught of proportion or relation; for it is without change, ever-present and indivisible. But time ever varies, can be divided into relative proportions, and is chronicled in the past, the present, and the future. Eternity is one; in duration infinite, in creation without repetition. Time is manifold; in duration limited, in creation infinitely repeated. Part of time is present; it cannot be measured, for it is inconceivably small. The whole of eternity is

^a Schlegel, p. 414.

present; it cannot be measured, for it is infinite. The presence of eternity is unbounded; but the present time has two limits. If we cross the one, we enter into the past; if we cross the other, we enter into the future. The past, likewise, has two limits. If we cross the one, we enter the present sensible time; if we cross the other, we pass the beginning of our existing duration of time, but continue in ever-present eternity. Thus, too, has the future two limits. If we cross the one, we enter present sensible time; if we cross the other, we pass the end of this our time, but continue in present ever-existing eternity, in Being without beginning and without end.

Such is Time, and such is Eternity. Can it, then, be correct to call Being, in nature so different from our earthly time, as but one of a twofold form of time? And are we not too hasty if we believe that "the time which is 'out of joint,' the deranged and distracted time of sense, is nought but eternity fallen or brought into a state of disorder"?^a

Should we not with caution entertain the question which must necessarily arise, — "Who can have plunged it into disorder, and perpetrated

^a Schlegel, p. 419.

this jarring interference with the primæval harmony, disturbing the inner pulse of the world's universal life which was originally so sound?" If so, with much greater caution must be received the answer,—that "the power or might which threw both time and existence, universal life and the whole world, into disorder, could have been no other than the spirit of absolute negation, which rose in revolt against the primary Source both of itself and of all:" the "spirit of eternal contradiction and endless destruction, 'the Prince and Ruler of this world.'"

The nature of time must ever be the same; for if, in its onward course, aught of difference were to arise, then would it be time no longer, and would cease to be that same time which had hitherto been the subject of contemplation. Time is not eternity fallen into disorder. It is not a consequence of Satan's successful lies, and is not a part of the curse pronounced upon man's disobedience; because time was created before the fall of man; and such as time was in the beginning, such is it in the present.

Both time and eternity came from the hand of their Maker perfect and without blemish. Both were the ministers of man in his innocence, and

adapted to his twofold nature. His soul, in her aspirations and her longings, is the spiritual inhabitant of eternity; and time is the historian of his bodily actions, and by its aid are they performed. In the pages of Time is chronicled every event that has occurred since the creation of form. Time, too, saw the birth of evil upon earth, but it affords the means of man's justification, and will witness the restoration of his spirit; for it was Time whose early youth hailed the birth of the first father of mankind, — who looked upon his brow, and in solemn admiration there beheld the impressed image of his Maker, — who bowed down before the innocence of man, and was subject to him. It was Time, too, who, ere many days were numbered, saw the immortal spirit yielding to temptation, and mourned the first transgression. But thou, Time, hast hearkened unto the voice of thy Creator, and art fulfilling His command. To thee was power given over him who had offended. Thy burdens are weighty, and sorely dost thou deal with each child of man. But although the hand thou layest upon him is heavy with affliction, yet is it tempered with mercy, and leads the willing spirit to salvation. Thou art performing thy appointed

duty, and in the book of judgment dost record each inmost thought of him who has fallen from his high estate. In thy sight, too, was fulfilled the whole scheme of redeeming love. Thou didst behold how, "by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men unto condemnation, and that by one man's disobedience many were made sinners." But thy eye saw, too, the one great Sacrifice through which, "by the righteousness of One, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life," and how, "by the obedience of One, shall many be made righteous." In thy hearing was uttered the "good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people;" and thy ear heard the "multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men." In thy presence, too, passed those fearful hours when "the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst;" and before thee were uttered those words of more than human import, "It is finished!"

But at the appointed hour in which, through the merits of another, man shall enter into his perfect state, and his soul shall regain her lost innocence, thou wilt once again become his minis-

tering spirit; for when thou shalt have run thy course, and the voice of the angel shall "swear by Him that liveth for ever and ever, that there should be time no longer," then, as thou yieldest up thy life to Him who gave it, thou wilt open to man the gates of everlasting habitations, and with thy last breath thou wilt disperse every cloud which shall shroud the Infinite!

THE IMMATERIAL.

WE have obtained from our inquiries into the nature of time and eternity these four general principles : —

1. That which exists in the Infinite Past is now, and can never end.
2. That which can never end, is now, and exists in the Infinite Past.
3. That which has had a beginning, may be now, but must have an end.
4. That which has an end, may be now, but must have a beginning.

Let us now hasten to make the first and most noble application of these truths :

1. The Great First Cause exists in the Infinite Past.
THEREFORE, The Great First Cause is now, and can never end.
2. The Great First Cause is without end.
THEREFORE, The Great First Cause is now, and exists in the Infinite Past.
3. “Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the

foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands.”^a They all have had a beginning.

THEREFORE, “They shall perish; but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but Thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.”^b

4. “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”^c These all will have an end. “There is an eternity in which death and sorrow shall have no more dominion.”

THEREFORE, There has been a time “when He prepared the heavens, when He established the clouds above, when He strengthened the foundations of the deep, when He appointed the foundations of the earth.”^d

THEREFORE also, “We know that the whole

^a Heb. i. 10.

^b Heb. i. 11, 12.

^c Rev. xxi. 1. 4.

^d Prov. viii. 27.

creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.”^a

THEREFORE also, There was a time when “sin entered into the world, and death by sin.”^b

These evidences of the eternity of Omnipotence bring forcibly before us the truth, that death, and sin, and all earthly things, whether visible or invisible, are to our faculties of a temporary nature; and they lead us to the contemplation of the Author of all the great mysterious perfection of the Immaterial. But far be from us any intention to describe His incomprehensible attributes. Let it rather be our hope to remove that gross and material perception of them which some of us entertain, and to behold them in the clearest light which is at present permitted. “To have ascertained and to perceive *a* reason for anything that God has done, is far different from perceiving *the* reason; though the two are often confounded.”^c

So, to believe that we may now possess *a* more just and enlightened idea of the Divine attributes than we have yet had, is far different from the impious boast of pride,—that it comprehends

^a Rom. viii. 22.

^b Rom. v. 12.

^c Whateley's Essays, p. 165.

the thoughts of the Creator. Thus, then, will we proceed, neither forgetting the necessity of deep reverence and humility, nor that the attainment of even limited success requires the exercise of man's highest faculties; for, "though it is easy to say that we ought to love and worship, as well as reverence and fear, the Supreme Being, yet nothing is in fact more difficult for such a creature as man, surrounded too, as he is, by gross material objects, and necessarily occupied in worldly pursuits, than to lift up his thoughts and affections to God. A Being whose nature is so incomprehensible that our knowledge of Him is chiefly negative; of whom we know not so much what He is, as what He is *not*;—it is difficult to make even a steady object of thought. Now we believe that God is a *Spirit*; but we have a very faint notion of the nature of a *Spirit*, except in respect of its being *not* a body. God is *eternal*; but we are bewildered with the very idea of Eternity, of which we only know that it is *without* beginning and *without* end: we say that the Divine attributes are infinite; i. e., *not* bounded, *unlimited*. And even where our knowledge of God extends beyond mere negatives, we cannot but perceive, on attentive reflection, that the attributes as-

signed to the Deity must, in reality, be such, in Him, as the ordinary sense of those same terms when applied to men can but very faintly shadow out. But the difficulty is still greater when we attempt to set our *affections* on this awful and inconceivable Being;—to address as a tender parent Him who has formed out of nothing, and could annihilate in a moment, countless myriads, perhaps, of worlds, besides our own, and to whom “the nations are but as the drop of a bucket, and the small dust of a balance;”—to offer our tribute of praise and obedience to Him who can neither be benefited nor hurt by us;—to implore favour and deprecate punishment from Him who has no passions or wants as we have;—to confess our sins before Him who is exempt not only from all sin, but from all human infirmities and temptations;—and, in short, to hold spiritual intercourse with One with whom we can have no sympathy, and of whom we can with difficulty form any clear conception.

“And this difficulty is not diminished, but rather increased, in proportion as man advances in refinement of notions, in cultivation of intellect, and in habits of profound philosophical reflection, and thus becomes less gross in his ideas of the

Supreme Being. To the dull and puerile understandings of a semi-barbarous nation, such as the Israelites at the time of Moses, many of the circumstances just mentioned would be less likely to occur than to those of a more enlightened people; and an habitual and practical piety would accordingly have been more easy of attainment to them — while favoured, as they were, with frequent sensible Divine interpositions of various kinds, and continually addressed by prophets in the name of the Lord, Jehovah, the tutelary God of their nation,—than to men of more enlarged minds and more thoughtful habits *not* favoured with the Gospel-revelation.

“These impediments to devotion it is probable the apostle John had in mind when he said, ‘No man hath seen God at any time;’ and he seems to have conceived the ‘declaration’ of God by Jesus Christ was calculated, not, indeed, wholly to remove these impediments, but so far to moderate and lower them as to leave no insuperable difficulty to a willing mind.”^a

We must be careful not to imagine that the immaterial is simply the opposite of matter; for within a receiver, exhausted in the most absolute

^a Whateley’s Essays, p. 167. *et seq.*

sense, in which there remains neither air, nor light, nor electricity, nor material Being of any kind whatever, whether visible or invisible, the immaterial may in one sense be said to dwell. But, although the interior of such receiver is in opposition to matter, it may or may not be that which is immaterial, for the exclusion of matter and material properties does not necessarily cause either the presence or absence of the immaterial. The idea thus given is simply negative, and is inapplicable to that actual Being of which we are in search: our thoughts should rather seek to realise to our mind an image from which all positive principle is not thus excluded.

“ The attributes of the Creator of all material particles, naturally form a subject of the most sublime contemplation for all beings endowed with reason sufficient for that purpose. But here again we must refer to our incapacity to enter into a subject so much beyond human understanding; for man can only appreciate things which are material, and which, by virtue of their properties, communicate impressions through material organs to the human mind. We find that we cannot determine the absolute attributes of the Deity from physical science, but only infer

certain attributes by not attributing to His divinity the properties of matter, which solely derives its properties through the exertion of His power. In fact, nothing is more erroneous than the comparison of [physical] perfections in God with natural qualities in man. Out of this have arisen incalculable mistakes.”^a

It is, no doubt, true that the first impulse of “our reason teaches us to ascribe these attributes to God by way of resemblance and analogy to such qualities and powers as we find most valuable and perfect in ourselves.”

And “if we look into the Holy Scriptures, and consider the representations given us there of God or his attributes, we shall find them generally of the same nature, and plainly borrowed from some resemblance to things with which we are acquainted by our senses. Thus, when the Holy Scriptures speak of God, they ascribe hands, and eyes, and feet to Him : not that it is designed that we should believe that He has any of these members according to the literal signification, but the meaning is, that He has a power to execute all those acts to the effecting of which these parts in us are instrumental ; that is, He

^a Smee's Sources of Physical Science, p. 278.

can converse with men as well as if He had a tongue and mouth ; He can discern all that we do or say as perfectly as if He had eyes and ears ; He can reach us as well as if He had hands and feet ; He has as true and substantial a being as if He had a body ; and He is as truly present everywhere as if that body were infinitely extended. And in truth, if all these things which are thus ascribed to Him did really and literally belong to Him, He could not do what He does near so effectually as we conceive and are sure He doth them by the faculties and properties which He really possesses, though what they are in themselves be unknown to us.”^a

“If we review the properties of matter, we find that its first property is number ; that the juxtaposition of units forms addition and multiplication, and the mass of matter so formed is susceptible of diminution and division. The material character of number forbids us to attach that property to the attributes of the Almighty ; for His attributes are clearly immaterial, having no connection with the properties which His mighty power caused matter to evince. Natural philosophy, therefore, teaches us that the Al-

^a Dr. King’s Sermon, § 4. p. 6—10.

mighty has no relation to number; that, consequently, He is indivisible and incapable of addition.

“As we must discard the very idea of number as being an attribute of God, so must we also deny the possibility of any attribute arising from attracted number. We cannot, therefore, give to His majesty form or size, for these are properties of His created matter. His presence, moreover, cannot be limited to one spot, for position is a material effect. He must extend over space, and, consequently, omnipresence must be a characteristic attribute of His greatness.

“His omnipresence cannot be interfered with by the presence in certain positions of created matter. Impenetrability is a property of matter perhaps by virtue of attraction, and therefore cannot interfere with the immaterial. The omnipresence of the Deity will not be prevented by attracted matter; but He must be present in the structure of the hardest stones, the most massy rocks, — in fact, throughout the matter of this great globe, and even throughout the matter existing over the universe. . . .

“The power which conferred attraction on matter is present, not only where matter is, but

even where matter is not ; inasmuch as position is a material phenomenon. In consequence of that omnipresence, we may infer that He is cognisant of every alteration of each respective particle of matter, which omniscience is called the omnipresence of the Deity. Our material bodies allow certain expressions to be carried to the mind through certain material organs called the senses ; and therefore we only appreciate those impressions which act upon those senses. His omnipresence must know every single change without respect to any material conditions. His omniscience cannot be interfered with by darkness, quiescence, or temperature. Darkness is no darkness with Him ; the stillness of an action cannot cause it to be hid from His observation. His omniscience is derived from omnipresence ; not from the properties of matter, from which man derives his knowledge. . . .

“ It is useless to conceal that these great and glorious perfections are quite incomprehensible to our senses : we can only appreciate material impressions ; all else is quite incomprehensible to our mind. To say that God has no relation to number, is as unintelligible as His omnipre-

sence, His omniscience, or His eternity. We cannot conceive the nature of such attributes, though we are compelled to believe them, because we cannot conceive that such attributes should not exist.

“What other attributes belong to the Almighty we are incapable of ascertaining by physical science; and even the contemplation of these we must admit will suffice to fill our minds with an amazement productive of reverence, submission, and humility.”^a

“Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both

^a Smee's Sources of Physical Science, p. 279.

alike to thee. Thou knowest my downsit-
ting and mine uprising, thou understandest my
thought afar off. Thou compassest my path
and my lying down, and art acquainted with
all my ways. For there is not a word in my
tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it alto-
gether.”^a

Thus have we raised our thoughts to that
Spiritual Being of supreme goodness, that In-
finite Immaterial, the “High and Lofty One
that inhabiteth eternity;” whose diffusion em-
braces unbounded space, and whose life-giving
essence yet dwelleth in the secret soul of every
one that keepeth His commandments; who is in
heaven the “Creator,” in hell^b the “Friend of
Sinners,”^c and on earth the “Mediator;” who is
“the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.”^d

But the ideas of the Divine attributes which
we have here attained have arisen from contem-
plating the distinction of matter from the imma-
terial. The extracts which have been introduced
extend, I fear, already too far; but should any
doubt the truth of the result which they exhibit,
a reference to the originals, where the argument

^a Psalm cxxxix.

^b See 1 Pet. iii. 19.

^c Matt. xi. 19.

^d Heb. xiii. 8.

is fully stated, would, I think, remove all hesitation.

Admitting, then, and with justice, the correctness of these views, we perceive at once that they must be universally applicable to all that is immaterial, and cannot be restricted to the Supreme Goodness. All the attributes, therefore, which we thus infer to be identified with the immaterial, must be also applicable to the Arch-principle of Evil. Now we are not able thus to infer the attribute of omnipotence; reason, therefore, thus tells us that the attribute of omnipotence is not essential to the immaterial. And by Scripture we are assured that the power of Satan is limited, and that the power of Supreme Goodness is infinite, for "He is able to subdue all things unto himself," "and took on him the seed of Abraham, that, through death, He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil."^a Neither are we able thus to infer the attribute of immutability; reason, therefore, thus tells us that the attribute of immutability is not essential to the immaterial. The Scripture assures us that the reign of Satan shall be destroyed, and there we read of that Being of in-

^a Heb. ii. 14.

finite goodness who is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," whose words are, "I am the Lord; I change not,"^a and who, in his power of eternal foreknowledge, hath said, "Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out."^b Nor are we able thus to infer that the possession of a single moral attribute is essential to the immaterial: long-suffering, mercy, and love we know to be the characteristics of One Adorable Being; but we are taught that hatred, malice, and sleepless perseverance in works of darkness are identified with the great Enemy of Mankind. He, then, is another mighty power, the spiritual Being of evil, the immaterial adversary of goodness, infinite in diffusion, though limited in power, who, "as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour,"^c as an unclean spirit entereth into the hearts of a wicked generation^d, and as "the prince of the power of the air now worketh in the children of disobedience."^e As eternity is in truth to an eternal Being always present, so is infinity always present to an infinite Being. We must,

^a Mal. iii. 6.

^c 1 Pet. v. 8.

^e 1 Eph. ii. 2.

^b John, xii. 31.

^d Matt. xii. 45.

therefore, unhesitatingly dissent from that gross and vulgar conception of the "father of lies," which would give to him either a temporary duration, a bodily shape, or a limited sphere of existence. He is a spirit, and as such he both enters into the heart of every man and occupies infinity. All immaterial Being is essentially eternal, omnipresent, and omniscient; and we are taught that Satan is eternal, omnipresent, and omniscient.^a All immaterial Being is not essentially omnipotent, allmerciful, or immutable, and Satan, we know, is not omnipotent, nor allmerciful, nor immutable.

But the immaterial embraces within itself both heaven and hell; for here again we must scrupulously reject every idea that relates to the visible creation. We must not be led astray either by the representative symbols which we find in the works of the poet, the painter, and the sculptor, or by the beautiful descriptions which abound in the Holy Scriptures, for we unhesitatingly acknowledge their figurative character. Here is the language of Job: "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou

^a It should be observed that omniscience is here used for mere knowledge, and not wisdom.

find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.”^a These and many similar expressions were addressed to a people who delighted in the imaginative eloquence of the East, and are confessedly adapted to the comprehension of minds warmed, it may be, by the truths of religion, and nourishing the seeds of Christian charity, but neither enlightened by the discoveries of science nor refined by habitual reflection. We know that they can scarcely be correctly entertained even in relation to this earth; and that beyond our planet, and in the regions of space, height and depth and breadth must be absolutely and utterly unknown. Then must heaven and hell merge in the unbounded expanse of infinity. The works of Omnipotence which we see around and on every side, occupy that same infinite space wherein are now diffused without limit the house of mourning and the house blessed for evermore of the righteous. Neither for heaven nor for hell is there any limited place, any assignable spot; they are

^a Job, xi. 7—9.

merged in the unbounded expanse of the infinite, in the immaterial abiding-place of the spiritual and infinitely diffused antagonistic beings of good and evil.

Let him who believes that heaven and hell are not such, that they are not immaterial and infinite, that they are not invisible, existing in the heart of man and throughout unbounded space, let him answer and tell of their nature and their position. Heaven is now existing, eternal, and not to be created in the future. It is, therefore, manifestly not a sensible dwelling-place, either in the bowels of the earth, or in the interior or on the surface of any distant planet. It is not intermingled as a visible kingdom among unnumbered systems of suns, because the light from every orb falls without obstruction upon the eye that loves to contemplate the immeasurable beauty of a starlit canopy. We dare not say, we cannot conceive, that our Almighty Father, who is the "King of Heaven," should dwell so far from the presence of His children, that the vision is unable to penetrate the depth of separation. And, in truth, we know not that space does extend beyond the material creation; on the contrary, we are disposed to

believe that sun succeeds to sun, system to system, and nebulae beyond nebulae, infinitely without end; and that as space is infinite, so likewise is the number of heavenly bodies that there unceasingly sing in harmony. No, it cannot be: He who dwelleth in heaven, who rests in the hearts of the righteous, who is around their bed and about their path, cannot be removed more remote than the mind of man can conceive; nor can those heavenly mansions which are now in existence, and wherein the faithful are therefore now dwelling with Him in peace and holiness, be other than spiritual, infinite, and eternal. Thus, too, as unlimited space embraces the Author of Good and the Principle of Evil, so in like manner, dwelling within every man, and in constant opposition, is there the spirit of good and a spirit of evil, each perfectly distinct. And as every other spiritual power, whether of righteousness or of wickedness, whether of good or evil, is perfectly distinct, and possesses a true independent existence (*ὑπόστασις*), so also does the soul of every human being possess a true independent existence, perfectly distinct from that of every other soul which inhabiteth the body of a mortal.

But we have seen that the essential attributes of the immaterial are those of eternity, omniscience, and omnipresence; and these attributes must therefore necessarily be a portion of those privileges which are the inheritance that the soul of every just man made perfect does in truth possess in the everlasting present of an eternal life, but which are now veiled from his conscious knowledge, and lie hidden within this earthly tabernacle. Number, we have seen, is a property of matter; we are therefore forbidden to regard it as an attribute of the immaterial. The faculties of man, therefore, cannot tell the number of human souls who, throughout the unlimited universe, are now working out their salvation in fear and trembling; and the conviction is strongly forced on us, as the wondrous truth flashes upon our mind, that the immortal immaterial souls which throughout eternity are embracing unlimited space are endless in number, infinite in repetition.

But, in this mortal life, the aspirations of the spirit are held in check by the restraints of the body. Let us now, therefore, turn our consideration to the relations between the spirit and the flesh.

THE VISIBLE BODY.

AN inquiry into the nature and duration of the human body, within which as within a tabernacle is imprisoned man's immortal soul, must possess interest of more than usual depth. This body of flesh has had a beginning; and since our conclusions tell us that "that which has had a beginning may be now, but must have an end," we are unavoidably led to the belief of its ultimate dissolution and absolute destruction. "All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust;"^a for "*all* go unto *one* place, all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again."^b It is remarkable, and will doubtless excite surprise in many, that the Church of England is in her Articles silent upon the doctrine of the resurrection of the body; but upon referring to the creeds which "ought thoroughly to be received and believed,"^c we find this doctrine mentioned, though very briefly, in the Apostles' and in the Athanasian

^a Job, xxxiv. 15.^b Eccles. iii. 20.^c Art. 8.

creed. Almost as a necessary result of this absence of explanation, and perhaps also in consequence of the use of the definite instead of an indefinite article with the word "body," those who seek more explicit information will discover that upon this subject there exists among writers upon divinity more than the usual want of unanimity. Here are the words of Archbishop Tillotson:—

“ 1. The body of man is not a constant permanent thing, always continuing in the same state, and consisting of the same matter; but a successive thing, which is continually spending and continually renewing itself, every day losing something of the matter which it had before, and gaining new; so that most men have new bodies, as they have new clothes; only with this difference, that we change our clothes commonly at once, but our bodies by degrees.

