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GOD - MISUNDERSTOOD :

OR,

IS ETERNAL EVIL

COMPATIBLE

WITH THE CHARACTER OF GOD?

A Letter to Christian Friends,

BY

DAVID WARDLAW SCOTT,

AUTHOR OF

"DORA MARCELLI, THE LAST OF HER RACE ;"

"THE CONTRAST, AND OTHER POEMS ;"

"WATER AND THE SPIRIT : A FEW THOUGHTS ON JOHN III. 5 ;"

"COME OVER AND HELP US."

"God is Love."—1 John iv. 16.

"He cannot deny Himself."—2 Tim. ii. 13.

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SCRIPTURE AND THE CHURCH.

"He that is of God heareth God's words."—THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

"Above all things keep your attention fixed upon holy Scripture; give no ear to him that does not gather all his proofs from them, nor lead you, in all things, back to them."—JUSTYN MARTYR.

"To leave holy Scripture, that pure and undoubted source of faith, is to determine upon exposing one's self to the inconvenient danger of falling into error; it is to build our house not upon a rock, but upon the sand."—IRENEUS.

"All truth is contained in Scripture. We should admit of no conclusion not approved there. There is no court besides the court of heaven. Though there were an hundred Popes, and though all the Friars in the world were turned into Cardinals, yet we should learn more from the Bible than from that vast multitude."—JOHN WYCLIFFE.

"Let me be refuted and convinced by the testimonies of the Scriptures, otherwise I cannot and will not recant; for it is neither safe nor expedient to act against conscience. Here I take my stand."—MARTIN LUTHER.

"As there is but one sun to give light to the material world, so there is but one Light, one Spirit, to direct the soul of man; even the Word of Jesus Christ. This is the eternal Word, the Light of Truth; without it we are blind and foolish; and unless we permit it to shine upon us we remain in darkness; every other light which ariseth among us is false and deceitful; it is vain, and unworthy of our confidence."—FENELON.

"When truth is deserted and persecuted, this seems to be the time that the service which we yield to God in defending it, is peculiarly acceptable."—PASCAL.

"The whole Church may err. Did not the whole Church err when they crucified Christ? (Acts iii. 17; xiii. 27). Therefore it is very unsafe to pin your faith upon the Church's sleeve."—MATHER.

"Beware of a nominal acquiescence in certain alleged truths; because you have been taught them in your infancy, or because they are the established opinions of those with whom you are connected."—ABERCROMBIE.

"Deliver me from the narrowing influence of human lessons, from human systems of theology. Teach me directly out of the fulness and freeness of Thine own word. Hasten the time when, unfettered by sectarian intolerance, and unarmed by the authority of man, the Bible shall make its rightful impression upon all; the simple and obedient readers thereof, calling no man master, but Christ only."—THOMAS CHALMERS.

"From the very beginning there were many heresies, errors, and false doctrines prevalent among the professed followers of Christ; and such errors were maintained and propagated among those who formed what was called the Catholic Church."—DEAN GOODE.

"Even now, after eighteen centuries of Christianity, we may be involved in some tremendous error, of which the Christianity of the future will make us ashamed."—ALEXANDER VINET.

IMMORTALITY.

"The King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, WHO ONLY HATH IMMORTALITY."—PAUL.

"Adam forfeited the blessing of Immortality."—THOMAS SCOTT.

"In fact no such doctrine is revealed to us."—ARCHBISHOP WHATELY.

"If there be one blessing more than another, which the Scriptures agree in ascribing to Christ as its Author, and for which the believer is taught that he is wholly indebted to Redemption, it is Immortality."—DR. DE BURGH.

"That the soul is naturally immortal is contradicted by Scripture, which makes our Immortality a gift dependent on the Giver."—RICHARD WATSON.

"We are candidates for Immortality."—PROFESSOR PEROWNE.

"From the beginning to end of the Apostolical Fathers there is not one word said of the Immortality of the Soul: Immortality is asserted by them to be peculiar to the redeemed."—PREBENDARY CONSTABLE.

"The doom of the wicked is everywhere spoken of in Holy Scripture in terms which imply obliteration of their entire being and existence."—WILLIAM KER, A.M.

"The wide-spread belief in the Eternity of Evil is perhaps the most astounding phenomenon that has ever appeared in the history of the human mind."—SAMUEL MINTON, A.M.