“ And this is undeniably certain from experience. For so much as our bodies grow, so much new matter is added to them, over and besides the repairing of what is continually spent; and after a man be come to his full growth, so much of his food as every day turns

into nourishment, so much of his yesterday's body is usually wasted and carried off by insensible perspiration, that is, breathed out of the pores of his body, which, according to the static experiment of Sanctorius, a learned physician, who, for several years together, weighed himself exactly every day, is (as I remember) according to the proportion of five to eight of all that a man eats and drinks. Now, according to this proportion, a man must change his body several times in a year.

“ It is true, indeed, the more solid parts of the body, as the bones, do not change so often as the fluid and fleshy; but that they also do change is certain, because they *grow*; and whatever grows is nourished and spends, because otherwise it would not need to be repaired.

“ 2. The body which a man hath at any time of his life is as much his own body as that which he hath at his death; so that if the very matter of his body which a man had at any time of his life be raised, it is as much his own and the same body as that which he had at his death, and commonly much more perfect, because they who die of lingering sickness or old age are usually mere skeletons when they die; so that there is

no reason to suppose (or at least not to insist) that the very matter of which our bodies consist at the time of our death shall be that which shall be raised, that being commonly the worst and most imperfect body of all the rest.

“ These two things being premised, the answer to this objection cannot be difficult. For as to the more solid and firm parts of the body, as the skull and bones, it is not, I think, pretended that the cannibals eat them; and if they did, so much of the matter, even of these solid parts, wastes away in a few years, as, being collected together, would supply them many times over. And as for the fleshy and fluid parts, these are so very often changed and renewed, that we can allow the cannibals to eat them all up, and to turn them all into nourishment: and yet no man need contend for want of a body of his own at the resurrection; viz., any of those bodies which he had ten or twenty years before, which are every whit as good, and as much his own, as that which was eaten.”^a

“ The Archbishop is here of an opinion diametrically opposite to that of Bishop Stillingfleet, as to the resurrection of *every* particle of the

^a Tillotson's 194th Sermon.

body buried. He has Mr. Locke, however, on his side. For a summary view of the controversy between Stillingfleet and Locke, and an attempt at compromising their dispute, you may consult the eighth of Dr. Watts's Philosophical Essays.

“ See also Dr. Clarke's remarks on this interesting inquiry, as quoted in Bishop Watson's Theological Tracts, vol. iv. p. 235—237.”^a

The above is the answer of Archbishop Tillotson to that one of the objections, usually urged against a belief in the resurrection of the body, which “ may be stated in the following terms: — ‘ Of men drowned in the sea, the bodies may be eaten by fishes, and they again by other men ; or, among cannibals, men feast upon the flesh of men. In such cases, where one man's body may be converted into part of the substance of another man's body, and so on, how shall each at the resurrection recover his own peculiar body ? ’ ”

When we read this objection, and endeavour to shape our thoughts in accordance with the Archbishop's suggestions, we must all feel that his idea of a search throughout the life of man in order to discover the time when his body ap-

^a Gregory, p. 440.

proaches most nearly to perfection, is one very strongly opposed to that beautiful conception of the Supreme Good which, derived both from reason and revelation, invests Him with the character of the Infinite Immaterial. If we select the most favourable moment of life, how far, how infinitely, removed is the very best example of our bodily form from that absolute perfection which we find no difficulty in bringing before the imagination! But if we permit our thoughts to rest, though but for a moment, upon one of those loathsome and disgusting monsters which the annals of surgery record, or upon one of the many thousand beings who, born from nature's most forbidding mould, slowly drag out a wretched existence of misery, pain, and deformity, the objects of pity and commiseration;— if we bestow upon one of these but a passing thought, we experience the utmost difficulty in entertaining this belief; we turn again to search more carefully the words of Scripture; and the hope that a doctrine so repulsive, so opposed to the general features of revelation, and so irreconcilable with our most enlightened conception of the kingdom of heaven, — the hope springs unbidden, that a doctrine which thus teaches the resurrection

of this our identical material body, may not be in truth that of the Christian dispensation.

Let us listen to the language of Holy Writ : —

“ Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption ;” “ for we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved,” “ then shall the dust return to the dust as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.”^a

To me these words place beyond the shadow of doubt the truth, that the body, such as we are accustomed to regard it, will not rise from the grave. “ It is to be wished that those who inculcate this doctrine [of the resurrection of the body] would be careful not to expose it, as some have done, to the scoffs of the infidel, by insisting on the restoration, at the resurrection, of the very same particles of matter which were united with the soul in this life. Supposing the doctrine to be true, neither reason nor revelation affords means for ascertaining its truth, or for replying to the cavils brought against it. The question has been ably and copiously handled by the celebrated Mr. Locke :

^a 1 Cor. xv. 50. ; 2 Cor. v. 1. ; Eccl. xii. 7.

it will suffice, therefore, to observe, that, as far as we can ascertain, all the particles of a man's body are undergoing a perpetual and rapid change during his life; that which constitutes it, still *his* body, being not the identity of its materials, but their union with the same soul, and performance of similar functions. If (to use a familiar illustration) a man's house were destroyed, and a kind benefactor promised to rebuild it for him, and to make it much better than before (for such is the promise made to true Christians when their 'earthly tabernacle shall be dissolved'), he would not, surely, say that the promise had been violated if the same precise materials were not employed; it would suffice that he had, as before, a house, and one that was suitable for all the same purposes.

“As for the state of the soul in the interval between death and the general resurrection, the discussion is unnecessary, and perhaps unprofitable. Had knowledge on this point been expedient for us, it would doubtless have been clearly revealed; as it is, we are lost in conjecture. For aught we know, the soul may remain combined with a portion of matter less than the ten thousandth part of the minutest particle that was ever perceived by our senses;

since 'great' and 'small' are only relative. All we can be sure of is, that if the soul *be* wholly disengaged from matter, and yet shall enjoy consciousness and activity, it must be in some quite different manner from that in which we now enjoy them; if, on the other hand, the soul remains inert and unconscious (as it is with respect to the seeing-faculty, for instance, in a man born blind) till its reunion with matter, the moment of our sinking into this state of unconsciousness will appear to us to be instantly succeeded by that of our awaking from it, even though twenty centuries may have intervened: of which any one may convince himself by a few moments' reflection." ^a

Allusion is here made to the sleep of the soul, — to a supposed state of insensibility, continuing from the hour of death until the apparently future day of judgment, — to that dangerous doctrine which has been refuted by Dr. Gregory, and which we have his authority for believing "directly contradictory to many of the most stimulating and cheering promises in the New Testament." ^b Rejecting, then, this notion with-

^a Archbishop Whateley's *Essays on some of the Peculiarities of the Christian Religion*, p. 129.

^b Gregory, p. 451.

out hesitation, we are obliged to admit that the soul ever continues in a state of consciousness ; that, by the friendly hand of death, she is liberated from her prison-house ; and that, without suspension of Being, she then knows herself to be a free and unfettered spirit, forbidden further trial or opportunity for repentance before receiving, either for happiness or misery, the eternal sentence of her Creator.

On the other hand, we have the unqualified and reiterated assurance that we shall be raised with a body incorruptible. But when we ask, With what body do they come who rise to inherit a crown of righteousness ? we receive the answer of faith, that we shall be raised a spiritual body, for “ so also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption ; it is raised in incorruption : it is sown in dishonour ; it is raised in glory : it is sown in weakness ; it is raised in power : it is sown a natural body ; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body ; ” ^a a body manifestly utterly different from that body of flesh and blood which is now our temporary habitation ; a body, too, utterly different from that with which

^a 1 Cor. xv. 42—44.

we are accustomed to believe that the Saviour of mankind ascended into heaven, for He is described as then possessing the same material, natural, and carnal body with which he had dwelt among men. “Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.”^a “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. . . . And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish and of an honeycomb; and he took, and did eat before them.”^b

Far different, then, is that body with which we shall arise. It will not be that body of flesh as we now see it; not that wonderful disposition of bones and muscles which constitutes our organic frame; not that delicate mechanism, the visible evidence of the intelligent Designer, which is subjected to the vicissitudes, accidents, and diseases of the present life;—but in essential unison shall we arise with that spiritual and immaterial Being which is one and the same with Him “who shall change our vile body, that

^a John, xx. 27.

^b Luke, xxiv. 39. 43.

it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body ;”^a for, “as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”^b

“Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.”^c “The first man is of the earth, earthy.” His is a natural body; limited, material, and therefore temporary. “The second man is the Lord from heaven.” His is a spiritual body; infinite, immaterial, and eternal. His is that spiritual body which is *now* sacramentally received, and with which the soul will be in union when this natural body, which is of the dust, shall return again to the dust. His is that spiritual body which is now in present eternity, in virtual union with those whom “He hath chosen in Himself before the foundation of the world;”^d an union which, in its true, continuous, eternal state, we are unable, during the present temporary dispensation, to perceive. His is that spiritual body to which our present human body of flesh will be changed “when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and

^a Phil. iii. 21.

^b 1 Cor. xv. 49.

^c 1 Cor. xv. 46.

^d Eph. i. 4.

this mortal shall have put on immortality;" for "we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."^a Associated with the countless host of those who shall believe upon His name, we shall dwell for ever in His presence; not in a bodily form, for with so many millions that is physically impossible, but in that infinite diffusion by which alone we can know even as we are known. We shall then "have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."^b We shall be present with Him; not in corporeal contact, but blended in intimate actual and spiritual union. We shall be of that blessed company for whom He himself has uttered the words of prayer; for He it is who has said, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be

^a 1 Cor. xv. 51—54.

^b 1 John, iv. 16.

one in us : . . . that the love wherewith Thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.”^a “He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.”^b

“If a being which was constituted by the union of two substances essentially different were appointed to continue, it must continue a *mixed* being, or it would be no longer the *same* being.”^c Our constitution is twofold. Our being is a spiritual union of two principles diametrically opposed. Within us, increase of good is ever restricted by the presence of evil, and the flesh lusteth unceasingly against the spirit. But we are not appointed thus to continue; we shall not continue “a *mixed* being,” we shall not remain “the *same* being,” for we shall be changed: there is an eternity in which we shall be conformed to the image of Him who knows not sin, and in which “there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying;”^d—when “the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found.”^e We shall therefore not continue “a *mixed* being,” a being of good and evil, as in the present. And there is an eternity, too, in which

^a John, xvii. 20, 21. 26.

^b 1 Cor. vi. 17.

^c Gregory, p. 431.

^d Rev. xxi. 4.

^e Jer. l. xx.

“the dust shall return unto the dust as it was,”^a and the body shall utterly perish; in which “the spirit of the just man made perfect shall return unto God who gave it,”^b and be united with Him, of the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end, — whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. We, therefore, shall not continue “the *same* being;” a being of flesh and spirit as in the present, for we shall be changed, “so that, if man is to exist in a future state, the doctrine of the resurrection of the body is [NOT] a necessary consequence of his nature.”^c

But an important feature in the descriptions given by St. Paul, and, indeed, in those given by other Scripture writers, of our passage from this life, and one which greatly strengthens the belief that the visible body does not arise from the grave, is the general omission of reference to the resurrection of those who are unworthy to inherit the kingdom of heaven.

We have above been reading the words of the Apostle; but “the ‘resurrection of the dead’ here spoken of is not the resurrection of all mankind in common, but only the resurrection of the just.

^a Eccl. xii. 7.

^b Eccl. xii. 7.; Heb. xii. 23.

^c Gregory, p. 431.

This will be evident to any one who observes that St. Paul, having (ver. 22.) declared that all men shall be made alive again, tells the Corinthians (ver. 23.) that it shall not be all at once, but at several distances of time. First of all Christ rose; afterwards, next in order to him, the saints should all be raised; which resurrection of the just is that which he treats and gives an account of to the end of this discourse and chapter; and so never comes to the resurrection of the wicked, which was to be the third and last in order: so that, from the 23d verse to the end of the chapter, all that he says of the resurrection is a description only of the resurrection of the just, though he calls it here by the general name of the resurrection of the dead. That this is so, there is so much evidence, that there is scarce a verse from the 41st to the end that does not evince it. . . . That this was his design may be seen by the beginning of his discourse (ver. 12—21.), and by the conclusion (ver. 58.) in these words, ‘Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord: forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.’ Which words show that what he had been speaking of in the

immediately preceding verses, viz., their being changed and their putting on incorruption and immortality, and their having thereby the victory through Jesus Christ, was what belonged solely to the saints as a reward to those who remained steadfast and abounded in the work of the Lord.

“The like use of the like though shorter discourse of the resurrection, wherein he describes only that of the blessed, he makes to the Thesalonians (1 Thess. iv. 13—18.), which he concludes thus: ‘Wherefore, comfort one another with these words.’

“Nor is it in this place alone that St. Paul calls the resurrection of the just by the general name of the resurrection of the dead. He does the same Phil. iii. 11., where he speaks of his sufferings, and of his endeavours ‘if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead,’ whereby he cannot mean the resurrection of the dead in general, which, since he has declared in this very chapter (ver. 22.) all men, both good and bad (?), shall as certainly partake of as that they shall die, there need no endeavours to attain unto it. Our Saviour likewise speaks of the resurrection of the just in the same general terms of the resurrection, Matthew xxii. 30.; ‘And the

resurrection from the dead,' Luke xx. 35., by which is meant only the resurrection of the just, as is plain from the context."^a

Other Scripture passages, which teach us that the soul will be in conscious union with a spiritual body, are strictly limited to the state of the righteous. St. Paul says, that "we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."^b This is "the same that he had told them in the first epistle, ch. xv. 51., should happen to those who should be alive at Christ's coming. There are two aspects in which this passage may be regarded. We may either "understand by *γυμνοὶ* 'naked,' as I do here, the state of the dead, unclothed with immortal [spiritual] bodies until the resurrection; which sense is favoured by the same word, 1 Cor. xv. 37.;" or we may "understand 'the clothing upon' which the Apostle desires to be those immortal bodies which souls shall be clothed with at the resurrection; which sense of 'clothing upon' seems to be favoured by

^a Paraphrase on St. Paul's Epistles, by John Locke, p. 172. *et seq.*

^b 2 Cor. v. 4.

1 Cor. xv. 53, 54., and is that which one would be inclined to were it not accompanied with this difficulty, viz., that then it would follow that the wicked should not have immortal bodies at the resurrection." This latter sense, however, appears the more probable ; but whichever we may select, this passage clearly confirms the belief that the wicked do not at the resurrection participate in an union with the spiritual body ; for we cannot doubt that "whatever it be that St. Paul here means by 'being clothed upon,' it is something that is peculiar to the saints, who have the Spirit of God, and shall be with the Lord, in contradistinction to others, as appears from the following verses and the whole tenor of this place." ^a

Observation of the harrowing effects produced upon those who suffer from attacks of nightmare, of delirium, or from certain forms of madness, abundantly proves that even in this life mental agony is immeasurably more severe, more wearing, than that of the body. In mental disease or affliction, little or no relief can be obtained by ease of body, and all sources of recreation for it are closed ; but, from the records of the Martyrs' sufferings, we have the clearest proof

^a Paraphrase by John Locke.

that indescribable torture of the body may be almost forgotten and destroyed by a noble elevation of thought towards Heaven, and by the soothing influence of undaunted religious trustfulness. Whether, however, the state of the wicked be one of purely immaterial punishment or otherwise, we will not now pause to inquire; for our hopes are fixed upon eternal life, and in humility and trustful faith we look to Him who can alone save us from the power of the Destroyer. But a calm examination of all that is to be gathered from Scripture does not, I think, support the belief that this visible material body will enter the gates of heaven; "for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."^a It rather leads to the conclusion that the soul of the righteous will be united to a truly spiritual body, immaterial, infinite, and eternal, from which blessed communion the soul of the sinner will for ever be excluded.

Similarly restricted in its application is the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, wherein St. Paul speaks of us as "waiting for the fruit of our adoption, which is, that as we by adoption are made sons and coheirs with Jesus

^a 2 Cor. iv. 18.

Christ, so we may have bodies like unto his most glorious body, spiritual and immortal: "a not, be it ever remembered, like that material, limited, and visible body in which He dwelt on earth, with which He rose from the grave, and with which He ascended into heaven,—but a spiritual body, immaterial, infinite, and invisible; for as, in the material creation, an ethereal essence is believed by some to pervade all space, to be blended with the microscopic atom, and to accompany in their courses the distant orbs of heaven, so, in an everlasting dwelling-place, is His that purely spiritual body, immaterial, invisible, and infinite, which is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent. Neither is that body with which the righteous shall enter heaven the material, visible, and limited body which we inhabit upon earth; but it is that which is conformed to the likeness of His spiritual body, and which, like His, is immaterial, invisible, and infinite.

Revelation and the Christian Church teach, that, immediately after death, the soul, released from the body of flesh, but not yet united with the one and only glorious spiritual body, dwells in the infinity of space, an inhabitant of the realm

^a Paraphrase by John Locke, ver. 23.

of spirits. They also teach that the happiness of the blessed is not simply a state of repose, of mere indifference without change or improvement, but one of continual increase in knowledge, of unceasing advancement in holiness. Those, then, who believe in the resurrection of the visible body, are compelled to admit that the soul, after the lapse of untold years, during which it had become more and more fitted for participation in the bliss of eternal life, must relinquish its unfettered state, again be united with the body, and confined in the prison-house of the material.

“At every instant during life, with every motion, voluntary and involuntary, with every thought and exercise of the brain, a portion of our substance becomes dead, separates from the living part, combines with some of the inhaled oxygen, and is removed. By this process it is supposed that the whole body is renewed every seven years. Individuality, therefore, depends on the spirit, which retains its identity during all the changes of its earthly house, and sometimes even acts independently of it. When sleep is restoring exhausted nature, the spirit is often awake and active, crowding the events of years

into a few seconds, and, by its unconsciousness of time, anticipates eternity.”^a

We know that a large portion of the food which we consume is assimilated, so as to repair the waste to which every structure in our body is continually subjected. Now, “during life, a peculiar relation is maintained between the two kinds of matter which are received. The old man consumes continually more organic matter than he can replace by food. The strength of his muscles disappears, the quantity of blood becomes smaller, he grows thinner. But the inorganic matters are not wasted in the same quantity as they are received in the food. Man thus goes back again to the stage of childhood, and we obtain a view of life and death almost directly in contrast to that formerly unfolded. Even more and more earthly matter is added, organs which formerly were soft and pliant become ossified and refuse their office, even more heavily does the dust draw him down to the dust, till at last the light-winged Psyche, weary of the pressure, throws off the chrysalis shell — become too gross. She leaves the dust-born body to the slow combustion which we call

^a Physical Geography, by Mary Somerville, p. 368.

decay. A little pile of ashes remains to the earth from which they were borrowed. The soul, herself immortal, returns from the slavery of natural laws to the Disposer of Spiritual Freedom.”^a

We are all familiar with that most beautiful Scriptural example of this return to spiritual life:—“And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.”^b

“Hence we derive an additional proof that the human soul is distinct from the body, that it lives after it, in a state separate from it, and such a state as is susceptible of happiness and misery.”^c

And we know that our Saviour’s gracious promise to the malefactor, that his immortal spirit should in paradise be in intimate communion with His own infinite spiritual body, was fulfilled immediately that the hand of death had broken the temporary connection between

^a The Plant, by M. J. Schleiden, M.D. Translated by Arthur Henfrey, F.L.S. P. 183.

^b Luke, xxiii. 46.

^c Dean Stanhope’s Biblical Notes.

the material tabernacle and its immaterial inhabitant : “ Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”^a

Let me not be misunderstood upon this point of the Christian faith. Denial of the union of the soul with a body, with a spiritual body to which this natural body shall be changed, is directly opposed to my intention. It is rather my wish to draw attention to what appears to me a very erroneous and, I fear, very generally entertained notion, that those material destructible parts which at the present moment, or at the hour of death, or at some more suitable period of life, may have constituted this body, — that the very same bodily organs will, in some mysterious manner, be recovered and reunited to us, so as to form a being similar to ourself, and one that may be bodily identified. The words of Scripture appear rather to speak of the absolute loss of our material body, in its total and entire change to a body utterly different, spiritual, infinite, and immaterial.

The whole subject, then, resolves itself into the incontrovertible truth, that it is impossible to conceive the existence of a body, of a spiritual body, of one not composed of “ flesh and blood,”

^a Luke, xxiii. 43.

which could retain so much of its earthly constitution as would render it a visible substance, or cause it in any one point to resemble that material body of which the immortal soul is now the inhabitant. Can there, then, be in Scripture a true foundation for that faith which, professing the resurrection of the body, is accustomed to realise the idea of an appearance visible, limited, and material?^a

That which has a beginning, may be now, but must have an end :

The human body has had a beginning :

Therefore, the human body may be now, but must have an end.

“ Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by faith, not by sight:) we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”^b

^a See Note A.

^b 2 Cor. v. 6—8.

THE SOUL OF MAN.

HERE, then, let us pause; and, while believing that our material, limited, and temporary body will, in its mysterious change, be conformed to the image of that One Spiritual Being who is immaterial, infinite, and eternal; while rejoicing in the assurance that "whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God," that we dwell in Him, and He in us^a; while thus reposing trustfully in the promises of eternal life, let us turn to contemplate that other spiritual Being, that immortal soul, in the presence of which within his mortal frame every Christian believes. For proof of its existence we need not refer to the critical examination of Locke into the nature of simple and complex ideas, nor to the material conceptions of the modern German school. Our own reflection is sufficient to convince us that, in addition to the presence of various ideas, there dwells within us

^a John, iv. 15.

another power or faculty, which takes note of their appearance and of their ever-changing aspects. It is this self-consciousness, in itself immaterial and unchanging, which constitutes our continuous identity; and whether we give to it the name of "*prima vita*," or "*anima animarum*," or "*spiritus afflatus*,"—whether it be called life, or soul, or spirit,—that "*ὑπόστασις*" which causes our present self to be the same with the self which will be a partaker in the resurrection, which will stand before the judgment-seat, and there receive the irrevocable sentence of eternal happiness or punishment, must be consistent with that self, whether it be material or immaterial, limited or infinite, temporal or eternal.