"Throughout the Epistles there is not a single passage which could justify the assertion that the lost soul shall for ever continue to exist in torment."—E. F. LITTON, M.A.

"After the decision of the Great White Throne, there will not be a solitary dungeon in all God's dominions. Evil is no more."—DR. LEASK.

"I believe that the constitutional Immortality of the creature is a contradiction."—DR. D. THOMAS.

"Christianity treats man not as immortal, but as a candidate for Immortality."—DR. J. PARKER.

"We fail in presenting God's love to the heathen nations, because we have encumbered Christianity with a doctrine of hell so unjust, so indiscriminate, so hardening in its frightful proportions, that men's consciences refuse to receive it."—EDWARD WHITE.

"The earliest Christian Writings considered Immortality as the peculiar portion of believers in Christ."—J. M. DENNISTON, M.A.

"Paul and Peter, John, James, and Jude, all agree in teaching that destruction is the last judgment of God upon impenitence."—WILLIAM GRIFFITH.

"It is most plainly declared that there is no Immortality at present possessed by those who are not in Christ."—JOSEPH STRATFORD.

"The final destiny of man as a sinner is that he shall be as though he had not been."—E. W. P. TAUNTON.

SECTION I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

4, NORTHUMBERLAND HOUSES,
KING EDWARD ROAD, HACKNEY, E.
LONDON, 1ST MAY, 1871.

DEAR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,

I think it to be only due to you and to myself to write this Letter. Many of you already know, through the Twelfth Report of the "COME OVER AND HELP US" Mission, dated 14th June, 1870, of my heresy, so called, namely, that Immortality is *not the natural property of men*, but is bestowed, as the gift of God, *through our Lord Jesus Christ*, on those only who believe on Him, and that the finally impenitent will be *destroyed*, instead of being *tormented for ever*. Few of you, however, know the grounds of my belief, and, it is to acquaint you with such, that I now venture to address you, in hopes that, with God's blessing, you may be led to reconsider your own views, and, like the noble Bereans, search "the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so."¹ I do not mean to suppose that you have not searched them already, but, I think, I am not uncharitable in saying, that it is very customary to search the Scriptures for the confirmation of our own views, instead of for ascertaining the truth of God. We try to prove our creed from Scripture, instead of taking Scripture for our creed. There is, consequently, a multiplicity of beliefs, and no little amount of bigotry, for each one considers that he has truth on his side, and does what seems right in his own eyes. They who seek truth *for its own sake*, irrespective of private or public opinion, and, when it is found, are not afraid *to teach it*, are almost always called to suffer. Indeed, in a fallen world like ours, they can expect nothing else,

¹ Acts xvii. 11.

but they have the consolation of knowing that, like David, they are serving their generation, and that truth will ultimately prevail. Molinos could say, "Better is it to suffer than even to be an Apostle." He acted on this belief himself, but the many find it far easier to *say* than to *do*. It is only the grace of God that can give the needed strength.

Several of you have *cut me off* from fellowship with you in the Church, in the house, and in the work of the Lord. You have called me infidel, atheist, heretic, madman, fool, a denier of the Lord that bought me, one too bad to have any dealings with even in matters of secular business. This is very sad, but no less sad than true, yourselves being judges. I have asked for proof of my error, but have received none. I have used argument, but have got no reply. I do not blame you for this. Through grace I can say, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved."¹ You have acted as you have considered right, with a zeal for God, as if you thereby did Him service. I do not judge you, but ask you to "prove all things,"² and, striving to free yourselves from *traditional* teaching,³ give the matter an *honest* examination.

A few of you, I know, *already agree with me* on the subject of this Letter, but have not *declared your belief*. In this you resemble those referred to in the late Mr. Foster's letter to Mr. Edward White, "A number of ministers not large, but of great piety and intelligence, within his acquaintance, had been disbelievers in the doctrine in question, (the eternal existence of the wicked in misery)." I do not wish to impugn your motives for concealment, but I think such concealment is a mistake. Paul could say, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."⁴ The holding back of revealed truth certainly retards its progress, and puts undue pressure upon those who have the courage to bring it forward. Union gives strength. May you have a holy boldness to come forth "to the help of the Lord against the mighty."⁵

Others of you have told me that *you do not wish* to study the question, that it is above your comprehension, and that you have plenty to do without troubling yourselves about such matters. This may *seem* very humble, and, were such reasons given by poor, ignorant people, they might, perhaps, be entertained, but in your

¹ 2 Cor. xii. 15. ² 1 Thess. v. 21.