Some of the more enlightened philosophers of antiquity entertained a notion, though perhaps a vague one, of the immortality of the soul. Plato appears to have taught this doctrine, and to have supported his belief by four distinct arguments.

The first of these rests upon the belief which a philosopher entertains, that, as man is born to know the Creator, he must necessarily be born to know the truth; and that as this knowledge can never be attained while his body upon earth remains as an obstacle to the aspirations of the

soul, perfect knowledge must be reserved for a future life : and hence the doctrine of immortality.

The second argument is drawn from the principle that contraries produce their contraries ; and that, consequently, as life ends in death, so must death produce life.

The third argument is supported by our conviction, that as we now possess a knowledge — an intelligent, that is, not a sensible knowledge — of certain qualities, such as justice and equality, unattainable in this life, so must we previously have known such intellectual and perfect Being. Hence the belief in the remembrance of a previous state of existence, or, rather, in another and eternal sphere of consciousness.

The fourth argument rests upon the nature of the soul. The soul is simple and immaterial ; and as destruction can only take effect upon compounded bodies, Socrates states that the soul must necessarily be incapable of dissolution.

These arguments are well worthy the serious attention of us all. By the examination of them perception is quickened, comprehension enlarged, and reason strengthened ; the disposition is softened, feelings of devotion and veneration are aroused, and our hopes and thoughts are taught to

dwell upon an eternal and a spiritual creation. Such would be the principal result, and one highly conducive to the development of man's better powers; but that contemplated by the philosopher, that which is indeed the very object of the whole discourse, can scarcely be said to have been attained. After a careful perusal of these arguments, although perhaps no decided objection may arise in the mind of the inquirer, his reason remains unconvinced. He is aware of a high degree of probability, but the full consciousness of certainty is, I think, wanting, and he is unable to yield that unqualified assent which arises only when the mind feels thorough inward sensation of satisfaction.

“It appears, then, that whatever arguments may have been adduced, and with whatever effect, in favour of the natural and necessary *immortality* of the soul, at least the natural and necessary tendency of virtue to earn a *happy* immortality can never have been discovered by human reason; because nothing can, properly speaking, be *discovered* which is not *true*.

“But it has been my endeavour to show that the arguments which human reason actually did or might suggest in favour of a future immortality

when fairly considered as presented to the minds of such as had nothing else to proceed upon—not of such as are already believers on other grounds—are insufficient to warrant anything beyond a probable conjecture; and that in fact they very seldom produced even *that* effect. To bring the doctrine fairly within the list of truths discoverable by unaided reason, it should be shown, first, to have not only existed but *prevailed* as a matter, not of conjecture, but of belief, in some nation destitute of divine revelation; secondly, to have been believed on *sufficient grounds*; and, thirdly, to have been *correctly* believed. If any one of these requisites be wanting, it cannot be properly reckoned among the doctrines of natural religion. But, in truth, it appears that all three of these requisites were wanting among those enlightened nations of antiquity whose supposed knowledge of a future state is commonly appealed to: their notions were neither correct nor well-founded, nor generally received as a matter of certain belief.”^a

I wish to draw attention to the third argument adduced by Plato; and I bring it forward

^a Revelation of a Future State, by Richard Whateley, D. D., Archbishop of Dublin, p. 114.

entirely on account of its own nature, and the principle which it involves. The belief there brought before us of the pre-existence of the soul, is of great antiquity ; and when we understand this existence, not as giving remembrance of that which has passed, but as being the imperfectly manifested consciousness of a true eternity, the doctrine presents an aspect not dissimilar from that which our own reflections enable us to behold. It is also partly in accordance with the views of Origen, “ a presbyter of Alexandria, and a man of vast and uncommon abilities, who interpreted the divine truths of religion according to the tenor of the Platonic philosophy. Origen taught —

“ That there is a pre-existent state of human souls. For the nature of the soul is such as to make her capable of existing eternally, backward as well as forward, because her spiritual essence, as such, makes it impossible that she should, either through age or violence, be dissolved ; so that nothing is wanting to her existence but the good pleasure of Him from whom all things proceed.

“ That souls were condemned to animate mortal bodies, in order to expiate faults they had committed in a pre-existent state.

“That the soul of Christ was united to the Word before the incarnation. For the Scriptures teach us that the soul of the Messiah was created before the beginning of the world: Phil. ii. 5. 7. This text must be understood of Christ’s human soul, because it is unusual to propound the Deity as an example of humility in Scripture. Though the humanity of Christ was so God-like, He emptied himself of the fulness of life and glory, *to take upon him the form of a servant.*

“That at the resurrection of the dead we shall be clothed with ethereal bodies. For the elements of our terrestrial compositions are such as almost fatally entangle us in vice, passion, and misery. The purer the vehicle the soul is united with, the more perfect is her life and operations.

“That, after long periods of time, the damned shall be released from their torments, and restored to a new state of probation. For the Deity has such reserves in his gracious providence as will vindicate his sovereign goodness from all disparagement.

“That the earth, after its conflagration, shall become habitable again, and become the mansion of men and animals, and that in eternal vicissitudes. For it is thus expressed in Isaiah,—

Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth : and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind ; and in Heb. i. 10. 12., — Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth ; as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed."

It is essential here to bear in mind the distinction between the previous existence of the soul, as understood by Plato, and its existence as a true eternity. Unless we carefully reject the notion of its existence in a former order of things, we shall be liable to fall into the error of the Hindoo and its kindred theology, which not only teaches the doctrine of metempsychosis, but looks upon the imprisonment of the soul in a body of flesh as a punishment for guilt committed in a previous state of existence. On the contrary, since we believe that that which possesses the property of Being without beginning or without end is now present, and since we have determined it to be necessary to speak of such Being as in the present, we are unable to regard the soul as existing previous to the manifestation of time. It is only during her connection with a temporary dispensation that she knows aught of priority or consequence. But it is

quite possible that, in an eternal state, she may be conscious of that which is taking place in eternity, of that which appears to us as having taken place in the past, or as about to take place in the future. Only we must be careful to remember, that this eternal existence is present, and can, in truth, be neither before nor after her earthly pilgrimage.

“ Religious people often speak of death : sometimes generally, as a ‘ return ; ’ at others with a further addition, as a ‘ return home.’ Such modes of speaking, I admit, merely as such, and especially when they are uttered as so many empty phrases, unaccompanied with real feeling, and repeated without discrimination in season and out of season, are not perhaps calculated to make a very deep impression. Still, a very beautiful but grave meaning is nevertheless contained in them, and one which throws out very strongly the purely spiritual aspect of the matter. But here, then, a difficulty immediately presents itself. The question arises, How can we be said to go back or return to a place where, in fact, we never were before ? or how can that be rightly called our home, which, in our present life, we first seek, and are to find, and learn to

consider as such? In short, the difficulty recurs in the same manner as the somewhat similar questions which are involved by Plato's notion of an *anamnesis*, so long as it is conceived (not, as we would understand it, as a recollection of eternity, but) quite literally as that of a former state of things." ^a This, the eternal nature of the soul, is the point for consideration. How far the arguments of Socrates support the doctrine of immortality, it is immaterial here to inquire; for it is not upon one nor upon all the reasons adduced by him that I am disposed to rest my belief. It is neither my intention to enter into the disquisition of the schools, nor to examine the arguments brought forward with masterly ability by the divines of our own Church, relative to the immortality of the soul. We will alike abstain from considering the logical reasoning of Plato, and the depth of thought that breathes in the "Analogy" of Butler; but, choosing that which cannot fail as the light to guide us on our way, we will rest confidently in that inspiration which has been vouchsafed to us in revelation. Here, then, we are taught the immortality of the soul.

^a Schlegel, p. 422.

ETERNITY OF THE SOUL.

WE have already dwelt upon the consideration of Eternity and of the Immaterial, and have throughout our reflections sought in Scripture for information. But upon those results to which we have attained by the use of reasoning power alone, no light has been thrown from any other than from human source ; so that, although the further conclusions to which they are about to lead us may at the first glance appear startling, yet, as they are not fully revealed to us in Holy Writ, but have been left unexplained in order to induce the exercise and improvement of our mental faculties, we must necessarily appeal to their assistance if we would obtain a clearer knowledge of those things “which the angels desire to look into.”

Let us, then, make use of the knowledge thus acquired, in connection with that which we obtain from Scripture : —

That duration which is without end is now,
and is without beginning :

The human soul endures without end :

Therefore, the human soul is now, and is without beginning.

Eternity is an essential attribute of the immaterial :

The human soul is immaterial :

Therefore, the human soul is eternal.

“The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.”^a “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God created He him.” “The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.”^b Since by the “breath of life” we must understand the gift of the “Holy Spirit,” by possession of which Adam was made in the spiritual likeness of his Creator, it is clear that Being which is spiritual and eternal is a part of his Being; and hence we cannot but draw the conclusion, that he also is spiritual and eternal.

“Christ in the truth of our nature was made like unto us in all things, sin only except, from which he was clearly void, both in his flesh and

^a *Lives* in the original (see D'Oyley and Mant), and thus beautifully in harmony with the expression, “Let us make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness.”

^b Job, xxxiii. 4.

in his spirit.”^a Since we believe in the eternal existence of the human soul of Christ^b, that it is without beginning and without end, so must we likewise believe in the eternity of that soul which dwells within this our body.^c

It is possible that some may object to a belief in the eternity of the soul, upon the ground that it denies in effect that a soul can at this moment be created, and thus limits the power of Omni-

^a Art. 15.

^b That the existence of our Saviour is entirely independent of his manifestation upon earth is evident from Scripture. See John, iii. 13., vi. 50. &c., viii. 58., xvii. ; 1 John, i. 1. 4.; and other passages. “Dr. Watts supposes that the doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul of Christ explains dark and difficult parts of Scripture, and discovers many beauties and proprieties of expression in the Word of God, which, on any other plan, lie unobserved. For instance, in Col. i. 15. &c. Christ is described as the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature. His being *the image of the invisible God cannot refer merely to his divine nature*, for that is invisible in the Son as in the Father : therefore it seems to refer to his pre-existent soul in union with the Godhead. Again, when man is said to be created in the image of God (Gen. i. 2.), it may refer to the God-Man, to Christ in his pre-existent state. God says, *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness*. The word is redoubled, perhaps to intimate that Adam was made in the likeness of the human soul of Christ [as to duration], as well as that he bore something of the image and resemblance of the Divine nature.”

^c See Note B.

potence. But this limit is similar to that which all believe to be true when it is stated that Omnipotence cannot err, and that even with Him it is impossible that the same thing should be and not be at the same time. We know that He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and we cannot believe in a power which could now create in time that which is in existence, or destroy in time that which is not yet created. Omnipotence is limited when its exercise would necessarily involve a contradiction. We believe from Scripture in the eternity of Satan, and we believe that Omnipotence does not create evil. We believe that a soul which is "evil" and "desperately wicked" cannot now be created in time, because we believe that every soul is without end, and that therefore all must now be in existence; that such duration is in accordance with the laws of Being, and that it is consequently in accordance with the designs of Him who made those laws.

From revelation we learn that the soul is immortal; and thence, by the application of reason, we have reached the conclusion that it is therefore eternal. If it be not eternal, there must arise that question which has perplexed

Pagans and Christians, philosophers and churchmen, as to the exact moment of time in which each individual soul is created. It is needless to enter far into those nice disquisitions with which writers upon physiology, and members of the Roman Church, have continually burdened the subject. I have ever experienced great reluctance to hold the opinion which makes the creation of the soul dependent upon the formation or birth of the body. Those who entertain the belief of this dependence must necessarily adopt one of these alternatives,—that, by the exercise of his own will, a man can either create or cause to be created an immortal soul. This portion of our subject I feel great reluctance further to pursue, but every one can himself follow up the train of thought. I, however, see no mode by which the alternative of these two propositions can be obviated, and the adoption of either involves the necessity of ascribing to man an attribute which we do not believe him to possess.

The birth of the body is not an actual creation, it is a development from preceding organisation, and in it is retained the mortal character of the first Adam. But in the spiritual part of man resides the gift of free will; he has there power

to turn from evil and do good; to him is permitted the choice between endless pain and everlasting life. Every being such as this, possesses within itself a perfect and distinct existence, and can have no relation to the indwelling spiritual life of the earthly parents from whom the bodily form of which it is the occupant derives existence. The body, which owes its birth to the will of man, acting as a secondary cause, does not possess this eternally distinct and unconnected existence. Thou shalt "return unto the ground, for out of it thou wast taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return."^a "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."^b

Since, then, man is unable truly to create a bodily form, still less is he able to create a soul. He may, perhaps, as the second cause, produce the development of the body, but the manifestation of the soul upon earth is the immediate act of a mightier Power. Our fathers are the fathers of our bodies only, but God is the Father of our spirits: for "we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us;" but we put no trust in man, "for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and under-

^a Gen. iii. 19.

^b Ecc. xii. 7.

standeth all the imaginations of the thoughts.”^a
Let us “be in subjection to the Father of spirits,
and live.”^b

As, then, the soul is not dependent upon the formation of the body, but exists in continuous duration, it must be a participator with eternity in the knowledge of all those changes to which the visible creation is subjected.

Wherefore is it, then, that with all our labour and intellectual exertion we can attain, and that with difficulty, but an infinitely small portion of this knowledge, which really forms an actual portion of the soul’s perception? It is by the sin of Adam that she is unable to recover that comparatively limited knowledge which, before the fall, was his portion; but even he was not in a state of supreme bliss, nor dwelling in the conscious light of unclouded knowledge. Since, then, perfect knowledge was not his lot (nor is that of even the angels in heaven), there must be some further cause for present ignorance. If, then, we look to Scripture for guidance, we find that, by man’s disobedience, sin came into the world, and death by sin. The great Enemy of mankind, and of all true wisdom, thus obtained

^a 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.

^b Heb. xii. 9.

power over the children of disobedience. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." ^a Working, then, continually for our destruction, and blighting us with the gross darkness of ignorance, is opposed to us our spiritual adversary, the Prince of the Power of Evil.

Perhaps the most difficult subject to which reason has been directed is that of the existence of evil. The uncertainty of its origin affords a weapon that, according to the disposition of the combatants, has been most powerfully wielded both for the attack and defence of the Christian religion. It has been asserted, that Infinite Goodness cannot tolerate the existence of evil. It has been asserted, that the presence of evil is essential to the existence of good. But wherefore an evil spirit, and consequently moral evil, are allowed to exist, is a question which human reason has never been permitted to answer, and is one upon which it is by no means our intention to enter. We read, however, that "the devil

^a John, iii. 19., i. 5.

sinneth from the beginning;”^a that “he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.”^b We consequently know that evil is now, and will never cease. We also read that “the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”^c We consequently know, that evil is now, and has always been.

Thus, then, are we assured that evil is eternal; while our own knowledge tells us that it is also temporary. “Since all the elementary forces and original powers in creation can only be regarded as spiritual, therefore the power or might which threw universal life and the whole world into disorder could have been no other than the spirit of absolute negation, which rose in revolt against the primary source of itself and of all.”^d It is in eternity, then, and in the spiritual realm, that the angels of darkness are rebelling against the laws of Heaven. It is in time, and upon this our earth, that the indwelling evil of man is struggling continually against the Spirit of Life.

^a 1 John, iii. 8.

^b John, viii. 44.

^c Rev. xx. 10.

^d Schlegel, p. 420.

“ The power and influence of this spirit of eternal contradiction and endless destruction . . . cannot be rightly deemed either slight or insignificant, if he be with justice entitled ‘ the Prince and Ruler of this world ; ’ . . . the supreme lord of all these so-called spirits of the times, which are derived from the primary and supreme spirit of the age, being, so to speak, his absolute subjects and ministers. Now the belief in such a spiritual power of evil, and even the idea of it simply and nakedly, as in other times it is presented to us, is almost wholly lost sight of in the present day. The expressions of a former faith for what it is now the fashion to call ‘ the spirit of the age, ’ have become antiquated, and make but little impression ; being, for the most part, scarcely even regarded, or else ingeniously explained away, if not derided from the height of a superior enlightenment. . . .

“ But, however, this deadly spirit of absolute negation, though the name be now scarcely ever heard except in poetry, has not therefore lost as yet his dominion over this world of time, and the science thereof. On the contrary, in the baseless and arbitrary systems which the philosophy of the day propounds, he is acknowledged

more than ever, though it be with an unconscious reverence. As the idol of absolute rationalism most highly is he lauded, not to say deified. It is, in fact, remarkable, that in many of the most extreme systems of absolute reason the whole section of theology is exclusively confined to the negative view of the divine truth. Almost the whole of it, if only a few slight changes be made in the more important phrases, may far more consistently apply to the primal antagonist of eternal love and of revelation, than to the Beneficent Being himself." ^a

Let us listen to the voice of this Prince of spiritual wickednesses. It is Lucifer himself who utters the mad language of defiance:—

. . . . "Through all eternity,
 And the unfathomable gulfs of Hades,
 And the interminable realms of space,
 And the infinity of endless ages,
 All, all, will I dispute! And world by world,
 And star by star, and universe by universe,
 Shall tremble in the balance, till the great
 Conflict shall cease, if ever it shall cease,
 Which it ne'er shall till he or I be quench'd!
 And what can quench our immortality,
 Our mutual irrevocable hate?" ^b

The answer of the Christian is ready; for

^a Schlegel, p. 421.

^b Lord Byron's Cain.

he knows that He who "has overcome the world," who "also suffered for us, leaving us an example,"^a has said, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him: if he thirst, give him drink. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."^b

We know that "the Christian doctrines always stand as indications of the character of God."^c

We therefore point to the words of Scripture, and, in a perfect faith, we believe that His words shall not pass away; that they endure as His throughout eternity; and that there, as pearls beyond all price, they are shining forth, the everlasting symbols of an infinite mercy.

The fall of man was not the beginning of evil; for we read in Scripture of sin existing with the angels. They, in eternity, are rebelling against Heaven; and, in time, man obeys the commands of his Maker. And has Infinite Goodness assigned a means for the reconciliation of man to Himself? Did He so love the world, that He gave his only begotten Son to be a sacrifice for sinners, and shall no way be found to give hope to those other spirits of evil? Their rebellion, it may be, is eternal; but His mercy, it is certain, is infinite.

The soul of man is eternal. Where, then, is

^a 1 Pet. ii. 21. ^b Rom. xii. 20. ^c Gregory, p. 245.

its resting-place when not imprisoned in the body of flesh? The spirit of a fallen angel is eternal. Where, then, is its dwelling-place during the reign of time?

Adam was created free, and, consequently, liable to sin. The object of temptation was always before his sight, and the Arch-tempter continually appealing to the latent evil within him, and assailing his resolution to continue innocent: —

“ God made thee perfect, not immutable ;
 And good He made thee, but to persevere
 He left it in thy power ; ordain'd thy will
 By nature free, not overruled by fate
 Inextricable or strict necessity :
 Our voluntary service He requires,
 Not our necessitated ; such with Him
 Finds no acceptance, nor can find ; for how
 Can hearts not free be fix'd, whether they serve
 Willing or no, who will but what they must
 By destiny, and can no other choose ? ” ^a

His state, then, was not one of supreme and unalterable bliss ; for, exposed to temptation, he became, by yielding, subject to the effect of evil, and, so far as we can tell, he would have continued liable to fall, had he resisted the first attempt. “ Let it be recollected, that though

^a Milton.

our defection is a necessary consequence of the fall of our first parents, it by no means follows that, if they had continued upright, *we* should. The notion of a covenant ‘that Adam should *stand* as well as fall for himself and his posterity,’ appears to me totally unsupported by Scripture. We obviously suffer by his fall; and if he had stood, we might have been benefited by it in some way: yet some of his progeny, we know not how early or how late, might, by virtue of their freedom, have introduced sin and all its miserable attendants into the world.”^a Now, if we would know what are at the present day some of these “miserable attendants” that have resulted from Adam’s choice of evil, we need but become familiar with the state of tens of thousands of fellow-creatures in this the wealthy metropolis of Christian England.

Let us no longer remain negligent and self-satisfied members of that one half the world that knows not how the other half lives; but let each one of us personally visit the destitute, and ascertain the condition of those who rise in the morning and know not where at night they shall lay their heads; of those too, who, although they

^a Gregory, p. 269.

may have a house or a room, or a part of a room, yet know not a single comfort of home.

“I refer now especially to their domiciliary condition; because it lies at the root of all attempts to render to a people substantial service. Regarded physically or morally, it is an indispensable preliminary to all improvement, that they should possess within their dwellings whatever is required for cleanliness and decency. Now, to show the physical mischiefs that in this respect beset the population of London, as well as most of our towns, be they great or small (and much that is said of the towns may be applied to not a few of the agricultural districts), I need only refer to the statements nearly every day in the columns of your journal, the reports of the Registrar-General, and of the various sanitary associations. Disgusting and horrible as they are, I can assert, of my own personal knowledge, that they fall short of the monstrous reality. If they do not beget, they, unquestionably, invite and localise epidemic disorders; and I have, indeed, long entertained a belief, which is confirmed by hourly investigation, and the opinion of many friends who are joined with me in these inquiries, that a very large proportion of the pauperism of

the country, with its appalling train of debilitated frames, widows, and orphans, is the result of the sanitary condition to which our neglect has abandoned such vast multitudes.

“As for the moral mischiefs, their name is Legion. I can call to witness, I am sure, every minister of religion, the Scripture readers, the City missionaries, the district visitors. They will concur with me in declaring that to aim at the spiritual improvement of the fetid swarms that, without either the practice or the possibility of decency — without limitation of age, sex, or numbers — crowd the stinking apartments of the lanes, courts, and alleys of this great metropolis, is a vain and fruitless effort. The work, too, of education is altogether baffled; for the child, returning to these abodes of promiscuous and animal life, unlearns in a single hour the lessons of an entire day.”^a

“Persons immersed in misery and filth are for the most part inaccessible to the motives and consolations of the Gospel.”^b

To thoughtless wealth this earth is heaven. To hopeless, helpless poverty, this earth is — nay, far darker is it than the darkest depth of

^a Lord Ashley's Letter, Oct. 17. 1849.

^b Bishop of London's Letter, Nov. 3. 1849.

hell, for here is ignorance exposed to the unmerited neglect and obloquy of every fellow-creature: hereafter will be suffered that punishment which rebellion against the Creator of All deserves. Here, every feeling is outraged by the injustice of an equal: hereafter every thought of discontent will be hushed before the judgment-seat of Infinite Justice. Better than ignorance of God upon earth, is knowledge of Him even though it be in hell.

“Few people know enough of the poor to be able fully to appreciate their trials. The virtue of temperance, and a calm and devout thankfulness, are not very difficult of acquirement by those who enjoy every comfort without fear of the uncertainties of fortune. It is very different with those who have to bear the nippings of poverty—poverty which salutes them each morning; which they struggle with all day; which they feel in a thousand evils incidental to their families, all unknown to the rich,—poverty which renders each evening bitter, and which makes the meditations of the night sorrowful. Amidst such trials, life-long, the mind often suffers injury; self-control is weakened, natural affections are crushed, repinings arise, and physical

instincts and mental confusion lead to habits and actions to which the happier portions of mankind apply the scornful sentences due to vice. And in such poverty a large portion of what are called the labouring classes exist—on the mere brink of the gulf of pauperism, into which, if they live, they are too sure to sink at last.”^a

But not only is this state of moral and religious ignorance a necessary result of that mode of life which is inevitably the lot of thousands, but in too many instances the evil disposition of human nature is deepened into an irresistible confirmation in sin by the mistaken treatment which is received by the criminal or the pauper: for . . . “go into the children’s side of any prison in England, or, I grieve to add, of many workhouses, and judge whether those are monsters who disgrace our streets, people our hulks and penitentiaries, and overcrowd our penal colonies,—or are creatures whom we have deliberately suffered to be bred for misery and ruin.”^b

Thus the state of a portion of the destitute is one less of helpless ignorance of good, than one

^a The Croonian Lectures on General Paralysis, by John Conolly, M.D. 1849.

^b Preface to *Martin Chuzzlewit*, by Charles Dickens.

in which incentives to guilt are held out by those who have grown old in wickedness, or one in which, by ill-directed charity, evil thoughts are implanted and rapidly ripened into the maturity of crime. It is a state from which all happiness is excluded upon earth, and one which we dare scarcely hope is other than a foretaste of that which is to come.

There yet are those from whose hearts the habit of worldly thought and care has not driven forth that singleheartedness and simple kindness which, it is said, are found only in the spring-time of life. Let one such seek with me a spot where the grass grows green, and the streams run clear, where the birds sing sweetly, and the air is pure, and it will be with pity and profound melancholy that we look back upon those whose lot has been cast amid scenes that, even in passing remembrance, pain and deject. We remember the numbers whose birth is in poverty, who live to toil and toil to live, whose existence appears without end or aim but to bear their heavy burthens in one continuous scene of privation, and to whom the friendly hand of death is at length held out, and then their places are filled up, and they are scarcely missed. We know that

not one in ten thousand of those whose position most requires improvement has power to help himself. The voice of one who may have known no other associates but those to whom wretchedness and crime are familiar, is now and then more loudly raised in tones of sorrow and regret, and reaches the ear of Christian kindness. But who can tell how often such tones remain unheard, and he who uttered them left to die unpitied and despairing? What are the feelings with which we ought to regard the young criminal, thus born and reared in sin and misery? Surely, in the breast of us who are enjoying intellectual, moral, and religious knowledge, who can scarcely conceive the irresistible power of the temptation to which he is exposed, who may have yielded more readily than he to the self-promptings of evil, and are, perhaps, equally with him plunged in other vices and crimes,—surely in our breast should be found no trace of anger, or of the unforgiving spirit of implacable justice. Associating from his earliest infancy with those to whom crime is familiar; taught, like the Spartan, that successful sin is meritorious—failure and detection *deservedly* followed by punishment; within his breast must even the still small voice of conscience be stifled

and overwhelmed. He has never heard a mother's silver tones inculcating the precepts of piety and religion; to him has ever been closed the Book of Revelation, and for him have in vain been uttered the promises of the Gospel. He has never rejoiced in the glad tidings of another life; he knows not that he is an immortal soul, drawing nearer day by day to that path which, either for weal or woe, leads onward without end, and from which all thought of return is for ever forbidden. He has lived in ignorance, scarcely knowing that his life has been one of sin; he dies in the mid-career of vice, without hope and without fear: he asks not for mercy, for her name has been a stranger to his ear; he cares not for condemnation, for he has been without one thought that after death is judgment. The name of such is legion; and they shall elsewhere find mercy which from men they have never known.

“Of the numerous seeds of vegetables and bodies of animals which are adapted and put in the way to improve to such a point or state of natural maturity and perfection, we do not see, perhaps, that one in a million actually does. Far the greatest part of them decay before they are improved to it, and appear to be absolutely

destroyed. . . . And I cannot forbear adding . . . that the appearance of such an amazing waste in nature with respect to these seeds and bodies, by foreign causes, is to us as unaccountable as what is much more terrible, the present and future ruin of so many moral agents by themselves, *i. e.* by vice.”^a But still more unaccountable and still more terrible is the present and future ruin of so many moral agents by causes over which they cannot possibly have control. We know that the existence of such beings is a truth; and while with a perfect faith we unhesitatingly recognise them as the visible signs of infinite wisdom and goodness, we must also entertain as irresistible the conviction that their appearance upon earth is itself a punishment, and a punishment too of inconceivable severity.

It is probable that the faculties of man are utterly unable to comprehend the Divine attributes. It is sufficient for us reverentially to know and believe that there are such; but we are as little able fully to comprehend the nature of infinite justice and mercy, as to understand the manifestation of infinite power in absolute creation and destruction. But to all has been

^a Butler's Analogy, p. 112.

given the power to discern between the just and the unjust. This perception of the true good is that most noble attribute which gives us superiority over the brutes that think not, and is itself a trace of man's partly divine origin. Let us then apply this heaven-born faculty; let us "relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow: come now, and let us reason together"^a upon the state of the criminal born and nursed in sin, of the unbaptized infant whose breath is gone ere yet it scarce has seen the light of day, and of the heathen who has never heard the saving words of revelation,—all living without the hope or knowledge of a future life, and dying without an opportunity of repentance and forgiveness. "Undoubtedly nothing appears more offensive to our reason than to hear that the transgression of the first man attaches guilt on those who, being so vastly distant from its fountain, seem incapable of being involved in it. This communication is looked upon by us not only as impossible, but even as very unjust. For what can be more repugnant to our miserable rules of justice than eternally to condemn an infant, who is incapable

^a Isaiah, i. 17, 18.

of exercising his will, for an offence in which he appears to have had so little part that it was committed six thousand years before he was in existence? Certainly nothing seems to us more harsh than such a doctrine.”^a

We know that the present population of the earth is about eight hundred millions, but we cannot calculate how many times that number has been repeated since the creation, nor how often it will be yet again repeated before all things shall be fulfilled. But when we ask what proportion of this vast number Scripture teaches us to believe will be saved, how appalling is the answer! According to our interpretation of revelation, an enormous majority of the human beings at this moment scattered over the face of the earth are destined irretrievably to everlasting punishment; for we are taught not only that these are of their father the Devil, and vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, but “they also are to be had accursed that presume to say that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law and the light

^a Blaise Pascal: *Thoughts on Religion*, p. 29.

of nature.”^a “To suppose future punishment to be absolutely eternal, is to suppose that the Christian dispensation condemns far the greater part of mankind to infinite misery upon the balance.”^b “And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die, but the third shall be left therein.”^c “I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.”^d But the declarations of Scripture are explicit as to the eternity of punishment, and, unless words be violently wrested from their true meaning, they emphatically proclaim its reality. The calculation of chances, therefore, proves the exceeding high probability that a human being which shall be born at any given moment to-day, or to-morrow, or the next day, will be of the number of those who shall not be saved. If, therefore, it were possible that a choice were given before an earthly birth, it is demonstrably certain that the offer of a life such as we possess, with its attendant probable and inevitable consequences, would be rejected by all who were not in a state of pain

^a Article 18.

^b Hartley on Man, vol. ii.

^c Zech. xiii. 8.

^d Rom. xi. 4.

and wretchedness. When we attempt to reconcile these truths with the existence of justice, reason is confounded, and charity can give no consolation.

Numerous attempts have been made, by writers upon theological questions, to reconcile these apparent inconsistencies in that Christian religion which "is every where declared to be a dispensation of mercy, to be *glory to God* and *good-will to men.*"^a It is true that great and merited success has attended these efforts; but not only do the sceptic and the infidel remain unconvinced, but clouds of doubt and uncertainty too frequently overshadow the minds of men eminent for faith and piety. There are those whose faith, when required to be exerted in apparent contradiction to reason, is not at all times steady and unwavering, and of these some dare scarcely reflect upon the future state of many created beings, lest charity herself should compel them to look upon the birth of such less as a cause for thankfulness than as a source of bitterness and sorrow. And there are some who, though not puffed up with presumptuous desire of knowledge, are yet steadfast in the

^a Hartley on Man, ii.

belief that inquiry promotes truth, and that truth invariably tends to the glory of its Author. These seek to dive perhaps too deeply into the secret sources of man's creation ; and, guided by a noble and an elevated, though possibly an erroneous, idea of justice, they disregard the greatness of the number that is now plunged in all the darkness of ignorance, superstition, and idolatry, and consigned to misery here and to perdition hereafter ; for they assert that the moral qualities are not susceptible of comparison, and they therefore believe that injustice to one is the same as injustice to an untold multitude. And thus their thoughts find utterance : —“ If there could be but one human being who, at his earthly birth, were absolutely created from nothing, who should know no other state of existence than that of a few short moments or even years of misery here, who should be so placed upon earth that he could not possibly escape the sentence of eternal condemnation, then the voice of truth must answer that to such a being creation would have been an act of injustice. He could not by any possibility have deserved this, the punishment of a true and absolute creation, a creation out of nothing ; its infliction,

therefore, would have been unjust. Argument however specious, reason however powerful, faith however unlimited, are in truth utterly unable to compel acknowledgment of its justice. We may appeal to revelation, and, in the belief that our interpretation of it is correct, we may think that our faith is sufficiently strengthened; but in our inmost heart, and in the secret chamber of thought, truth will be heard, and, in deepest humility of spirit, but undaunted in the consciousness of sincerity, it is her voice which is heard to deny that such an act of creation would have been one of justice or of mercy. By so much as the soul dreads the despair and agony of everlasting woe, even with as great bitterness must she reflect upon that birth which exposed her to its distant contemplation here, and to the probability of its reality hereafter. We cannot by any possibility conceive such a dispensation to be consonant with justice or goodness."

How sublime, then, is that faith which is thankful for creation, which by its very depth opens for itself a path to the gates of heaven! It may be that such faith is ours; undoubtedly it is that of many, and by them are felt in all their force and beauty the words, "thy faith hath made

thee whole." They, and they alone, are fitted to sing rejoicingly of infinite goodness and mercy. It is for themselves only that they rejoice, for there is still an untold number into whose hearts such hopeful trust in the future does not and cannot enter, upon whose eye the light of salvation never falls. It is the voice of one of these that, in tones of bitterness and agony, is now heard complaining : —

“ And this is
Life!—Toil! and wherefore should I toil?—because
My father could not keep his place in Eden.
What had *I* done in this?—I was unborn :
I sought not to be born ; nor love the state
To which that birth has brought me.”^a

“ Why was I placed here upon earth? As I wished not for creation, so neither am I thankful for it. Far preferable would have been nonentity, for to me life has been a burden ; infinitely preferable would be annihilation, for death will be to me the beginning of everlasting punishment. Nonentity gives no pain. Annihilation is deliverance.” And those of little faith, who are harassed by doubts, and are struggling with difficulty, can find no answer ; but they ask, and

^a Cain.

all who think with them must ask, "Why was that soul created? And why should that soul be punished now and in eternity?" And they ask that question, that stronghold of the infidel, "Why did not Infinite Goodness, in whom the Christian believes, so form our first father that sin and evil should find no entrance into his thoughts? Why, rather, should Adam, why should I, why should any have been created?" And we hear the atheist, triumphing in his reply, cry aloud, "There is no God; for if soul and body be together created at the moment of birth, where is the justice? where is the goodness? As I could have had no desire of existence, so neither am I thankful for a creation which exposes me to certain misery here, and to the probability of eternal torment in a world to come." Such is the answer with which too successfully the infidel assails a faith which he cannot understand. But the finger of faith points to the words of Scripture, "God himself hath formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else. I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched

out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded. I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways.”^a “Even every one that is called by my name : for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him ; yea, I have made him.”^b “And the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord.”^c And the one and single answer of truth and justice falls upon the ear of the Christian philosopher. “Since there is not one point of our earthly time in which Infinite Goodness could have created a living creature to be the inheritor of certain pain here and of probable misery hereafter, there must necessarily be within this body of flesh a spiritual and eternal being, to whom an earthly and a temporary birth has given, not a beginning of existence, but a habitation.” If our reflections have convinced us of the true eternal existence of the soul, if we are unable to look upon it other than as Being existing in the infinite past as well as in the infinite future, without beginning as without end, the occupant of an eternal present, who can then tell the depth of that sin of which we may not

^a Isaiah, xlv. 18. 12, 13.

^b Isaiah, xliii. 7.

^c Ps. cii. 18.

have been guilty, and who shall affix bounds to that punishment which justice may not demand? And then, when we again ask "Why was I placed here upon earth?" we may well tremble at the unknown magnitude of our transgression, but every shadow of apparent injustice vanishes away, and we begin faintly to perceive the glorious light of an infinite mercy designing the mysterious scheme of spiritual redemption.

We learn from Scripture the true and certain existence of intelligent and sentient beings, spiritual in nature and probably infinite in number, but yet separate and distinct each from the other. They are either angels of light, or spirits of evil; messengers of Omnipotence, or fallen adherents of Satan. We are likewise assured that there are existing spiritual beings now confined within a limited space, and imprisoned in the body of flesh, each of which we call a human soul. And we are taught that many of the sons of men are born to suffer both here and hereafter without an opportunity afforded by which they could hear the saving voice of Christianity; and we are thus compelled to regard the earthly birth of the greater part of the human race as an evil fearful and appalling.

Our eternal soul, therefore, cannot be the spirit of a good angel; or it would not deserve punishment: and since Infinite Goodness punishes not the innocent, our manifestation upon earth is a proof of guilt. Where, then, are we to look for that sphere of sin in which rules the evil soul of man, — in which, when unimprisoned in the flesh, his spirit raises itself in proud opposition to the Lord of Life? And what, then, is that spirit of wickedness which, now confined within a tabernacle of clay, still rebels against the will of Heaven? Dare we hope that the rebellious angels may yet be received into holy habitations? and is it on earth that there is afforded to them an opportunity of repentance? Does the offence of the least sinful of the fallen angels so immeasurably outweigh the most enormous crimes of fallen man, that there is no punishment less severe than that of everlasting perdition which can sufficiently recompense the iniquity of the one, — while the reward of the other, if he turn from his evil and repent, is an exceeding and eternal weight of glory? If such never-ending retribution be not the mournful decree of Omnipotence (and that such is not His will, the character of our Great Example, who is “able to

save to the utmost," most emphatically announces), then must there be a season of probation given to these spirits of evil, to the fallen angels of Satan, and then would they find a fitting habitation in Adam and in his fallen sons. If our soul be indeed the embodied spirit of a rebelling angel, then how great and unimpeachable would have been that justice which should have awarded irretrievably a doom of temporal and eternal punishment! Can we entertain a doubt as to the real nature of the spiritual Being which we call the soul, and which is not one of those angels of light, but yet is existing in time and in eternity? Is it not the embodied spirit of one of those rebellious angels which in heaven rebel against their Maker, and still retain upon earth their original spirit of contradiction?^a

When Adam yielded to the voice of the external tempter, is it not certain that he was urged on by

^a See the allegory with which Leibnitz concludes his *Theodicæ*. Minerva loquitur. "Vides Sextum a Patre meo non fuisse factum improbum, talis quippe ab omni æternitate fuit, et quidem semper libere; existere tantum ei concessit Jupiter, quod ipsum profecto ejus sapientia mundo, in quo ille continebatur, denegare non poterat: ergo Sextum e regione possibilium ad rerum existentium classem transtulit."

the latent spirit of guilty ambition hidden within his breast, the incarnate remembrance of evil ? . . . “ To this hour his descendants are proud, and full of the spirit of independency: and it seems to be the most general opinion, that this was the cause of the angels’ and of Adam’s fall; and if so, it is the greatest bar to the recovery of the soul. Whatever was the sin of Lucifer, it is probable that the sin of Adam was the same. It is natural to suppose the Devil would tempt him to transgress in the same way that he himself did, as well knowing the sad effects of it.”^a It was to man’s inward spirit of evil that Satan successfully appealed; it was to his pride and to his ambition that the promises of the knowledge of good and evil, and the hope of godlike immortality, were held out; it was before an innate but a latent spirit of evil, like himself, that the Arch-tempter spread forth his enticement; it was with one of his own embodied angels of darkness that the Prince and Ruler of this world held false and alluring discourse; and it was this fallen angel who rejoiced to hear the voice of his Master, and yielded to his temptations.

“ Revelation contains an inexhaustible mine;

^a Rev. Thomas Adam, p. 291.

and I have only wished by the way to call attention to these as yet unexplored treasures. But it is above all important, for the philosophical point of view, steadily to insist upon and enforce the truth, that in no respect can we form a notion adequately grand and lofty, or rich and manifold enough, of the Creation. The compactly closed and orderly arranged system is almost always the death of truth. . . . With this impression, I shall allow myself to notice an opinion but little known; which, moreover, if I had not met with in writers who, in this province of inquiry, are of the highest authority, I should scarcely have ventured to adduce. . . . The opinion I allude to is to be found in St. Jerome, *i. e.*, in that very father who, for theological judgment, is acknowledged by all to be the first and the greatest. It was held also by St. Francis de Sales, that holy saint of spiritual love, and who, even on that account, is so superior to the many hundreds of the schoolmen before him, and also to so many ideologists after him. Lastly, it occurred to Leibnitz, who, of all philosophers, was most possessed of a true and fine intellectual tact to perceive and discover all the most secret and delicate traits of a great system,

even though most remote in character from his own. . . . Now this opinion is, that in the revolt of the rebellious spirits, while those who remained in their state of innocence and in their allegiance rallied only the closer round their Creator, a considerable number, fearful and undecided, vacillated between good and evil, and, as we might justly say, with the weakness of the human character remained neutral in the conflict, and thereby lost their original place in the hierarchy of the heavenly host, without, however, being counted among the utterly lost. As a fourth authority for this opinion, I might adduce Dante. He is, indeed, a poet, but still a theological poet, and deeply versed in theology, who would never have arbitrarily devised or invented, or even adopted, such a notion, had he not found it existing among others before him, and had he not been able to adduce a good and valid authority for it: —

. . . . ‘quel cattivo coro
 Degli angeli che non furon rebelli,
 Nè fur fedeli a Dio ma per se foro.
 Cacciarli i Ciel per non esser men belli,
 Nè lo profundo Inferno gli riceve
 Ch’ alcuna gloria i rei avrebber d’ elli.’^a

^a Dell’ Inferno, canto iii. Thus rendered by Carey: —

“But what . . . according to the analogy of the Divine economy and merciful justice, as elsewhere displayed, are we to suppose the doom of these undecided and wavering spirits? In the first place, we may well suppose that they would be submitted to a new probation, just as a general gives another opportunity to the troops who, in some evil moment, have shown a want of spirit to retrieve their honour. Now, if it be allowable to assume that this, or some similar idea, or some tradition of the kind, had an influence on, and gave rise to, the doctrine of the pre-existence of men, which is so generally diffused among the Hindoos, and which was also held by the Platonists, and even Christian Platonists, of the first centuries, we can then conceive how this otherwise so arbitrary assumption and groundless hypothesis could have arisen.”^a

. . . . “with that ill-band
 Of angels mix’d, who nor rebellious proved,
 Nor yet were true to God, but for themselves
 Were only. From his bounds Heaven drove them,
 Not to impair his lustre; nor the depth
 Of hell receives them, lest th’ accursed tribe
 Should glory thence with exultation vain.”

^a Schlegel, p. 136.

It is one tenet of the Calvinists, "That God hath chosen a certain number of the fallen race of Adam in Christ, before the foundation of the world, unto eternal glory, according to His immutable purpose, and of His free grace and love, without the least foresight of faith, good works, or any conditions performed by the creature; and that the rest of mankind He was pleased to pass by, and ordain to dishonour and wrath for their sins. With respect to the *conditional* predestination admitted by the Arminians, they say, that an election upon faith or good works foreseen, is not that of the Scriptures; for that election is there made the *cause* of faith and holiness, and cannot, for this reason, be the *effect* of them. With regard to predestination to *death*, they say: If the question be, Wherefore did God decree to punish those that are punished? the answer is, — On account of their sins. But if it be, Wherefore did He decree to punish them rather than others? there is no other reason to be assigned but that *so it seemed good in His sight.*"^a

^a See Eph. i. 4, 5.; Rom. ix., xi. 1—6., viii. 29, 30.; 2 Thess. ii. 13.; Acts, xiii. 48.; John, vi. 37.; 1 Peter, 1, 2.; Rom. ix. 15, 16. Let me draw attention to the Lambeth

This doctrine is undoubtedly in accordance with several passages of Scripture. But its apparent opposition to all our ideas of justice has been a natural cause of doubt as to the correctness of the interpretation, and has led many to

Articles, which are not, perhaps, very generally known. They were drawn up at Lambeth Palace under the eye, and with the assistance, of Archbishop Whitgift, Bishop Bancroft, Bishop Vaughan, and other eminent dignitaries of the Church:—“1. God hath from eternity predestinated certain persons to life, and hath reprobated certain persons unto death. 2. The moving or efficient cause of predestination unto life, is not the foresight of faith, or of perseverance, or of good works, or of anything that is in the persons predestinated, but the will alone of God’s good pleasure. 3. The predestinate are a predetermined and certain number, which can neither be lessened nor increased. 4. Such as are not predestinated to salvation, shall inevitably be condemned on account of their sins. 5. The true, lively, and justifying faith, and the Spirit of God justifying, is not extinguished, doth not utterly fail, doth not vanish away in the elect, either finally or totally. 6. A true believer, that is, one who is endued with justifying faith, is certified by the full assurance of faith that his sins are forgiven, and that he shall be everlastingly saved by Christ. 7. Saving grace is not allowed, is not imparted, is not granted to all men, by which they may be saved if they will. 8. No man is able to come to Christ unless it be given him, and unless the Father draw him; and all men are not drawn by the Father that they may come to his Son. 9. It is not in the will or power of every man to be saved.”

forsake a Church in which it is inculcated. But since Christians must unhesitatingly admit the possibility of the soul's eternal existence, and consequently the probability of her rebellion when not manifested upon earth, they are in possession of a belief which points out one mode (although it may well be, not the only one) by which the truth of these inspired declarations is harmonised with perfect justice and goodness.