³ See "Truth and Tradition," &c., by Lieut. General H. Goodwyn, lately published by G. J. Stevenson, Paternoster-row.

⁴ Acts xx. 27. ⁵ Judges v. 23.

case, I am afraid they cannot, for it happens that you are in quite a different position in life from them, and you claim to be *teachers* yourselves. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance, that you teach only what is *Scriptural*; and, when many Christians, both holy and learned, solemnly declare that, after prayerful and laborious search, they cannot find the doctrine of man's Natural Immortality in God's Word at all, it appears to me that you, assuredly, *ought* to study the subject for yourselves, in order that you may either *prove* the truth of what you teach, or, if you cannot do that, *abandon* what you have taught as error. To do less than this would, in concerns of this world, be accounted as not quite honest, and certainly the Christian, in matters of honesty, should be at least equal to those whom he has been accustomed to consider as outside the pale of the Church.

Some of you think this to be a *troublesome question*, and that your holding anything contrary to what is commonly deemed orthodox, might get *you* into trouble, so you quietly let it alone, remembering the proverb, "The least said the soonest mended." You earnestly hope that, before long, it may die out, and, in your meetings for worship, you will not permit it to be named, acting, with respect to it, on the same principle as the Jews did regarding the disciples of the Lord Jesus, "that if any man did confess that He was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue."¹ Let me remind you that the intolerance of the Jews led to their own expulsion, and that not only their synagogues, but their very Temple itself, were soon swept away. It is vain for you to imagine that the subject can be put aside. It is one of far too great importance, both as regards the character of God, and the destiny of man, and has taken too deep a hold of *thinking* and *holy* Christians, to be disregarded now. It is shaking the religious world to its very centre, and you might as well attempt to stem the current of Niagara as the tide of human thought.

The lower classes in the towns, and many of the higher, scarcely ever enter a place of worship, for they cannot believe in the contradiction that God is Love, and yet will keep alive in Eternal Torment unnumbered myriads of His creatures. The natural tendency of such teaching is to Infidelity, wherever liberty of thought is exercised, and bad must be the doctrine which leads to such a miserable result. Spiritualism, that dark system of iniquity,

¹ John ix. 22.

founded on the old lie of Satan, "Ye shall NOT surely die,"¹ is engulfing millions in its vortex. It panders to the false teaching of man's inherent immortality, by bringing seducing spirits to personate the dead, and does the work of Satan by denying what Paul preached—Jesus and the Resurrection.² Dear Christian Friends, I implore you to be true. Test everything by the Word of God; it is our only Chart over life's tempestuous sea. Truth loves the light; it is only error that creeps in darkness. If your principles and teaching will not bear investigation in the light of Scripture, be assured that they are not true. "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all."³ "God is Love,"⁴ "He cannot deny Himself."⁵ "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is because there is no light in them*"⁶

In calmly considering the past, I am humbled and amazed when I think of the length of time that elapsed before I came to my present understanding of the subject of this Letter. I have been a Christian for thirty years, for five-and-twenty of which I have been endeavouring to act as Evangelist and Pastor, not as a means of livelihood, for I have been, and still am, engaged in secular pursuits, but from the simple desire of serving Him "who loved me, and gave Himself for me."⁷ I possess a library stored with the best books of reference on Scriptural matters, and, although I make no pretensions to scholarship, have yet sufficient learning to enable me to consult the Scriptures in the original for myself. I feel, therefore, positively without excuse; but, I think, the fact of my having been so foolish, and "so slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken,"⁸ makes me more lenient in my judgment of others than I might otherwise have been. I can at least give them credit for sincerity, well knowing that we may be as sincere in error as in truth; and I do not denounce, either as hypocrites or fools, those who do not see things in the same light as myself. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind;"⁹ may God give us wisdom that we "may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good."¹⁰

The great hindrance to the reception of truth is not the *want of capacity* to understand it, but the *want of will* to give up preconceived ideas, thus verifying the old adage, "None so blind as those who *will not see*." To unlearn is far more difficult than to learn.

¹ Gen. iii. 4. ² Acts xvii. 18. ³ 1 John i. 5. ⁴ 1 John iv. 16. ⁵ 2 Tim. ii. 13.
⁶ Isa. viii. 20. ⁷ Gal. ii. 20. ⁸ Luke xxiv. 25. ⁹ Rom. xiv. 5. ¹⁰ Isa. vii. 15.