For with this conviction we are at once compelled to acknowledge, with a heartfelt sense of dependence, the justice which exposes us to certain pain here, and probable punishment hereafter. We confess, with true contrition of heart, that he who is born amid crime and wretchedness,—who lives where the voice of religion and instruction is never heard,—and who dies without hope and without fear, is, even before his appearance upon earth, indeed and in truth deserving of temporal and eternal punishment. And not only he, but all the fallen race of Adam, who are by nature born in sin, the children of wrath, and worthy of condemnation.

INDIVIDUAL GUILT.

BUT let us not imagine that it is the nature and position of souls in general,—of other souls with whom we can have little or no concern,—which we are now seeking to ascertain. It is we ourselves that are thus interested. It is I myself who am dwelling in eternity. Mine is the heart that in eternity is the home of pride and ambition. Within me is the spirit of contradiction which, while participating in an earthly and a temporary dispensation, continues to make war against the Majesty of Heaven. It is I that, as a fallen angel, am joined with Lucifer in rebelling against the will of the Most High. It is I who glory in the association, and delight with him to strive against all that is holy; for, while my nature knows *only* a spiritual and eternal existence,—while it in truth embraces, or rather is itself, the essential principle of evil *alone*, I hope not, and I wish not, for pardon. I am unable and unwilling to obtain the means of

justification. I am plunged in the dark abyss of the knowledge of evil, and I delight with Satan in unrepenting obduracy and rebellion.

. . . . Nor "do I repent or change,
 Though chang'd in outward lustre, that fix'd mind,
 And high disdain from sense of injur'd merit,
 That with the Mightiest rais'd me to contend,
 And to the fierce contention brought along
 Innumerable force of Spirits arm'd,
 That durst dislike his reign, and, me preferring,
 His utmost power with adverse power oppos'd
 In dubious battle on the plains of heaven,
 And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?
 All is not lost; — the unconquerable will,
 And study of revenge, immortal hate,
 And courage never to submit or yield,
 And what is else not to be overcome;
 That glory never shall his wrath or might
 Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
 With suppliant knee, and deify his power,
 Who from the terror of this arm so late
 Doubted his empire; that were low indeed,
 That were an ignominy, and shame beneath
 This downfall." ^a

And for this a punishment is devised; but how different from that which man, through anger or offended pride, inflicts upon his fellow! "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord:

^a Paradise Lost.

for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”^a “ My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.”^b

Thus, with Him, punishment is not revenge, but a merciful infliction by which the means of reconciliation are given to sinners.

^a Isaiah, lv. 8, 9.

^b Heb. xii. 5—10.

MANIFESTATION OF MAN UPON EARTH.

OUR earthly birth, which is the election^a of God, takes from us our spiritual and eternal knowledge of innate evil, and fits us for the reception of faith and for the showing forth of the fruits of righteousness.

Here, then, is brought home to us that great doctrine of Scripture which is embodied in the "Lambeth Articles,"^b which, from the dawn of Christianity, has been restricted in its application to sinful beings on earth, but which, if extended to those same spiritual beings when in rebellion against their Creator, becomes a witness which loudly proclaims the wondrous depth of Divine love. These were compiled by learned and conscientious men, but necessarily with the intention that the doctrines which they embody should be restricted in their application to beings in the state of humanity. But it is an instance

^a "We thank Thee for our creation."

^b See note, p. 190.

of remarkable agreement that these doctrines, thus carefully drawn from Scripture, should almost *in ipsissimis verbis* admit of extension so as to embrace beings in a state of sin purely spiritual. Let us now apply the following reflections to our earthly birth.

The doctrine of election teaches that we are rescued out of the power of condemnation, not of ourselves, but of free grace preventing us,— grace given unto us, not for any good that we have done, but of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit breathed forth upon us, through the eternal merits of Him who was appointed a Mediator before all worlds. “I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father! glorify Thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.”^a How consonant with infinite justice that all should have been left to the evil consequences of rebellion! how consonant with human ideas of justice that, of these, some should be left to the danger of desperation, and some elected unto grace, whereby God hath “constantly decreed by His counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation

^a John, xvii. 4, 5.

those whom He hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation.”^a “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.” “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”^b “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”^c The free gift of the Spirit is poured forth. “And the Word was made flesh;” and “as many as received Him,” (not of their own power, but of

^a Art. 17.

^b Eph. i. 3, 4, 5., ii. 8. 10.

^c John, iii. 6. 8.

His election), “to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God.”^a “He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”^b

The fallen angel is imprisoned in the body of flesh; into him is breathed the breath of lives^c, the Divine essence, the redeeming Word, the sanctifying Spirit; and thus are means given by which, through faith and repentance, justice may yield to mercy, and pardon may be granted even to the evil spirits of rebellion. “Of his own will begat He us with the Word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.”^d “The Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endureth to all generations.”^e “He retaineth not his anger, because He delighteth in mercy.”^f He “hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into

^a John, i. 12, 13.

^c Note C.

^e Ps. c. 5.

^b Titus, iii. 5—7.

^d James, i. 18.

^f Micah, vii. 18.

the kingdom of his dear Son ;” . . . “for by him were *all* things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible ; whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers : all things were created by him and for him.” “For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell. And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by Him to reconcile *all* things unto Himself ; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.”^a “The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion ; slow to anger, and of great mercy : the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. All thy works shall praise Thee, O Lord ! and thy saints shall bless Thee : they shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power ; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.”^b “For thy mercy is great above the heavens, and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds.”^c

But the possession of an eternal knowledge of

^a Col. i. 13. 16, 20.

^b Ps. cxlv. 8—13.

^c Ps. cviii. 4.

evil is in itself an unceasing, an insuperable, an infinite obstruction to happiness. The all-merciful gift of forgetfulness is therefore bestowed. And let it not be imagined that this idea of forgetfulness is a visionary one, for it is manifest that we are now living in a state during which knowledge is suspended. Reason, indeed, but then only in her most elevated form, may at times tell us of the infinite depravity of our nature, and of the immeasurable bliss which we have forfeited; but it is by Scripture alone that the truth of her words is confirmed. "Original sin is foolishness to men. We allow it to be so. We ought not, therefore, to reproach reason for not having this knowledge; because it is not pretended that reason can fathom it. But this foolishness is wiser than all the wisdom of man. Yet how should he be made acquainted with this by his reason when it is a thing above his reason; and when reason, instead of discovering it to him at first, disinclines him to believe it when it is presented before him?"

"These two opposite states of innocence and corruption being once laid open before us, it is impossible we should not recognise them. . . . Observe all those emotions of greatness

and glory which the sense of so many miseries is not able to extinguish, and consider whether they can proceed from a less powerful cause than original nature. But so great is our misery (greater than if there had never been anything noble in our condition), that we retain an idea of happiness, though we are unable to attain it ; we feel some faint notion of truth, while we possess nothing but falsehood, — incapable both of absolute ignorance and of certain knowledge. So manifest is it that we have once been in a state of perfection, from which we are now unhappily fallen.

“ What, then, does this avidity on the one hand and this impotence on the other teach us, but that man was originally possessed of a real bliss, of which nothing now remains but the footsteps and empty traces ? . . . This twofold nature of man is so visible, that some have imagined him to have two souls ; one single subject appearing to them incapable of such great and sudden transitions, from immeasurable presumption to the most dreadful abjectness of spirit.

“ Hence arose the various sects of the Stoics and Epicureans, the Dogmatists, Academics, &c. The Christian religion alone has been able

thoroughly to cure these opposite vices, . . . for while it exalts the righteous even to a participation of the Divinity, it makes them understand that, in this superior state, they have still within them the fountain of all corruption; and it assures the most impious, that they still may partake of the grace of their Redeemer.”^a

Reason may also similarly teach us the exceeding high probability that the soul is immortal; but we have seen that man is not of himself conscious of the existence of eternity itself, and that therefore, for assurance, he must refer to the words of Him who “hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.”^b This immortality is not a gift hereafter to be bestowed, for such would be a true creation; but it is a never-ending life, which we now possess, which is now a part of our present Being; that is, we are now in the possession of an everlasting existence, which we are unable to perceive. We are therefore now in a state of forgetfulness, or, more correctly, of temporary ignorance; and this ignorance arises from what we are accustomed to call the imperfection of our natural faculties.

^a Thoughts on Religion, by Blaise Pascal, p. 29. *et seq.*

^b 2 Tim. i. 10.

But, because our remembrance, our present knowledge, and our power of foresight, are all limited, we must not therefore hastily assume that these faculties are in their nature imperfect. Limited it is true they are, but they must not therefore be regarded as a cause of reproach, or as the result of sin: for Adam, although in his innocence he was not subjected to the power of death, had not unlimited knowledge of the past, of the present, or of the future; and these faculties at least were with him limited even as they are with his descendants. This limitation is not, therefore, necessarily inseparable from guilt, it is not inevitably a part of man's spiritual evil, but it is the gift of our Maker; it is therefore designed in infinite wisdom and goodness, and better suited to our present state than would have been a greater or less amount of imparted or inherent knowledge.

It is probable that many will be disposed to deny that this gift of forgetfulness has been bestowed. It is not pretended that the above reflections amount to absolute proof, but they tend to give some ground for believing that to be a reality which all must admit to be possible, and to which (according to the habit of thought) a greater or less degree of probability will be

attached. This is a conclusion in harmony with all that we know of the ways of Providence. It is by the Divine will that man *now* forgets the scenes of infancy, and listens to the recital of his early joys and sufferings as to that of incidents which had befallen another. It is by the Divine power that man will *hereafter* forget the sins that he has committed, that they will be “blotted out as a thick cloud,” that they “shall be sought for and not be found.” “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.” “I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more:” for “where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.”^a Forgetfulness is therefore a part of Divine government in the present; it will be so in the future, and this we believe will be the fulfilment of the type prefigured in the past.^b And thus is there given to us additional cause reverentially to worship Him who, in His infinite wisdom and goodness, designs the means of spiritual redemption. “Our Saviour’s saying, ‘How often would

^a Jer. l. 20. ; Isaiah, xliii. 25. ; Heb. x. 16—18.

^b See Isaiah, lxxv. 17.

I have gathered thee as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings!' is an affecting illustration of the divine *στοργή*, and his own yearning compassion in the fond workings of that creature. But who in this dark state of things can trace the thought in its full extent, or discover the resemblances, ends, and uses of but a few particulars? This will be the delightful employment of glorified spirits, and the growing wonder of eternity."^a

^a Adams, p. 265.

CREATION.

BUT for repentance Eternity is too long, for it is without beginning and without end ; for repentance Eternity is too short, for it is an everlasting present, and has no past, no future. TIME was therefore given for repentance. But Eternity is forgiveness.

As yet, while good and evil are contending in primæval strife, around and on every side extends that dark

“ Illimitable ocean, without bound,
 Without dimension ; where length, breadth, and height,
 And time, and place, are lost ; where eldest Night
 And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold
 Eternal anarchy.”^a

Then goes forth the breath of Omnipotence. He wills the mysterious origin of development ; the primal element appears, and fills the infinity of space : but attraction follows ; the material universe is created, — the earth and the heavenly bodies roll onwards in their appointed courses, —

^a Paradise Lost.

and TIME begins. Then "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a *living* soul."^a The soul in eternity is spiritually "*dead* in trespasses and sins;"^b but the "Holy Spirit" is united to her Being; she then becomes a "*living* soul," and is imprisoned in the body of flesh. And thus was Adam formed of body, soul, and spirit: the body, which "shall return to the dust as it was; the spirit, which shall *return* to God, who *gave* it;" and the soul, which "is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."^c The body, which is material, limited, and temporary; the soul and the spirit, which are spiritual, infinite, and eternal. By the influence of the Spirit, the all-merciful gift of forgetfulness is received, and the soul no more remembers the eternal evil of her nature, or the infinite depth of her iniquity. And now Time and Eternity reign together, and are known upon earth; the hushed and subdued spirit of evil and the breath of eternal life are united in the bodily

^a Gen. ii. 7.

^b Spiritual death is scripturally opposed to spiritual life. See Eph. ii. 1.

^c "Heart is used for the soul and all the powers thereof."

— *Buck.*

form of man; “mercy and truth are met together: righteousness and peace have kissed each other;”^a and the means of salvation are given. Then “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.”^b

The first man was made free to stand or fall; for, had he been placed in a position of infallibility, the all-merciful mystery of spiritual restoration could not have been fulfilled. “Purity of heart, mind, and conscience, does not consist in freedom from temptation, or total insensibility, but in abstinence from the outward act of sin, and suppression of all inward motions and tendencies to it, in the fear of God, and with a steady choice of his will.”^c Therefore, “the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”^d

Thus was provided a test of obedience and returning love: and it was a test, too, of man’s steadfastness in virtue; since, in yielding to temptation, he committed every sin that could

^a Ps. lxxxv. 10.

^b Job, xxxviii. 7.

^c Adams, p. 342.

^d Gen. ii. 16, 17.

then be known. “It was *ingratitude*: God had of his free bounty given to man everything that could be conducive to his happiness; yet he could not refrain from that one fruit which God had reserved for his own purposes. It was *breach of trust*: he was placed in the garden to keep and to dress it; everything else was his own; yet he availed himself of the confidence placed in him, to take what God had told him was to be reserved. It was *rebellion*: he knowingly put forth his hand to do what God had prohibited. It was *intemperance*: Eve saw that the tree was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes; and she did eat, and gave to her husband also, and he did eat. It was *ambition*: they imagined they were to become as gods, knowing good and evil. It was *charging God with falsehood*: God had said, In the day thou eatest of it thou shalt surely die. Had Adam believed that declaration, he would as soon have eaten of the most deadly poison as of that fruit. But the serpent said, Ye shall not surely die; and Adam believed the serpent rather than God.”^a

But was not the prohibition from eating of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil more

^a Carlisle on the Deity of Christ, p. 416.

than a test of steadfast obedience? Possession of the knowledge of good and evil threatened to destroy the merciful gift of forgetfulness. ' Adam, in his state of innocence, was immortal; and had he continued so after having eaten of the forbidden fruit, then would his have been a knowledge of everlasting evil. But the act itself destroyed his knowledge of immortality, and thus limited its reach to temporary evil. And this act of disobedience called forth yet another beautiful instance of Divine goodness. "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become *as one of us*, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever; *therefore*, the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken." ^a

Possession of the knowledge of good and evil was necessarily the consciousness of sin; for "the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked." The absence of this knowledge afforded the means, and the only means then appointed, by which the fallen angel which inhabited the body of Adam could have

^a Gen. iii. 22, 23.

worked out his salvation. The exercise of free will in resisting temptation would have diminished his liability to fall; his mental and moral faculties would have gradually gained strength; and the continued grace of his Creator would have enabled him constantly to approach nearer and more near to a state of holiness. "For habits of virtue thus acquired by discipline are improvement in virtue: and improvement in virtue must be advancement in happiness, if the government of the universe be moral.

"From these things we may observe, and it will further show this our natural and original need of being improved by discipline, how it comes to pass that creatures, made upright, might fall; and that those who preserve their uprightness, by so doing raise themselves to a more secure state of virtue. . . . The case would be as if we were to suppose a straight path marked out for a person, in which such a degree of attention would keep him steady; but if he would not attend in this degree, any one of a thousand objects catching his eye might lead him out of it. Now it is impossible to say how much even the first full overt act of irregularity might disorder the inward constitution, unsettle

the adjustments and alter the proportions which formed it, and in which the uprightness of its make consisted. But repetition of irregularities would produce habits. And thus the constitution would be spoiled, and creatures made upright become corrupt and depraved in their settled character, proportionably to their repeated irregularities in occasional acts. But, on the contrary, these creatures might have improved, and raised themselves to a higher and more secure state of virtue, by the contrary behaviour; by steadily following the moral principle supposed to be one part of their nature, and thus withstanding that unavoidable danger of defection which necessarily arose from propension, the other part of it. For, by thus preserving their integrity for some time, their danger would lessen; since propensions, by being inured to submit, would do it more easily and of course: and their security against this lessening danger would increase; since the moral principle would gain additional strength by exercise: both which things are implied in the notion of virtuous habits. Thus, then, vicious indulgence is not only criminal in itself, but also depraves the inward constitution and character. And virtuous

self-government is not only right in itself, but also improves the inward constitution or character; and may improve it to such a degree, that, though we should suppose it impossible for particular affections to be absolutely coincident with the moral principle, and consequently should allow that such creatures as have been above supposed should for ever remain defectible, yet their danger of actually deviating from right may be almost infinitely lessened, and they fully fortified against what remains of it: if that may be called danger against which there is an adequate, effectual security. But still this, their higher perfection, may continue to consist in habits of virtue formed in a state of discipline; and this, their more complete security, remain to proceed from them. And thus it is plainly conceivable, that creatures without blemish, as they came out of the hands of God, may be in danger of going wrong; and so may stand in need of the security of virtuous habits additional to the moral principle wrought into their natures by Him. That which is the ground of their danger, or their want of security, may be considered as a deficiency in them to which virtuous habits are the natural supply. And as they are naturally

capable of being raised and improved by discipline, it may be a thing fit and requisite that they should be placed in circumstances with an eye to it; in circumstances peculiarly fitted to be, to them, a state of discipline for their improvement in virtue.”^a

^a Butler's Analogy, p. 104.

REVIEW.

LET us once more state the result which we have obtained, with a brief recapitulation of the reasons upon which it is founded.

We have seen, that the two Spiritual Beings of good and evil are existing in mutual opposition, from everlasting to everlasting, and that neither of them is of that corporeal or temporary nature which we have been accustomed, perhaps, to imagine. It is unnecessary to dwell upon the attributes possessed by the Author and Essence of Good, for they are indelibly impressed upon the heart of every Christian; it may, however, be proper to call to mind that the Principle of Evil is likewise eternal, spiritual, and infinite, — infinite not in power but in diffusion: “the Prince of the power of the air, the Spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.”^a We have seen, that to each of these two antagonistic Spiritual Beings obedience is given by

^a Eph. ii. 2.

an untold number of ministering spirits, like unto themselves, angels of light and angels of darkness, each individually perfectly distinct one from the other, and each possessing a true and independent existence.

“It was the opinion both of Jews and heathens that the air was full of spirits called demons, and that there was a prince over them, called the governor of the world, that is, of the darkness of it. This evil spirit is here said (Eph. ii. 2.) inwardly ‘to work in the children of disobedience,’ and elsewhere ‘to take them captive at his will’ (2 Tim. ii. 26.), and their conversion is styled a recovery of them ‘from the power of Satan’ (Acts, xxvi. 18.)”^a

“All the angels, even those of the highest order, are employed by their Creator to serve those who believe in Christ Jesus. What these services are, and how performed, it would be impossible to state. They are, no doubt, constantly employed in *averting evil* and *procuring good*. If God help *man by man*, we need not wonder that He helps *men by angels*. We know that He needs none of those helps, for He can do all things himself; yet it seems agreeable to his

^a Dr. Whitby.

infinite wisdom and goodness to use them. This is a part of the economy of God in the government of the world and of the church ; and a part, no doubt, essential to the harmony and perfection of the whole. (See the Rev. John Wesley's Works, vol. ix. p. 337. ed. 1811.)"^a

We have seen that a Being of infinite goodness, the very author and essence of every good, regards with mercy and compassion all that He has created ; and we have been taught to believe that He is able and willing to save even the opposing spirits of evil, that He delights to bring good out of evil, and thus to add to the glory of the kingdom of heaven ; but we have seen, that by an evil Being, while possessing within itself the attributes solely of the immaterial, the infinite, and the eternal, conversion to good, as it is not wished for, so neither can it be received.

Again : we have seen that the soul of Adam is not an infallible being, but one liable to temporal and eternal misery. We know that each one of his descendants is born to certain pain here, and many of them (as we are taught) to probable torment hereafter ; and thus we learn,

^a Dr. A. Clarke's Biblical Notes.

that as the appearance of the first man upon earth must undoubtedly have been a punishment, so also, but in a much greater degree, must have been the bodily imprisonment of every soul in all succeeding generations. But as we know that a soul which had not existed could not have deserved punishment, and as we unhesitatingly acknowledge that unmerited punishment cannot be inflicted by infinite justice, we are therefore assured that each individual spirit which we call the soul of man is evil in its nature, and must have known another sphere of existence, in which sin is committed and punishment deserved.

Reason, therefore, and Scripture, unite to teach us that the eternal principles of contradiction, the everlasting spirits of evil, are deserving of punishment; but we know that the punishment of Heaven is not as that of human invention. It is not the act of aroused vengeance nor of offended pride. It is demanded by justice, —it is tempered with mercy, —it is inflicted in hope. It is the merciful means of conversion, —it is a just cause for thanksgiving, —and it is satisfaction that rests trustfully in the future. By its means is evil turned to good; the kingdom of evil and its power are diminished; the

dominion of supreme good is enlarged ; and its glory established for ever.