There are many whose minds get so coated with prejudice that they become incapacitated for just judgment. To argue with such while in this state is hopeless : the plainest facts, the most cogent reasoning, the most logical deductions, fall on them as unproductively as rain upon the sand. We should not be angry with such, we can only grieve for them, and wait patiently till they are ready to receive instruction. In being justified by faith, we must first have a *felt want* of something apart from ourselves. There can be no salvation without this ; that is, the heart must be open to feel its need of Christ before it can accept of Him as a Saviour. Thus the well-known hymn describes it :—

“ All the fitness He requireth
Is to *feel our need* of Him.”

So with regard to any particular doctrine which we have not investigated, and which we decline to investigate, having already given it an ideal character of our own, we must just remain in ignorance of its real meaning, so long as we feel no need to give it a proper examination. “ He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul.”¹

An acquaintance of mine, whose name is familiar as a household word to the readers of “The Christian,” lately said to me, while conversing on this subject, “The Devil has got hold of you.” I replied, “You are mistaken. I can look you steadily in the face, and say that God was never so precious to me as now.” This dear brother, who is himself a teacher, and whom I sincerely love in the Lord, *positively refuses* to examine the subject, and yet thus judges one who has most carefully done so, and has proved his sincerity at the expense of his reputation and pocket. The world would justly scorn such one-sided judgment. A Jewish ruler said, “Doth our law judge *any* man before it hear him, and know what he doeth ?”² Yet Christians, with sorrow be it written, too often so judge one another. As a sinner, my own heart condemns me, I am so vile in my own eyes that none can think of me so badly as I do of myself ; but I know that the Devil has *not got*, and *never will get* hold of me, for my life is hid with Christ in God. “My flesh and my heart faileth : *but* God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.”³ I name this, because some have erroneously supposed that the views I now hold have a tendency to lessen hatred of sin and appreciation of the holiness of God ; but I believe the very opposite to be the case.

¹ Prov. xv. 32.

² John viii. 51.

³ Ps. lxxiii. 26.

They give far higher ideas of Christ as the Saviour from sin, and a much greater desire to be conformed to the image of Him "that hath called us to glory and virtue."¹ Not one fundamental doctrine of Christian truth is thereby given up; we only the more "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."²

Having been so long considered orthodox by a large circle of Christians, my departure from the beaten path has been a matter of some concern. I have not only been called the names already referred to, but, by some of you have been prayed for, both in public and in private, that I "may be delivered from my error." I heartily thank those of you who have so prayed for your kind solicitude; and, although God will not answer prayers in contradiction to His own Word, I trust He may bless them by giving us an increased knowledge of Himself, and a greater desire to do His will. In this way they may prove effectual both to you and me.

I think I cannot now do better than tell you the reasons which induced me to abandon the commonly received doctrine of Eternal Torment. I shall endeavour to do so in a plain, straightforward way, that may come home to the understanding and conscience of the reader, whether learned or unlearned. The *moral view* of the question is, to my mind, the strongest of all, although it is one which has, I think, been generally the least alluded to by writers on this subject. As most of you are unacquainted with Hebrew and Greek, I shall not trouble you with citations from such more frequently than the occasion appears to demand; but it will be well sometimes to refer to the originals.³ It is impossible to get at the true meaning of a passage without a right understanding of words, for words are the embodiment of thought, as Christ, the Divine Word, is the embodiment of God the Spirit. I shall try to be as accurate as possible, and make no statement which I cannot confirm. There are, I know, scholars among you who can soon cor-

¹ 2 Pet. i. 3.

² Jude 3.

³ I would strongly advise any who may desire to acquire the knowledge of Hebrew—and I earnestly hope that their number may be greatly increased—to do so *without the points*, which, as scholars well know, *form no part of the original* of that simple and sublime language. In the preface to his Hebrew and English Lexicon, Parkhurst truly says, "I can venture to assure any person of tolerable parts and abilities, that an application *thus directed* of two or three hours every day to the *Hebrew* language will, in a *few months*, enable him to read in the original, with ease and delight, most part of those *Holy Scriptures* all of which, St. Paul assures us, were given by the inspiration of God, and are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Jesus Christ."

rect me should they find me wrong ; and, if so found, I shall at once be ready to acknowledge any mistake, as it is truth, not victory, for which I contend. It is my aim to write this letter in a popular style ; those of you who might wish to see the subject treated in a learned manner, I would refer to a very able work, lately published by my friend Mr. Denniston, who is also known to several of you, the title of which I give below.¹

Until about four years ago I never had my attention specially called to the subject of Eternal Torment. I had taken for granted the teaching of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism, and the various preachers I had heard, that the lost would be subjected "to the pains of hell for ever."² At times, when thinking of this, my heart and mind revolted from it with horror, but I crushed such thoughts as rebellion against what appeared to be taught from God's Word. At last I attended a private meeting, to consider the question, at the house of a Christian gentleman in the West End, known to many of you. About a dozen of us used to meet there once a month, for the purpose of studying the Scriptures more critically than is generally done at what are called Reading Meetings. All, or at least nearly all, were orthodox, but at that meeting my own mind was terribly shaken as to the truth of the popular belief. I afterwards named my perplexity to the friend, whose book I have just referred to, and who, at that time, was very orthodox. His reply was to the following effect. "This subject has troubled many good and able men, such as Foster, Hall, and others ; but I advise you not to be disturbed about the matter, as, I think, you will get no satisfactory solution. Be assured that God is just, and will do all things well." I took his advice, although I could not help crying out sometimes, like another, as he was passing away, "More light, more light !"

Light was at last given. A friend who used to attend the monthly meetings for Christian fellowship, which have been held at my house for the last five years, had been put out of communion at a Plymouth Brethren gathering, because he declined to give up teaching the non-eternity of Hell Torments. I was expostulated with by some of these Brethren for asking this friend, and one or two

¹ "The Perishing Soul according to Scripture, with reference also to Ancient Jewish Writings, and the Christian Writings of the first two Centuries." By J. M. Denniston, M.A., author of "Ancient Landmarks," &c. London, F. Bowyer Kitto, 5, Bishopsgate-street Without.

² Assembly's Shorter Catechism ; answer to question 19.

others, whom they considered heretical, to these meetings; but as they were conducted on an entirely unsectarian basis, and I knew that those referred to were godly Christians, I saw no just reason for my acting the part of excommunicator. The fact, however, of this brother having been excluded from fellowship for the cause named, led me to see it to be my *bounden duty* to study the question carefully for myself. Accordingly, last Autumn twelvemonth, I began to do so by comparing Scripture with Scripture, with the aid of the Englishman's Hebrew and Greek Concordances, and I read every publication I could get, for and against, bearing on the subject. The result of this inquiry was—I was satisfied that there is *not one text in the whole Bible* proving the natural or inherent immortality of man, and that the doctrine of Eternal Torment *is not taught there*. Other reasons for rejecting the doctrine also presented themselves to my mind, which I purpose giving in their proper place. After this close personal search, in order to test the matter still more, I had several private meetings at my own house, of esteemed Christian friends, to investigate the matter, and the result was still the same. I then openly declared my change of opinion, and have had to suffer in consequence.

I have made these few Introductory Remarks in order to let you know something of my own state of mind, and how I was led to study the question before us, in hope that they may be useful to some of you. In spiritual belief, as in natural life, there are "Little Children," "Young Men," and "Fathers." The Apostles themselves could not comprehend Christ's teaching at first, so that He said, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now."¹ We can only see as far as the platform on which we stand permits. On the plain we see a certain distance, but, if we ascend a hill in the vicinity we shall see further, and, if we climb a mountain, further still. The objects seen are not themselves increased, but the range of sight is enlarged. So is it with regard to spiritual truths. The great thing is to have a mind *open*, when the opportunity arrives, "to understand the vision." If we *shut* it our vantage ground will prove of no avail. The steps to Divine knowledge are gradual, and only to be ascended by God's continual dealings with ourselves. It is "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."² May each of us be ready to say, "Speak, LORD, for Thy servant heareth,"³ and be afterwards accounted, like Samuel, "among them that call upon His name."⁴

¹ John xvi. 12. ² Mark iv. 28. ³ 1 Sam. iii. 9. ⁴ Ps. xcix. 6.

SECTION II.

THE ARGUMENT FROM THE SCRIPTURES : IMMORTALITY.