But such a dispensation of punishment and pardon is exactly that under which each sinful soul of man is placed ; and it is moreover pre-eminently, and far above all human power of conception, fitted for enabling the rebelling spirits of evil to tread with humble footsteps that path which alone can lead to holiness. For those evil spirits, deserving to be eternally excluded from association with angels of light, and to be left unpitied in a state of never-ending contradiction, are yet made the recipients of a merciful compassion ; a compassion, too, which, in their state of spiritual opposition, knowledge, and power, they were unwilling and unable to receive, because consciousness of sin was not only dwelling within them, was not merely a part of themselves, but was actually their real existence itself, for they were themselves the spirits of contradiction. But the gift of oblivion is mercifully ordained, and they remember not the innate evil of their nature : by their embodied appearance upon earth, their self-condemning knowledge is lost in temporary ignorance ; and upon beings who, in their very nature, are

eternal, immaterial, and infinite, there is bestowed time, form, and an abiding-place. "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."^a They are not yet condemned; for "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."^b He is merciful and longsuffering. He stayed the hand of justice, that it struck not. He spoke the words of promise, that He would not yet utterly destroy. But He cast down to earth the evil spirits of rebellion, there to work and toil in the sweat of their brow, there to receive in chains and darkness that temporal punishment which is far short of the due reward of their iniquity, and there to prepare in sorrow and in repentance for that great day of judgment in which their sentence will be eternal. "For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people." They are tied and bound with the chains of their sins; "but the Lord shall arise, and his glory shall be

^a 2 Pet. ii. 4.

^b Jude, 6.

seen.”^a “And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.”^b “For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad;”^c that every one may yield his spirit to “the final judgment, when both angels and men shall receive their eternal doom.”^d “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.”^e

We have seen, that when these spiritual beings were first placed here upon earth, they were in a state of freewill, and, consequently, of infallibility; so that, by the constant exercise of virtuous resolution, they necessarily would have acquired a habit of increasing moral excellence, they would have continually approached nearer and more near to perfect holiness, and would have con-

^a Isaiah, lx. 2

^b John, i. 5.

^c 2 Cor. v. 4. 10.

^d Dr. A. Clarke.

^e Eccles. xii. 14.

tinually receded from the probability of yielding to temptation.

We have seen, that to these beings the knowledge of good and evil was prohibited. It was a prohibition which emanated from infinite wisdom and mercy. As a simple command, it was by itself a test of steadfast faith, obedience, and love; while obedience to it would have been the means of retaining that continual restraint upon the desires which perfects the moral character, and was the only remaining path to the attainment of holiness, and would also have prevented the acquisition of that knowledge which had been mercifully withheld, and which was actually, in itself, both an insurmountable obstacle to conversion* to good, and inevitably a consciousness of existing evil.

We are utterly unable to conceive any other dispensation by which this mysterious and most merciful design could have been effected; and we are equally unable to imagine any other cause for which the first Adam and his descendants could have deserved liability to temporal and eternal punishment.

And now, can we entertain a doubt but that Adam and every individual of his fallen sons is the habitation of a distinct and separate principle

of evil,—a habitation limited, earthly, and temporary, for that which is in its nature infinite, immaterial, and eternal? and that this spiritual wickedness has been, by an all-merciful Being, thus confined within the prison-house of the flesh, to work out its salvation in fear and trembling, and to obtain, by the exercise of faith and a continued mortification of unholy desires, a title to admission into the realms of spiritual goodness?

But I have heard the voice of one who in agony and bitterness of spirit cried aloud: “Why was I placed here upon earth? As I wished not for creation, so neither am I thankful for it. Far preferable would have been nonentity, for to me life has been a burden; infinitely preferable would be annihilation, for death will be to me the beginning of everlasting punishment.” “Cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed. Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man child is born unto thee. Wherefore came I forth out of the womb to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame?”^a

^a Jer. xx. 14, 15. 20.

“Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man, for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.”^a Let us hearken unto the voice of the same prophet: “Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.”^b Nay but, O man! it is I myself that am an evil spirit, dwelling in eternity, and rebelling against the Author of all good: and as the sin is eternal, so should be the punishment. But a voice from heaven speaks of infinite compassion. He whom I am offending leaves me not eternally to “the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”^c He pours forth the abundance of his loving-kindness. He elects me unto the influence of His Holy Spirit. He

^a Job, xxxviii. 2—4.

^b Jer. i. 4, 5. To sanctify: “To cleanse a sinner from the pollution and filth of sin, to free him from the power and dominion of sin, and endue him with a principle of holiness.”

^c Mark, ix. 44.

washes out the remembrance of sin and its attending punishment. He creates this earth and all that thereto belongs. He places me in a state of probation and trial, and thus gives the means of reconciliation and of restoration to goodness. Such is the immeasurable gift of infinite mercy: and thus is Reason answered when she asks, "Why was I placed here upon earth?"

FALL OF MAN.

UPON Adam was bestowed the breath of life; he was spiritually created in the express image of his Maker; he was innocent, he was holy, he was divine. But, since it is impossible for divinity to yield to temptation, his soul must have also been evil in its nature. Therefore was Adam discontented, proud, devilish.^a In him were spiritually united the supreme good and a spirit of evil. It was in his power not only to remain upright, but to grow in holiness and grace. But it was in vain. The archprinciple of evil knew that destruction was threatening his dark kingdom. The indwelling spirit of contradiction which lay enshrined within the breast of the first father of mankind listened rejoicingly to the false promises of his master, the kindred prince of evil. Ambition and pride stirred within him, and all the slumbering evil

^a "Infection of nature doth remain; yea in them that are regenerated." Art. ix.

of his nature was awakened to activity. He, a fallible being, coveted the knowledge of good and evil, and believed that, by its possession, he should become a god. Thus he fell, and thus was effaced the divine likeness of his creation. But his guilt was itself his punishment, his wickedness was no longer concealed, and he knew that he was naked.

Thus he voluntarily relinquished all opportunity of continual advancement towards the perfection of holiness, and thus he himself first knew the bitterness

“Of man’s first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us.”

Thus, then, are we doubly sinners ; in eternity, as fallen angels, we rebel against heaven ; and in time, as the sons of Adam, sin comes upon all, and we yield to temptation. Now we see clearly that “our very virtues may be snares unto us. The enemy that waiteth for all occasions to work our ruin hath found it harder to overthrow an humble sinner than a proud saint. There is no man’s case so dangerous as his whom Satan

hath persuaded that his own righteousness shall present him blameless in the sight of God. . . . Indeed, God doth liberally promise whatsoever appertaineth to a blessed life to as many as *sincerely* keep his law, though they be not *exactly* able to keep it. Wherefore we acknowledge a dutiful necessity of doing well ; but *the meritorious dignity of doing well we utterly renounce*. We see how far from the perfect righteousness of the law, the little fruit which we have in holiness is ; it is, God knoweth, corrupt and unsound ; we put no confidence at all in it, we challenge nothing in the world for it, we dare not *call God to reckoning* as if we had Him in our debt books : *our continual suit to Him is and must be, to bear with our infirmities and pardon our offences.*"^a

Deeper then, far deeper, is our sin than we are accustomed to imagine. Now, we see that the powerful language of the inspired writers fails to give a true picture of our iniquity. Reason and faith join together to tell us, that if left to our own power, our portion would have been inevitably the black darkness of despair ; and the heart now truly feels the full meaning of words which have hitherto too frequently fallen

^a Hooker's Discourse on Justification.

from the lips unheeded and unappreciated, but which, in reality, must fall far short of the actual depravity of our nature.

“The way of man is froward and strange.”
 “There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not.” “The heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.” “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Who can know it?” “I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.”^a But yet again was the manifold love of Heaven poured forth : —

——— “All the souls that are were forfeit once,
 And he that might the 'vantage best have took,
 Found out the remedy!”

“The Lord is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”^b

^a Prov. xxi. 8. ; Eccl. vii. 20., viii. 11. ; Jer. xvii. 9. ; Ps. li. 5.

^b 2 Pet. iii. 9.

REDEMPTION OF SINNERS.

It is undoubtedly possible, that at this very day the manifestation of a man such as Adam might be exactly repeated. Then would he and his descendants, if they continued upright, have the power of themselves to work out their own salvation; but human reason tells us, first, that since Adam, with all things propitious, fell in Eden, a soul so formed and placed amidst the additional temptations of the present time would yet more certainly be found irresolute; and, secondly, even were he to stand, he and those of his descendants only who continued innocent would inherit salvation. But such a limited scheme of reconciliation is not in harmony with infinite wisdom and goodness. By Omnipotence, other means of recovery have been provided. "God so loved the world, that he hath given his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him may not perish, but enjoy everlasting life." ^a He "submitted himself to death, even

^a John, iii. 16.

the death of the cross ;”^a and having been “delivered for our offences, was raised again for our justification ;”^b the propitiation for the sins of the whole world.”^c

“By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name ;”^d “which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge ;”^e who “also suffered for us, the just for the unjust ; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth ; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again ; when he suffered, he threatened not ; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously : who his ownself bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness : by whose stripes we are healed.”^f

Thus “call to mind, O sinful creature ! and set before thine eyes, *Christ crucified*. Think thou seest his body stretched out in length upon the cross, his head crowned with sharp thorns, and his hands and his feet pierced with nails ; his

^a Ph. ii. 8.

^b Rom. iv. 25.

^c 1 John, ii. 2.

^d Heb. xiii. 15.

^e 2 Cor. ii. 14.

^f 1 Pet. ii. 21—24.

heart opened with a long spear, his flesh rent and torn with whips, his brows sweating water and blood: think thou hearest Him now crying in an intolerable agony to his Father, and saying, *My God! my God! why hast Thou forsaken me?*"^a

And these sufferings of our Redeemer, we must remember, were in all probability, in their nature, far more intense than those borne by many of the earlier and late martyrs. "When He was at Gethsemane, the evening on which He was betrayed, the evangelist Matthew says, 'He began to be very sorrowful, and *full of anguish*, and said to his disciples, My soul is *very sorrowful*, even unto death' (Matt. xxvi. 37, 38.). Mark in like manner says, 'He began to be *greatly astonished*, and to be *full of anguish*' (Mark, xiii. 33, 34.). Indeed, the original language employed by Mark conveys a stronger sense than that in this translation; for *ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι* imports the most shocking mixture of terror and amazement, and *περίλοιπος*, in the next verse, intimates that He felt on every side surrounded with sorrow, and pressed down with despondency. While thus 'drinking of the brook by the way' (Ps.

^a Second Homily on the Passion, p. 359. ; Oxford edition, 1810.

cx. 7.), *thrice* did He pray to his Father to ‘take away the bitter cup;’ and though it was in the cool of the evening, ‘the sweat’ occasioned by the agony of his mind ‘was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground’ (Luke, xxii. 44.). And when hanging on the cross, his piteous and heart-rending exclamation, ‘My God! my God! why hast Thou forsaken me?’ (Matt. xxvii. 46.) doubtless arose from the want of a comfortable sense of God’s presence.

“Now, whence arose this agony, this interruption of the sense of God’s presence, this intense feeling of destitution during our Lord’s great extremity, but from the necessity that He should *suffer*? Bodily pain might have been lost in enjoyment even during crucifixion (as has been manifested in the delights of some martyrs in the midst of their tortures); but in that case the ‘soul’ of the Messiah could not have been an ‘offering for sin,’ as Isaiah predicted it must be. To this end it was that it ‘pleased Jehovah to *crush him with affliction* ;’ and it is next to impossible to meditate upon his pathetic exclamations amid his severe sufferings, without adopting again the . . . language of the same prophet,

‘ Surely OUR *infirmities* *He hath borne,*
And OUR *sorrows* *He hath carried.*’

“ . . . Compare his behaviour under suffering with that of other martyrs; many, for example, in the third century. *He* suffered for the space of a few hours only; *they* were made to sustain sufferings for days, weeks, months, nay, in some cases, years. *He* suffered the punishment of the cross; *they* have agonised under boiling oil, melted lead, plates of hot iron, or have been broiled for *days* over a slow fire, or shut up in fiercely glowing brazen bulls, or have had their members cut and torn off one after another in tedious and barbarous succession. Yet *He* lamented and *they* triumphed. Is not this infinitely astonishing upon any other theory of religion than ours? Is it not incomprehensible that the Master of our faith, ‘the Captain of our salvation,’ should be abashed and astounded at the sight, or even the *contemplation*, of death, and that his servants and followers should triumph in the midst of unequalled torments? The one is seized with sorrow even unto death; the others are transported with joy. The one sweats, as it were, drops of blood at the approach of death; the others behold a divine hand wiping off their

blood, but not their *tears*, for none do they shed. The one complains that God forsakes Him, the others cry aloud with rapture that they behold Him stretching forth his hands to encourage and invite them to Him.

“All this cannot be because his bodily torment is greater than theirs; nor can it be because they have more internal strength and holiness than He has. But it is because God administers more comfort to them than to Him.”^a Such are the sufferings, in their nature inconceivable by human faculties, which, in their awful reality, in their mysterious design, and in their immeasurable love, I with a steadfast faith unhesitatingly believe. But there is, I am aware, a numerous class who, believing in the Christian doctrine of redemption, are unable to regard it as a free gift of infinite mercy. They know that every soul enters into the world as a child of sin, that he is utterly unable of himself to obtain the means of pardon and reconciliation, and that he would be inevitably doomed to eternal punishment, but for the sacrifice of Him who longs as a father for the returning love of his children, to all of whom, who believe upon his name, is forgiveness freely

^a Gregory, p. 291.

given. They assert, that since each newly created soul would have been exposed to the certainty both of temporal pain and of eternal torment in consequence of the guilt of one who lived six thousand years ago, and over whose actions he could have had no control; that therefore the means of forgiveness is a gift, not of mercy, but of justice; and that even the intense suffering which we have been contemplating would not, as a work of love, surpass that of which even our human affection is capable.

We find the views of those who thus argue stated in the following language:—

“Let us imagine that you and I as earthly parents may have been, by the hand of death, liberated from this world, and that through the one sacrifice of the Great Founder of our Faith we are now dwelling amid the mansions of the blessed. Hence we look down upon that earth which we have quitted, and our eye first seeks those loved children whose bodies we have supported, and whose souls we have striven to guide aright. But instantly, with the rapidity of unfettered thought, we learn these two truths—the one painful and very bitter, the other brightened with peace and great joy. We perceive that

those so endeared to us are as sheep going astray, and are as birds falling into the net of the fowler; but, at the same instant, we are made conscious that, by the willing sacrifice, but for a short season, of the happiness of heaven, by entering again into the flesh, and thus submitting ourselves for a few years to trial, and to pain, and to an ignominious death upon earth, they may yet be recovered to the fold of the true Shepherd. Is it possible that one of us would hesitate? Should we not be unworthy of happiness; should we not rather be incapable of its enjoyment if we refused to rescue our children from everlasting punishment, by undergoing an infliction so slight that comparison with that which threatens them is impossible.

“If a mortal then, with all his doubts and fears weighing heavily upon him, and his perceptions of love and charity all obscure, now feels ready and willing joyfully to offer himself as a sacrifice for the welfare of those children who are not his by creation, but only by association; if a mortal should be thus eager, and deem it no great trial of his affection, could we then call infinite that love which, for a short season, relinquishes the divine attributes, and

assumes the human form, in order to save from condemnation not the limited offspring of the flesh, but the whole army of spiritual believers, who, if the birth of the body be the creation of the soul, would have suffered for sin they had not committed, and over which, either in act or thought, they could have had no control; could we really and truly call that love infinite which is thus a sacrifice for the salvation of children, his not by association only, but by creation."

These are thoughts with which many conscientious men have been perplexed; but since we heartily and steadfastly believe that salvation is indeed a free gift of love, in which we "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory,"^a inestimable is that power of reason which, in unison with every tendency of revelation, teaches us the eternal existence of the soul, for, we must then confess that condemnation is deserved by all. We then clearly see the infinity of our guilt, we learn that we have unceasingly rebelled against the laws of goodness; and that, as a spirit of contradiction, we may have been actively present in the heart of Adam, assisting our great master the prince of spiritual evil in alluring the first created

^a 1 Pet. i. 8.

man to destruction. "The man who knows himself to be a devil is in a fair way to be a saint."^a

Now, with a lively faith we inwardly feel in all their power the beautiful Scripture descriptions of the infinite depth of redeeming love. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God," "according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord; of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." O that we "may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."^b

"I see the glory and blessedness of God in giving his Son to die for such sinners as I am, and would give the world to have a lively gratitude and burning love to him in my heart; but can have no peace but in thinking that he died for my ingratitude. . . . To comprehend the breadth, and depth, and length, and height of the love of Christ, we must first take the dimensions of our own sin. . . . A thousand saints with all their fortitude, patience, and united efforts, could not bear the burden of one sin. What, then, did Christ endure when all the sins of the

^a Adams, p. 291.

^b Eph. iii. 11. 15. 18, 19.

world were laid on him? ‘Herein is love,’ — superlative, inconceivable, infinite — that he ‘sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins,’ without exception of any sins or sinners! Christ says to man, ‘Live!’ not for any good he sees in man, but when he is, and because he is, lying in his blood. He can enlighten the dark heart; he can purge the defiled heart; he can bend the stubborn heart; he can fix the inconstant heart; he can quicken the dead heart; he can spiritualise the earthly heart; he can universalise the selfish heart; he can comfort the sorrowful heart; all cold and icy as it is, he can make it a heart of pure love; he can be himself in the heart. Blessed be his name!”^a

“Surely our infirmities he hath borne,
 And our sorrows he hath carried them.
 He was wounded for our transgressions,
 Was smitten for our iniquities.
 The chastisement by which our peace is effected was
 laid upon him,
 And by his bruises we are healed.
 Jehovah hath made to light upon him the iniquity of us
 all.
 For the transgressions of my people he was smitten to
 death,

^a Adams, p. 308. 310.

Although he had done no wrong,
 Neither was there any guile in his mouth,
 Yet it pleased Jehovah to crush him with affliction.
 Of the travail of his soul he shall see and be satisfied.
 By the knowledge of him shall my servant justify many,
 For the punishment of their iniquities he shall bear.
 He poured out his soul unto death,
 And was numbered with the transgressors ;
 And he bare the sins of many,
 And made intercession for the transgressors." ^a

Thus once more true holiness appeared again upon earth, and thus was made clear that type of regeneration which was by the creation of man first shadowed forth. As, in the beginning, by the union of the breath of life with an evil spirit of rebellion that spirit became a participator in the Divine influence, and therefore innocent in itself, so, by the mysterious union of the Divine essence with a human soul, fallen human nature was restored, and yet again a Being of perfect innocence appeared. By his miraculous birth He became man, and in the same state of innocence which Adam possessed before he fell ; but, like Adam's, his too was a twofold nature. In his distinct human existence his soul was an union of good with the liability to evil. In Him, as in Adam, was the exercise of faith, love, and

^a Lowth's Isaiah, liii. 4. 6. 8. 12. ; Dan. ix. 24. 26.

charity necessary for the perfecting of his human nature, thus to render it worthy of reward. Neither was He infallible nor in a state of perfection, absolute and unalterable: in his human nature, He was not immutable; for even in Him resistance to temptation required the active exercise of free will. "In that He himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted:"^a "for we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."^b It was in the form of the first Adam, and in that of his descendants, that the fallen angels would have been enabled, by the infused breath of their Creator, to work out of their own merits the means of their salvation. But he and they yielded to temptation, and shame and failure is their inheritance. It was in the form of the second Adam that the saving spirit of their Creator rebuked the arch-principle of evil, and of His own righteousness worked out the salvation of every fallen son of man who shall believe upon His name. The first Adam is the union of an evil spirit of rebellion with the breath of

^a Heb. ii. 18.

^b Ib. iv. 15.

life; the second is the union of the rebellious spirit of man with the Giver of Life. Both were fallible; both might have yielded to temptation. But "the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." By the union in Him of the divine nature with the human soul, the means of salvation were given; and, by His righteousness, innocence was again offered to man. He, the Mighty Saviour, it is who sends his Messenger of Comfort after him, that we beings of evil should once again receive the breath of eternal life. In the form of the Holy Ghost is the breath of life, "even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father,"^a once more poured forth upon all that believe in His name. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me."^b "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him, for he dwelleth in you, and shall

^a John, xv. 26.

^b Ib. xiv. 6.

be in you.”^a “And he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.”^b “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”^c Thus are we placed in the position of our first parents before they knew sin and fell from innocence ; thus, as evil spirits, by believing on Him than whom “there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved,”^d is there renewed a right spirit within us. Adam, by the breath of his Maker, ceased to be a spirit of evil, and he became a living soul. By faith in the second Adam, and by the gift of the Holy Ghost, the breath of life is united to our natural spirit of evil, sin becomes dead within us, and we are born again and of the Spirit. The first Adam was elected unto an earthly birth of the free grace of God, and into his rebellious soul was mysteriously “breathed the ‘Breath of Lives,’ the Divine Essence, the redeeming Word, the sanctifying Spirit;” and thus was Adam made in the image of his Creator. The chosen of the sons of men are

^a John, xiv. 16.

^b John, xx. 22.

^c Acts, ii. 38.

^d Acts, iv. 12.

elected unto a second birth of regeneration of the free grace of God, and by repentance and faith in the second Adam. He in whom "dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily" enters into their heart. "He that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him."^a And thus into the rebellious soul of man is mysteriously "breathed the 'Breath of Lives,' the Divine Essence, the redeeming Word, the sanctifying Spirit," and thus are we renewed in the image of our Creator.^b Then with Him we sing rejoicingly of infinite love, and give thanks that we are not as other men are. The all-merciful gift of faith in a redeeming sacrifice has been bestowed upon us. Into our hearts has been poured forth abundantly the riches of the Holy Spirit. We are of the elect, and our feet no longer go astray.

^a 1 John, iii. 24.

^b "This marvellous conjunction and incorporation with God is first begun and wrought by faith." — *Bishop Jewell*.

TYPE PREFIGURED IN ADAM.

IN Adam was indeed prefigured the type of man's regeneration ; and thus far have we traced its fulfilment. But we must not here rest satisfied: still further must we seek resemblance. As Adam, coming from the hands of his Maker, was placed in the garden, that there, by resistance to temptation, he might grow in grace and approach nearer to perfection, so we, after we shall have "put off the old man, which is corrupt, and have put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness,"^a — so we then, after our second birth, shall go forth into the world with our loins girded, steadfast to withstand the wiles of our great Enemy. Adam was not infallible, nor was he in a state of unlimited happiness ; for his thoughts were not sufficiently purified for the kingdom of heaven, and at his creation he was fitted only for this world of sense. "There was not a man to till

^a Eph. iv. 22.

the ground. And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it.”^a As he was permitted to see the beginning of the heavenly path, and was not qualified to enter the courts of heaven until, by the right exercise of free will and by resistance to temptation, he should have of his own strength commenced an advance towards the perfecting of his spirit, so neither can we be an acceptable people until, after justification by faith, we shall of our own strength and free choice have mortified the desires of the flesh, and put on the whole armour of righteousness. For, “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. For as the body without

^a Gen. ii. 5. 15.

the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”^a

And now it is by obedience to the will of our Father which is in heaven that we are to make ourselves meet to become partakers of his everlasting kingdom. As yet we have but thrown off our old evil: it now remains that, by acts of love and charity, we qualify ourselves to enter into the mansions of the blessed. It is now our joy to take the first steps in that path which ever leads us nearer and more near to infinite perfection of holiness; a path the end of which, even in eternity, we can never reach, but one upon which the light of truth ever and evermore brightly shines. “The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”^b Let us, then, walk in the ways of the Most High which He has set before us, not vainly, as do the hypocrites, but “according as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine

^a James, ii. 14—18. 26.

^b Prov. iv. 18.

nature. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. 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 was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, you shall never fall.”^a

“ Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant . . . there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another

^a 2 Pet. i. 3—10.

faith by the same Spirit ; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit ; to another the working of miracles ; to another prophecy ; to another discerning of spirits ; to another divers kinds of tongues ; to another the interpretation of tongues : but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.”^a “ There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial : but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars : for one star differeth from another star in glory.”^b

“ All glorified spirits will not have the same *degree* of glory. *Two* things will necessarily cause great difference : 1. The quantum of *mind* ; and 2. The quantum of *grace*. (1.) It is idle to suppose that God has made all human souls with the *same capacities* ; He has not. There is an infinite diversity : he who has the greatest mind can *know* most, *do* most, *suffer* most, and *enjoy* most. (2.) The quantum of *grace* will be another cause of diversity and glory. He who received most of Christ here,

^a 1 Cor. xii. 1—11.

^b 1 Cor. xv. 40, 41.

and was most devoted to his service, shall have the greatest *approach* to Him in his own kingdom. But all equally holy and equally faithful souls shall not have equal degrees of glory, for the glory will be according to the *capacity* of the mind, as well as the degree of *grace* and *improvement*. The greater the capacity, provided it be properly influenced by the grace of Christ, the greater will be the enjoyment. That there will be great diversity in the states of glorified saints, is the apostle's doctrine; and he illustrates it by the different degrees of *splendour* between the *sun*, *moon*, *planets*, and *stars*. This needs little application. There are some of the heavenly bodies that give *heat*, *light*, and *splendour*, as the SUN, and all of the utmost service to the world; some that give *light*, and comparative *splendour*, without *heat*, as the MOON, and yet are of very great use to mankind; others, again, which give a *steady* but not a splendid light, as the PLANETS, and are serviceable in their particular spheres; and, lastly, others which *twinkle* in their respective systems, as the STARS of different magnitudes."^a

Here, then, is the conclusion which we must

^a Dr. Adam Clarke on 1 Cor. xv.

draw from these reflections. Man merits neither esteem nor reward on account of the excellency of his intellectual or moral qualities; nor, if his depravity were inherited solely from Adam, would he be deserving of censure or of punishment by reason of the evil nature of his heart. But since all his good qualities have been given by a Higher Power, and all his sin is within him, coeval with his eternal existence, the voice of approbation is silenced, and justice pronounces condemnation. Most of us, too, indulge that tendency to sin which is innate, and thus inclination becomes habitual; while all neglect properly to improve those gifts of grace which ought to yield fruit in due season, but which, through our negligence, becomes as that seed which “fell upon a rock, and as soon as it was sprung up it withered away, because it lacked moisture.”^a

“For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his

^a Luke, viii. 6.

journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time, the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not

strawed ; and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth : lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed ; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take, therefore, the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance ; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”^a

We are therefore taught to believe that our happiness will be in unison, not with the amount of our gifts, but with their beneficial application ; and it may be that our punishment will be proportioned, not to the number or depth of our sins, but to the ease with which we have yielded to temptation, or the determination with which it has been overcome. “ He who is heartily

^a Matt. xxv. 14—30.

troubled for his anger, in godly repentance, and earnestly striving against it, is perhaps a more virtuous man than he who, from natural meekness of temper, is seldom or never angry.”^a

^a Adam, p. 359.

REFLECTIONS.

ALL inducement to active works of benevolence is entirely taken away by the belief that they are supererogatory and unnecessary to salvation ; that our every impulse is evil ; that no thought nor act of ours can be acceptable at the throne of our Creator ; and that all those who have faith are elected to the kingdom of heaven, there to enjoy an equal degree of happiness. Those who superficially and without reflection have adopted this belief are greatly in error. But this is a question which has been made the subject of warm discussion ; it is a question, too, of vital importance, and one which ought not to be hastily dismissed. Let us, therefore, devote a few lines to its consideration.

Can any amount of faith make holy one whose life has been a continued scene of callous indifference to the welfare of his fellow-creatures, or of habitual cruelty towards the brute creation ? towards living beings that feel as we do—beings given to man for his use, but not to be made

the means of unrighteous gain, or a source of thoughtless excitement. Such an one may perhaps die with the minister of religion by his side, and with the words of repentance, induced, not by hatred of sin, but by fear of punishment, upon his lips; but if he expects thus to become fitted for the abodes of the just in heaven, fatally may he deceive himself. "Can faith save him?" "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil."^a

Even Adam in his first innocence was not meet for the joys of the blessed. Even he required time, not for repentance, but for the exercise of virtue and the strengthening of his holiness. Faith in a redeeming Creator had been given to him, but more than this was required: to faith must be added love and charity, for these, only as the fruit of faith, and these alone, can give a true foundation for the hope of heaven. And if he in his innocence were all unfit for participation even with the lower angels in realms of purity, how far from a proper state must be even the regenerated heart of the best of his descendants!

^a Jer. xiii. 23.

The hardened sinner steeped in the lowest depth of crime, the reckless profligate who indulges in forbidden folly, the man of fashion whose thoughts are fixed upon the heartless pursuit of pleasure, may at the last hour profess a compulsory belief in the truth of religion; and the tardy death-bed repentance of such an one may perhaps save him from eternal condemnation; but if he lay the flattering unction to his soul that it will be a passport to happiness, miserably will he discover the mistake, and bitterly repent his folly.

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”^a

Thus calmly do we discuss the murderer’s chance of forgiveness: but let us ask, where is now heard his victim’s plaintive cry? —

“Thus was I, sleeping, . . . at once despatch’d :
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,
Unhousel’d, disappointed, unanel’d ;
No reckoning made, but sent to my account
With all my imperfections on my head.”^b

Is his a voice from heaven or from hell ?

^a Matt. vii. 21.

^b Hamlet, Act 1. Sc. 5.

And to this most fearful question the united voices of the whole Christian church can give but one all-pitying answer. Is it, then, possible that happiness can be the portion of him who sees punishment inflicted on another, and knows, too, whose hand it was that delivered him, unprepared and bound with the chain of sin, into the presence of the great Judge? For we all shall know even as we are known, and every one will know each the other's state. "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. . . . But Abraham said, Son . . . between us and you there is 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."^a The conscious cause of another's continuous ill dare not ask for pardon; but even if despair compel the tones of supplication, justice would pass condemnation; and should mercy yet wash away the stain of sin, the knowledge of his victim's lot must still hang heavily upon his soul. Can the murderer be in heaven if the murdered be in hell?

A patriarch's lifetime, given to works of love

^a Luke, xvi. 23—26.

and charity, would not in such a case avail. To the winds, then, is scattered all value of a repentance induced by fear, beginning within the prison and ending upon the scaffold. Therefore, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: looking diligently lest ye be as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected."^a

"Heaven is wherever God is; in my heart, if I desire it and delight in his presence:"^b but "it is a vain thing to think that we can take any delight in being with Christ hereafter, if we care not how little we are in his company here."^c

"*Conscience*, that mighty troubler of the human breast, is a frequent accuser. Paul, speaking of the Gentiles, says, 'their conscience beareth witness, and their thoughts accuse or excuse one another' (Rom. ii. 15.). And, truly, none but those who have learnt by experience can tell fully what the pangs inflicted by a guilty and awakened conscience are. A man may flee from many calamities, and bear up with dignity

^a Heb. xii. 14—17.

^b Adam, p. 400.

^c Adam, p. 401.

and patience under others, but he can no more flee from an accusing conscience than he can flee from himself. ‘The spirit of a man may sustain his infirmity, but *a wounded spirit who can bear?*’ (Prov. xviii. 14.)”^a “Our future existence will be the same kind of life or state of being continued which we are fixed in here. Death makes no alteration in our condition, it only clears up our mistakes about it.”^b

We are rebellious spirits in eternity, on earth “we are sinners by the corruption of the heart, and it is a fatal mistake to suppose that we are so *only* by the commission of sin. Our guilt does not then begin to exist when it is brought into action, but to appear; and what was always manifest to God is now become so to ourselves and others.”^c But in the spirit of the believer will be blotted out all remembrance of sin. The sinner is utterly unable of himself to effect this deliverance from the yoke and thralldom of evil, and all-insufficient are words of man to show forth his debt of thankfulness. He has “put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him;”^d and

^a Greg. p. 297.

^b Adam, p. 399.

^c Adam, p. 269.

^d Col. iii. 10.

has *now* to work out for himself his own salvation. Both inward and outward is his justification. He is justified by faith in that he is created anew, for "there is no condemnation for them that believe."^a He is justified by faith, in the manifestations of the fruit of the Spirit; evidences that would remain dead within him unless the working of the Spirit were united with the exercise of his own free will. Thus he is made meet for the kingdom of heaven. He can do evil, he can do good : ample is his power of choice.

"In reality and truth it was out of love that God made the world, and indeed out of a superabundant love. This we may well venture to assert and even to call it a fact, and that the Divine love is also the final cause as well as the beginning of creation. A superabundance of love in God we must, however, call the final-cause ground of creation, inasmuch as He stood in no need of it, no need of the love of the creature, nor absolutely of the world itself, or created things. For in His inmost essence, where one depth of eternal love responds fully and eternally to the other, He was perfectly sufficient

^a Acts, ix.

for Himself. And yet it is even so there is in God this superabundance of love, for He has created the worlds, and it is the Divine will to be loved by His creatures. For this end and purpose has He created them; and because He would have their love He has created them free, and given both to the pure spirits and to men a free will. The whole secret in the relation subsisting between the creature (and man especially) and the Creator, lies in this great fact, that He has created them out of love, and requires in return the service of their love. There is, perhaps, something awful in this requisition, and in the relation thus found to subsist between a weak and imperfect creature and the Infinite and Omnipotent Being. But it is even so: we are really free, and are really required by God to give him our love.”^a Therefore, let not the sincere Christian be tardy in well-doing, let him not neglect one opportunity of serving others; nay, rather let him seek out distress and hasten to assist it. “It must not be forgotten, that though by justification we are freed from punishment and brought into a state of acceptance, yet, as the justification described by

^a Schlegel, p. 128.

Paul is a state without degrees, it does not, nor was intended to, furnish the measure of the degrees of future happiness. Though we are brought into a state of justification, independently of good works, yet the degrees of future happiness will be graciously apportioned to 'our works of faith and labours of love' performed subsequently to the 'renewal of our minds' by Divine influences. . . Hence it is that we are exhorted to 'grow in grace,' to 'press forward' to more exalted attainments, to be more and more 'transformed into the image of God,' that we may here live fully under the privileges and immunities of men truly free, and in due time obtain a larger portion of that 'blessing of the dead who die in the Lord, who rest from their labours, and their *works* do follow them' (Rev. xiv. 13.)."^a So that in proportion to the amount and nature of those thoughts of love and charity, and those works of benevolence, which are the fruit of the Spirit, and follow the gift of faith and regeneration, so will be the extent of that happiness which we shall receive. Let us not, therefore, devote too much time to the acquirement of temporary information. Let

^a Gregory, p. 40 b.

us not aspire to reach too high a position in the calling which we have chosen, but let us rather be contented with that amount of technical knowledge which the requirements of existence render absolutely necessary, and let us find in the retirement of home that serenity of mind which raises the thoughts to dwell upon the mysteries of our immortal Being :—

“ How various his employments whom the world
 Calls idle, and who justly in return
 Esteems that busy world an idler too !
 Friends, books, a garden, and perhaps his pen,
 Delightful industry enjoy'd at home,
 And nature in her cultivated trim
 Dress'd to his taste, inviting him abroad, —
 Can he want occupation who has these ?
 Will he be idle who has much t' enjoy ?

.
 He that attends to his interior self,
 That has a heart, and keeps it ; has a mind
 That hungers, and supplies it ; and who seeks
 A social, not a dissipated life, —
 Has business ; feels himself engaged t' achieve
 No unimportant, though a silent, task.
 A life all turbulence and noise may seem,
 To him that leads it, wise, and to be praised ;
 But wisdom is a pearl with most success
 Sought in still water, and beneath clear skies.
 He that is ever occupied in storms,
 Or dives not for it, or brings up instead,
 Vainly industrious, a disgraceful prize.”

COWPER.

Let not the man of business engage too eagerly in the pursuits of civilised life ; let him not devote his attention by day and his thoughts by night to the examination of commercial undertakings ; let him not strive, by worldly wisdom, perseverance, and industry, perpetually to increase his store of unhallowed profit, looking upon wealth as his idol, making a good position in society the object of his anxiety, and forgetting that he and all the many who toil without ceasing for his superfluities (but for their bare maintenance) are one and all engaged in the great battle of good against evil, in which either victory or defeat is certain and eternal. Neither let him whose footsteps tread in a more intellectual walk direct his energies too determinedly towards the intricacies of his profession, nor dive too deeply into its mysteries ; let him not seek to make himself too well acquainted with its changeful aspect in the past, to become too familiar with the merits of its position in the present, nor speculate with too great confidence upon its perfection in the future. He who does these things may lay up for himself a fund of treasure and a store of knowledge, valuable here, but it will be knowledge that will lose

all value with advancing age, and that profiteth not in the life to come. It will be knowledge that, here, will induce him to place trust in things that will sooner or later absolutely perish; it will draw him further and further from the path of holiness, and render him continually less and still less able to discern between truth and falsehood. It will be knowledge that hereafter will be not only useless but injurious; it will be a clog lying heavily upon his soul, dragging her continually from higher and more holy aspirations; it will be knowledge which, with constant supplication, she will ever pray may be blotted out from remembrance.

“ My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.”^a

Seek, therefore, for the knowledge of things

^a Prov. ii. 1—5.

which expire not with this life. Seek for the knowledge of those deep things of nature, the visible thoughts of an Allwise Creator, which show forth his glory so long as duration continues; which form, in union, one mighty everlasting whole, perfect in all its parts, designed by infinite mercy for the eternal happiness of man; and which can be fully comprehended by those alone who, having here a heart to feel, and a soul to long for, the manifestation of infinite wisdom, will hereafter be permitted to enter those everlasting habitations where thought is knowledge, and knowledge will adore.

“ Consider, then,—since man is a moral and responsible, as well as a sinful, creature, whose future and everlasting condition will be influenced by the habitual tenor of his life and conduct,—whether *any* pursuit can display a wisdom more becoming a cultivated mind than the acquisition of the means by which it may regain the forfeited favour of Heaven, and the knowledge which connects time with eternal duration, and inspires a hope full of immortality? All else — unless it be duly restricted to its appropriate use, and each subordinate to the nobler purposes of our entire nature —

. 'is fume,
 Or emptiness, or fond impertinence,
 And renders us in things that most concern,
 Unpractised, unprepared, and still to seek.' (MILTON.)

“ Then, as to intellectual pursuits . . . the topics which Christianity supplies . . . furnish meditation for the most soaring and inquisitive genius; since they relate to matters of infinite moment, infinite dignity, infinite diversity, manifesting the richness of infinite love. What a field for the noblest excursions! Eternal duration,—souls immortal ranked in an order of existences from which none have the power to escape, and involving the awful alternatives of perennial bliss or endless woe:—other created beings, although spiritual, ever active, ever watchful; pure intelligences, from whom the secrets of ‘the Ancient of Days’ and the closets of men’s hearts alone are hidden; always enjoying the beatific vision of their Maker, always delighting to do His will, always ‘ministering to the heirs of salvation:’—other created beings too, the powers of darkness, — ‘*the spiritual wickednesses in high places,*’ — whose number, energy, and combination constitute a dreadful world of evil spirits, conflicting where they

prevail not, and often harassing those whom they are not permitted to overcome:—the Son of God, who was also Son of man, He ‘who cometh from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah,’—yielding Himself to humiliation, derision, suffering, and death; then, bursting the bonds of the tomb, triumphing not only over death, but over ‘him that had the power of death, even the Devil.’ . . . Topics such as these, far from being ignoble, far from tending to contract the mind, give it an expansion of occupation and a glow of delight which no discoverer but he who has found ‘the Pearl of great price’ can ever attain.”^a

Therefore, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor dust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”^b

Thus far have we traced out the fulfilment of the type given in Adam. And this we find is threefold. We have sought for, and found, his

^a Gregory, p. 254.

^b Matt. vi. 19—21.

origin in evil ; we have hailed the evidence of redeeming love in his appearance upon earth ; and we have contemplated the opportunity given him in Eden of making manifest the fruitful works of the Spirit. By faith in Christ, the stain of original sin has been in each of us blotted out ; a new and spiritual heart has, at our second birth, been created within us ; and we are now, either for good or for evil, to offer the works done in the flesh before the judgment-seat of Mercy. “The night is far spent, the day is at hand : let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.”^a The moments fly quickly : the last is present ; it has passed away ; and now no longer does the choice remain. Ours must now irretrievably be the language either of joyful trust or of despair. Either “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith ; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness : ”^b—or, “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.”^c

^a Rom. xiii. 12. ^b 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. ^c Jer. viii. 20.

REPEATED SEASONS OF PROBATION.

WE have been led to believe that distinct intelligent beings, whether of good or evil, whether angels of light or spirits of rebellion, are unlimited in number. But the duration of this our present time, however extended, must be insufficient for the trial of these evil beings, and we know that it is by time only that a season of probation can be given; for as time is too limited for all, so is eternity too extended even for one.

But we have seen the high probability, approaching indeed to certainty, of an infinitely repeated creation and destruction of distinct durations of time, each in itself perfected and complete.

During the continuance of our present time it is that an elected number of spiritual beings, who are in opposition to good, obtain, as the free gift of infinite mercy, and through the one great and mysterious sacrifice of Him against whom they are in a state of contradiction, the

means of conversion to holiness and reconciliation to eternal Goodness. But there yet remains another number, be it a greater or a less, in whom still dwelleth the consciousness of sin; and to them is assigned the still-continuing ever-existing eternity,—the measure of punishment, as it is the duration of rebellion. Of this number, one portion harden their hearts to the commission of sin, and *wilfully* stifle the voice of conscience; and in their behalf reason must remain silent, for even by human justice they must be condemned. They are in the hands of Omnipotence; but it is Omnipotence in whose infinity mercy is united with justice.

There is a second portion, whose innate and original evil is too great to be expiated in this present time; they are designedly left in ignorance, and, however willing, are *unable* to turn from their evil ways and repent; for, whether He who is “the governor among the nations” shall have ordered their sojourning upon earth in a Christian or a heathen land, to them have the glad tidings of salvation ever been denied.

But “I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed

away.”^a Another and yet another time is created, another, and it may be a different, dispensation is ordained, by an Omnipotent Will, as a means by which another order of evil beings may be made partakers of the kingdom of heaven.

Those of us who shall have walked steadfastly in the faith without wavering, and shall have made ourselves meet to enter into the holy habitations of our Father, may, in another creation, be deemed worthy to be called His ministering spirits, and there to work out those high behests which are now in our human life given to the angels of heaven. “For in the resurrection we are as the angels of God in heaven.”^b To those of us who may die in infancy or in early youth, before we can understand the promises of the Gospel,—to those of us whose understandings may be ripened, but into whose hearts the knowledge of true religion can have never entered,—may there yet in infinite mercy be given another time, and thus a second season of trial be afforded.

All of us have parents, whom we delight to love, honour, and obey. Many of us have children, who are in our eyes precious “as the lily among thorns, and as the apple-tree among the trees of

^a Rev. xxi. 1.

^b Matt. xxii. 30. Note D.

the wood.”^a Few of us are so lost as not to possess a friend,—“a friend,” it may be, “that sticketh closer than a brother;”^b whose “mouth is most sweet, and his countenance as Lebanon, —excellent as the cedars.”^c But those parents may themselves become lost to a knowledge of the truth, and die without the hope of eternal life. Those children, whose being is as our being, may forget the early lessons of piety and virtue, and perish amidst the thick darkness of iniquity. That friend, upon whose tried affection we had reposed in trustful love,—before whom we had laid open the secret meditation of the heart,—with whose soul we had, in earnest communing of the spirit, mused upon the things that pertain unto eternal life; he—even he—unstable as water, may fall away, and his place be found no more among the children of promise. And I shall be alone, now and throughout the dread eternity alone! alone to tread the thorny path of life; alone to pass through the valley of the shadow of death; alone arise from the grave to stand before the judgment! Hearken, then, thou fearful soul, unto the words of our Father which

^a Canticles, ii. 2, 3.

^b Proverbs, xviii. 24.

^c Canticles, v. 15.

is in heaven ; listen to His voice, and thou shalt find comfort. Confide in His promises, and thy heart shall no longer fail with fear and doubt. He hath said, “ Who is my mother ? and who are my brethren ? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren ! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.”^a “ And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.”^b Now although we know that “ eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him,”^c — yet if, by the all-merciful will of our great Judge, his courts should be for me, firmly and faithfully do I believe that they will shut out every painful thought, and give a peace and joy which passeth understanding. But the voice of charity asks, How can I be thus happy, with the knowledge that those whom I have held dear, and cherished with the

^a Matt. xii. 48—50.

^b Matt. xix. 29.

^c 1 Cor. ii. 9.

utmost affection of my earthly nature, are plunged in woe unutterable? Nay, not if all, but if even one be missing?—one, too, not of that limited circle within which I have passed the sweetest hours of life, but one of that unbounded sphere of universal love within which all men are brethren? How can happiness, even in heaven, be perfect—nay, how can it exist at all—with the consciousness that but one of the children of men is in eternal torment? And how can any soul, however sunk in the deepest depths of hell, be utterly in intolerable anguish if but one heavenly ray of consolation bring him the glad tidings that he whom he had loved on earth is now in the habitations of the blessed?

Dare we, then, to hope that to those of us who in youth have been virtuous, but who have afterwards walked till death in the paths of chosen crime,—that to those of us who, from our very birth, have throughout a long life of iniquity followed our own desires, have wilfully closed our ear to the voice of conscience, and have gone down to the grave with the words of defiance upon our lip,—dare we hope that to *us* a second time of trial may be given? Shall man, then, attempt to define those attributes of

infinite perfection of which he knows not the nature? The number of distinct manifestations of times by which the opportunity of conversion may be given to spirits of evil, is beyond the grasp of man's capacity. Let us not, then, limit the numbers of trials which may be afforded, for even to one child of sin they may be infinite.

Praise and great glory, then, be unto Him who has now "made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which He hath purposed in himself: that in the *dispensation of the fulness of times* He might gather together in one, ALL things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth:"^a "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."^b And praise and great glory be unto Him who "died for the ungodly,"^c "who gave Himself a ransom for ALL, to be testified *in due time*,"^d and whose words of promise are, "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God."^e

^a Eph. i. 9, 10.

^b Phil. ii. 10, 11.

^c Rom. v. 6.

^d Tim. ii. 6.

^e Luke, xii. 8.

“With respect to the punishments of the wicked in a future state we may observe, that these may be corporeal, though the happiness of the blessed should not be so. For sensuality is one great part of vice, and a principal source of it. It may be necessary, therefore, that actual fire should feed upon the elementary body, and whatever else is added to it after the resurrection, in order to burn out the stains of sin. The elementary body may also, perhaps, bear the action of fire for ages without being destroyed, like the *caput mortuum* or *terra damnata* of the chemists. For this *terra damnata* remains after the calcination of vegetable and animal substances by intense and long-continued fires. . . . But if the punishments of another world should be corporeal in some measure, there is still the greatest reason to believe that they will be spiritual also; and that, by selfishness, ambition, malevolence, envy, revenge, cruelty, profaneness, murmuring against God, infidelity, and blasphemy, men will become tormentors to themselves and to each other; deceive, and be deceived; infatuate, and be infatuated; so as not to be able to repent and turn to God till the appointed time comes, if that should ever be.

“ But we are not to suppose that the degree, probably not the duration, of future punishment, corporeal or mental, will be the same to all. It may also, perhaps, be, that there may be some alleviating circumstances, or even some admixture of happiness.”^a

For “ that servant which knew his Lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes ; but he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.”^b

We know, that during the existence of our present time, and that under the same divine dispensation which overshadows us, there are angels of light, ministering spirits, “ beings invisible, and superior in nature to us, who may . . . be in many respects ministers of God’s providence, and authors under Him of many events to particular men, without altering the laws of nature. For it implies no contradiction or absurdity to say there are such beings ; on the contrary, we have the greatest reason to think, what has been intimated already, that

^a Hartley on Man, vol. ii. prop. 89.

^b Luke, xii. 47, 48.

such imperfect beings as we are far below the top of the scale. . . . And since it has been proved that all corporeal motions proceed originally from something incorporeal, it must be as certain that there are incorporeal substances as that there is motion. Besides, how can we tell but that there may be above us beings of greater powers and more perfect intellects, and capable of mighty things, which yet may have corporeal vehicles as we have, but finer and invisible? Nay, who knows but that there may be even of these many orders, rising in dignity of nature and amplitude of power one above another? It is no way below the philosophy of these times, which seems to delight in enlarging the capacities of matter, to assert the possibility of this. But, however, my own defects sufficiently convince me that I have no pretension to be one of the first rank, or that which is next under the All-perfect.

“ Now, then, as we ourselves, by the use of our powers, do many times interpose and alter the course of things within our sphere from what it would be if they were left entirely to the laws of motion and gravitation, without being said to alter those laws, so may these superior

beings likewise, in respect of things within their spheres,—much larger, be sure, the least of them all than ours is: only with this difference,—that as their knowledge is more extensive, their intellects purer, their reason better, they may be much properer instruments of Divine Providence with respect to us than we can be with respect one to another or to the animals below us. . . . As men may be so placed as to become, even by the free exercise of their own powers, *instruments* of God's particular providence to other men (or animals), so may we well suppose that these *higher* beings may be so *distributed* through the universe, and subject to such an economy (though I pretend not to tell what that is), as may render *them also* instruments of the same providence: and that they may, in proportion to their greater abilities, be capable, *consistently with the laws of nature*, some way or other, though not in *our* way, of influencing human affairs in proper places." ^a

“One thing is most clearly proved by this text [Matt. xviii. 10.], as it is confirmed by a multitude of others, namely, the doctrine, not

^a The Religion of Nature Delineated, by Wm. Wollaston.

only of a general, but of a particular providence, which, either by ministering angels or by the all-comprehending eye of Himself, watches over those true disciples of Christ who approach most nearly to the humility, the meekness, the innocence, and the simplicity of a child.”^a

“He even condescends to take them under his protection; He sends even his most favoured angels, those ministers of his that do his pleasure, to guard and watch over those little children, and those humble Christians who are like them in purity and innocence of mind.”^b

“Not only, He adds (ver. 11.), are the angels thus employed, but it was the very purpose for which even the Son of God came into the world, to seek and bring back those who had strayed away.”^c

Such contemplation of Eternal Providence diffusing good to all by means of ministering spirits, raises our thoughts far above the things of earth, and assists us in the full and perfect conception of that “indefinite and perpetual extension of the intellectual and moral faculties which will be experienced by the ‘spirits of the

^a Bishop Porteus.

^b Ibid.

^c Bishop Mann.

just made perfect ' in the heavenly world ; where, although the happiness of each will be so entirely *replete* that he will have no conception of felicity greater than his own, yet the understanding will be eternally occupied with such an infinity of *truth* as it may be exploring, and contemplating, and delighting in for ever, — while the affections will be eternally charmed with such an infinity of *goodness* and *love* as will excite an everlasting reciprocation of love to Him ' who first loved us.' ” ^a

“ Much is there in nature which is to remain long hidden from man ; much, too, which we shall see first of all in the other world, when death shall have opened our eyes, and made us clear-sighted in one direction or another. But the beginning and the end are even here and now placed clearly and intelligibly before us, if only we are ready and willing to walk by the light that is so graciously given us, and here, as elsewhere, invariably to refer the first cause and the final consummation to the Creator and to God. Without such a reference, without thus, as it were, placing its two poles in God, the right understanding of nature is absolutely impossible ;

^a Gregory, p. 466.

and every scientific attempt to attain it, apart from, and independently of, God, must, simply as such, prove vain, and involve itself in absurdities. Hence it is, however paradoxical it may sound, that we can recognise more distinctly and better understand the end of nature, its meaning and significance as a whole, than we can find the final cause of many a single object in it, which, however, as contrasted with the whole, appears inconsiderable and trifling.”^a

But when, in the fulness of time, we shall rise to the life immortal, then shall we be “as the angels of heaven” now are; it will then be our joy to receive from them drops of that water of life now poured forth upon them; they will still sing of the wondrous works now performing for the children of men; and through their instruction we shall learn with a perfect knowledge wherefore “the Lord hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth.”^b

“We read of the spirits of nature, ensouled elementary powers and living forces, which are described as being seized and taken possession of by the power of evil, but as hereafter to be set free by the efficacy of redeeming

^a Schlegel, p. 126.

^b Isaiah, li. 13.

love, and again subjected to and united to God. Now, as connected with this subject, it is deserving of consideration, that in all the declarations and allusions of the Eternal Truth this present earthly nature is spoken of as the battle-place of invisible powers; the debatable ground on which the two armies of good and evil spirits and elements are posted in hostile array against each other, and perpetually coming into collision.”^a “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”^b “Such as Christ triumphed over when, ‘having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it’ (Coloss. ii. 15.), and ‘sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high’ (Heb. i. 3.) ‘far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come’ (Eph. i. 21.). ‘Against the ruler of the darkness of this world,’ that is, those evil spirits which still rule in those heathen nations which are still in darkness; and ‘against spiritual wickedness in high

^a Schlegel, p. 134.

^b Eph. vi. 12.

places,' that is, against those evil spirits which have their station in the region of the air." ^a

Thus once again do we trace the fulfilment of the type given in Adam: "We have sought for and found his origin in evil; we have hailed the evidence of redeeming love in his earthly birth of regeneration, and we have contemplated the opportunity given him in Eden of making manifest the fruitful works of the Spirit." In the first fulfilment of the type we have seen that "by faith in Christ the stain of original sin being in each of us blotted out, a new and spiritual heart has at our second birth been created within us, and that out of that heart these words of the same Holy Spirit have been poured forth: 'Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.'^b Let us 'bring forth, therefore, fruits worthy of repentance,'^c that we be 'a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God,'^d 'for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.'^e And now again a second time is the type fulfilled. Those of us who shall "have walked in the statutes

^a Dr. Whitby.

^b Rom. xiii. 13.

^c Luke, iii. 8.

Rom. xii. 1.

^e Eph. ii. 10.

and judgments” of Him who “turneth the shadow of death into the morning,”^a “shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”^b In the realms of bliss in the Heavenly Jerusalem shall we be yet a third time freed from the bondage of sin, and yet a third time will its stain be washed away; for, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”^c And He “will give them one heart, and will put a new spirit within them.”^d

Yet the third time will man be created anew after the likeness of his Maker; for, “when the breath shall have gone forth out of this body, that returneth again to the dust,” then will our death be a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness; then shall we be “conformed to the image of his Son,”^e “who is the beginning,

^a Amos, v. 8.

^b 1 Pet. i. 4.

^c Rev. xxi. 3, 4.

^d Ezek. xi. 19.

^e Rom. viii. 29.

the first-born from the dead,"^a "the faithful witness and the first begotten of the dead."^b

Yet a third time shall we strive to make ourselves a more acceptable people in His sight, "being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son."^c And in that day when the spirits of the just are made perfect, "there remaineth a Sabbath of rest to the people of God. He that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, AS God did from his."^d As His rest is a still continuous watchfulness over the inhabitants of this world which He hath created, and as He graciously inclines his ear towards their earnest supplication, so shall *we*, in *our* eternal Sabbath, and in that kingdom which is *our* inheritance, still continue to offer up before his footstool the homage of a true and

^a Col. i. 18.

^b Rev. i. 5.

^c Col. i. 10—12.

^d Heb. iv. 9.

faithful obedience; we shall then be immortal, spiritual beings, and as the instruments of his Divine will we shall be enabled, with him as our example, to exercise his long-suffering goodness towards the children of men; in his name we shall be around their bed and about their path, and as his messengers it will be our duty to excite within their hearts the inward working of his spirit. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."^a

For, "in the resurrection, we are as the angels of God in heaven;"^b and as we, by the exercise of faith and charity, shall have rendered ourselves worthy of a higher sphere of existence, so will they, by having performed the will of Him who created all things, have become fitted to join the heavenly host of a yet higher order of intelligencies; and as *they* are now the spiritual guides which enter into the heart of man, and there, as ministering spirits, become the source of every right feeling and of every tendency towards good, so shall *we*, in another dispensation of time, be the selected messengers of heaven, to visit not only

^a Psm. xxxiv. 7.

^b Matt. xxii. 30.

those other fallen angels to whom a season of probation shall be given, but also those human souls to whom, in this present time, temptation had proved too powerful, and for whom infinite mercy shall have assigned yet another battle-field of faith,—shall have given yet another opportunity of reconciliation. We “shall be as the angels of God in heaven;” and “are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”^a Joyfully shall we hasten to perform towards all our work of love; with a radiant countenance shall we minister unto those who shall humble themselves as little children; for “in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.”^b But it will be with great gladness and with rejoicing indescribable that we shall watch over those beings whom on earth we had loved and cherished; we shall enter into their inmost soul: there, as the still small voice of conscience, continually make known our absolute spiritual presence, there continually strive to turn aside the power of evil, and there aid without ceasing every aspiration for holiness.

^a Heb. i. 14.

^b Matt. xviii. 10.

And now far different is the contemplation of that loneliness in eternity which we had trembled to believe as possible, and which had appeared to us more appalling than companionship even with the spirits of evil. The probability to all of us,—the inevitable certainty to some,—that in heaven we shall mourn the absence of all those we had known on earth, still remain unaltered. But, striving for the good of those loved ones, we shall be associated with the whole army of believers; we shall still, as when on earth^a, participate in their hopes and fears, in their joy and in their sorrow, and join in communion with their very soul; and then it will be that we shall first repeat, with a full and perfect heartfelt consciousness of their truth and beauty, those words of One who cannot err—“Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.”^b

And ever as we are made conscious of another visible creation, of another manifestation of time,

^a We shall be participating in another manifestation of time, and therefore a knowledge of temporary things will be possible.

^b Luke, xv. 10. 7.

and of another all-merciful dispensation, by which spirits of evil may work out their conversion, ever is thy type given in Adam yet again and again fulfilled; and in each renewal of the type we shall rejoice with satisfaction and thankfulness, as we are assured that within us the knowledge of evil is still further washed away, and that the continued and acceptable performance of the behests of heaven makes us more and more like that Mighty One by whose power our knowledge of good is continually increased, and ever more closely blended with our very being. Thus ever throughout eternity are we approaching nearer and more near towards supreme excellence; but since the infinite repetition of that which is limited never equals infinity, even with the infinitely repeated increase of heavenly knowledge will the distance between us and the fountain of wisdom, power, and goodness ever remain infinite.

Thus in each repeated distinct duration of unconnected time is the number of the elect continually receiving addition; that of the rebellious spirits of evil continually diminished. In lustre the kingdom of good is ever growing

brighter, and ever is the dominion of evil losing power. The essential principles of evil are continually freed from their spiritual bondage to sin; still is evil made to work unto good, and eternally throughout immeasurable space is the spiritual kingdom of righteousness and truth ever more widely diffused.

N O T E S.

NOTE A. Page 140.

THE immortality of the material body is a doctrine which does not appear in the theological systems of antiquity, and indeed we have very slight reason for supposing that a belief in the everlasting future existed previously to the gospel dispensation. "That the Mosaic law did contain the revelation in question, has been maintained, as is well known by many learned men; and the illustrious author of the 'Divine Legation' has been assailed by many of them, with much acrimony, for denying that position." But it is not "easy to conceive, how any man of even ordinary intelligence, and not blinded by devoted attachment to an hypothesis, can attentively peruse the books of the Law, abounding, as they do, with such copious descriptions of the temporal rewards and punishments (in their own nature so palpable) which sanctioned that Law, and with such earnest admonitions grounded on that sanction, and yet can bring himself seriously to believe that the doctrine of a state of retribution after death, which it cannot be contended is even mentioned, however slightly, in more than a few passages, formed a part of the Mosaic revelation."

"One passage there is, which is commonly understood

by Christians as having reference to the Resurrection, but which I cannot conceive to have been so designed by the writer. In the well-known passage of the book of Job, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth,' &c., by the 'Redeemer,' Christians usually understand the Lord Jesus, and by 'the latter day,' the Day of Judgment. The other interpretation of the words, which would refer them to the deliverance (shortly after recorded) of Job from his afflictions, and his restoration to health and prosperity, is less likely to occur to a Christian reader who takes the passage as an insulated sentence apart from the rest of the book. But this latter is the only interpretation that is at all consistent with all that had gone before, and with the general drift of the work. Job is represented as wondering and complaining that such a weight of calamity had been heaped upon a man of blameless life. His friends reply by insisting that he could not have been blameless; and they vindicate the Divine justice on the ground that, whatever he may say or think, he must, by some sins (though they cannot bring any charge home to him) have called down these judgments. They do not, it should be observed, suggest any other ground for supposing him a sinner, except the mere circumstance of his suffering under a visitation which they consider as totally inexplicable except on that supposition. He, on the other hand, persists in maintaining his innocence. Now if the speakers could be supposed to have known, or even believed as probable, any such doctrine as that of a future and immortal life, it is plain they would have adverted to that topic, as cutting short the dispute, and explaining the difficulty.

If they had had the least particle of the faith of the Apostle, they would have said, in his words, ‘Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,’” &c. ^a

Indeed, the book of Job affords confirmation that the writer of it, in accordance with the prevailing opinion of the time, looked only for temporary rewards and punishments, and it gives us indisputable proof that he had no conception whatever of any existence beyond the grave. The character there drawn of Job, presents us with a highly-wrought description of the weakness of human nature; it furnishes us with an eminent example of patriarchal faith which a purer light alone enables the Christian to surpass; and it brings vividly before us the satisfaction and delight that arose from the fulfilment of hopes which an imperfect knowledge of truth had confined to the attainment of earthly blessings. Although murmurs occasionally escaped his lips, he still looked forward with untiring confidence to the time when He who had given affliction should withdraw his chastening hand; he rejoiced in the anticipation of an honourable old age, in which his losses should be abundantly recompensed to him, in which he should be blessed in his possessions, in his friends, and in his children. But above all these there was reserved unto him one mercy of far greater excellence.

Adam, in his innocence, conversed with his Creator. “The Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God.”^b “Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord;” “and God blessed Noah and

^a Whateley’s *Revelation of a Future State*, p. 86, *et passim*.

^b Gen. xvii. 1.

his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth.”^a And thus, as the crowning reward of his suffering endurance, Job trustfully hoped that *he also* should be favoured like unto “Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face;” that *he also* should be made a participator in this blessing that was granted to Adam, to Abraham, and to Noah; that *he also*, before he “was laid to his fathers and saw corruption,” should be gladdened with the immediate presence of the Deity. We are told of his repinings, of his trustfulness, and of his reward. “Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? O that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me! *I should have been as though I had not been*; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave. Are not my days few? Cease, then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little, before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death.” “And Elihu said, Surely God will not do wickedly if He set His heart upon man, — if He gather unto Himself His spirit and His breath, all flesh shall perish together, and man shall return again unto dust.” “Then Job answered and said, Though *after* my skin worms destroy this body, yet *in my flesh* shall I see God: whom *I* shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and *not another*, though *my reins be consumed within me.*”^b “O that I knew where I might find Him!

^a Gen. vi. 8., ix. 1.

^b This is a metaphorical expression which signifies intense longing. Job confidently believed, even though his body should be wasted away by earnestly yearning for the presence of his

that I might come even to His seat ! I would *order my cause before Him*, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which He would answer me, and understand what He would say unto me. He knoweth the way that I take : when He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held His steps, His way have I kept, and not declined." "Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind." "Then Job answered the Lord." "Then answered the Lord unto Job." "And it was so, that after *the Lord had spoken unto Job*," that "the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before, and blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning." "After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations. So Job died, being old and full of days." ^a

The reader is requested to lay aside all preconceived ideas, and to read the whole of the book of Job carefully through three times. The beauty of its language will please his imagination, and from its general design he will form his own opinion upon the points in question.

deliverer, that the day would come when the Deity would personally make clear wherefore He had thought fit to give affliction ; and would Himself answer his entreaties—"Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy ?" And that day did come, and Job was "blessed."

^a Job, x. 18. 21., xxxiv. 15., xix. 26., xxiii., xxxviii., xl., xlii.

NOTE B. Page 153.

The light in which the immortality of the soul is generally viewed, represents it as a life without end, beginning upon earth, and continually increasing in length for ever. Were we to apply this idea universally to the souls of men, we should have existing in the present moment, and in every succeeding one, a succession of distinct durations, each terminating in the past, each measurable in the whole of its length, each called *infinite*, but each *shorter* than the preceding. And this throughout an infinite future could never be otherwise. Is not this a self-contradiction? Duration continuing onwards without end never could become infinite by continual increase in length; infinite duration must therefore be eternal.

NOTE C. Page 198.

The majority of commentators agree, I believe, in the opinion that the doctrine of the Trinity is shadowed out in the Mosaic account of the creation of man, and that, at the birth of Adam, there was breathed into him the mysterious union of the three Persons. We know that Adam fell from his state of sanctification, and that faith, repentance, and regeneration thus became necessary to him and to all of his descendants. These merciful means of restoration are now given to those who believe upon that Stone than which "there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved,"

and for the reception of them by all who lived before the sealing of the new covenant, belief in the typical merits of the sacrifice was essential. But, previously to his fall, Adam had not become corrupt, and therefore clearly could not, as fallen man, have been a participator in the mystery of redemption. Therefore the Word of Life must have been breathed into him in order to cleanse his soul from the stain of sin committed in another sphere of existence.

NOTE D. Page 274.

If the word "resurrection" be here understood as the liberation of the soul immediately after death, as in the example of the repentant malefactor, it is then proved by Scripture that the righteous enter into the promised joys of heaven unfettered by a material prison, and while the earthy body is rotting in the grave. But if the word be understood as the final resurrection at the Day of Judgment, "when we shall be changed," it is then proved that another era of creation will succeed that hour in which the heavens shall depart "as a scroll when it is rolled together," and that there will be granted yet another season of probation to those evil beings, who, under the present dispensation, shall have failed to work out their salvation.

THE END.

LONDON :
SPOTTISWOODES and SHAW,
New-street-Square.

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