ALL who believe the Bible acknowledge that God is Love, that He is Just, and that He is Unchangeable ; but those who are considered orthodox also hold that He will cause the lost to be tormented in hell-fire throughout the countless ages of eternity. We have been cradled in this doctrine. It has been instilled through catechisms and hymns into our infant minds. It is taught in hundreds of theological volumes, it is preached in thousands of pulpits. It is an article of orthodox Christianity almost as much believed as that Christ died for us on the cross. But the question is now asked, IS IT TRUE? It may seem bold, perhaps presumptuous, to many, that the question should be asked at all. They think it wrong to doubt the truth of a doctrine which has been taught so long, and which thousands of the wisest and most learned have held. I thank God I do not stand alone, for many of the best Christians now agree with me, but, were I compelled to stand alone, I would not shrink from declaring that this doctrine of Eternal Torment directly impugns the character of God, and attributes to Him deeds altogether at variance with what He has revealed concerning Himself.

I am aware that, in making this statement, I am treading on tender ground, and that many good men have feared to touch it ; but I believe that, in this respect, they are mistaken, and that this is THE GROUND on which the battle between truth and error must be fought. It is written of God, "*I am the LORD, I change not.*"¹ Can His nature, then, be so changeable as that the very sinners whom He once so loved as to send His Son into this world to save, He will, if they do not believe in Him, eternally torment in the world that is to come? It is written, "*Just and Right is He*";² would He show His justice in punishing a lifetime, even of a

¹ Mal. iii. 6.

² Deut. xxxii. 4.

hundred years, with excruciating agonies lasting on and on, for ever and ever, after ten thousand times ten thousand millions of ages have past away? It is written, He is "The Lord God Omnipotent";¹ could He be so weak that He cannot put away sin, but be compelled to endure throughout eternity those works of the Devil which He abhors, and which He sent His Son to destroy? Such a God appears to me to be not the God of the Bible, but a God of the dark imaginations of fallen man.

It may be well to give a few specimens of the views of so called orthodox divines on the subject of Eternal Torment. We need not go back to Tatian or Tertullian, who, seeing cruelties perpetrated by the heathen on their fellow-Christians, consoled themselves with the thought that their persecutors would hereafter feel the pains of an unending hell. Let us take men of later days. We shall begin with Dr. Jonathan Edwards, one of the best Christians who ever lived:—

"Imagine yourself to be cast into a fiery oven or a great furnace, where your pain would be as much greater than that occasioned by accidentally touching a coal of fire as the heat is greater. Imagine also that your body were to be there for a quarter of an hour full of fire, and all the while full of quick sense; what horror would you feel at the endurance of such a furnace! and how long would that quarter of an hour seem to you! And, after you had endured it for one minute, how overbearing would it be to you to think that you had to endure it the other fourteen! But what would be the effect if you knew you must lie there enduring that torment to the full for twenty-four hours! And how much greater would be the effect if you knew you must endure it for a whole year! and how vastly greater still if you knew you must endure it for a thousand years! O, then, how would your hearts sink if you knew you must bear it for ever and ever—that there would be no end! that after millions and millions of ages your torment would be no nearer to an end, and that you never, never should be delivered! But your torment in hell would be immensely greater than this illustration represents."

Hear now Richard Baxter:

"The greatest aggravation of these torments will be their eternity. When a thousand million of ages have past, they are as fresh to begin as the first day. The damned are never weary of sinning, nor will God be weary of punishing."

Now Wesley:

"From the moment wherein they are plunged into the lake of fire burning with brimstone, their torments are not only without intermission, but likewise without end."

The passages we might quote on this subject could be greatly

¹ Rev. xix. 6.

multiplied, and some are too horrible to repeat. We shall only give one parting episode from our popular friend, Mr. C. H. Spurgeon :—

“In hell there is no hope. They have not even the hope of dying—the hope of being annihilated. They are for ever, for ever, for ever lost! On every chain in hell there is written ‘For ever!’ Oh! if I could tell you that one day the fire would be burned out, and that those who were lost might be saved, there would be a jubilee in hell at the very thought of it! But it cannot be,—it is an eternity of hell without hope of escape.”

The above is a picture, drawn by some of the most approved orthodox theologians, of the dealings of God in the future world with the vast majority of the human race. Again I ask, **IS IT TRUE?** A thousand times I would answer, **NO.** It is the grossest calumny on the character of The Most High! How then has it arisen? I answer, from the **ASSUMED IDEA** of the **INHERENT OR NATURAL IMMORTALITY OF MAN.** God said to Adam, “In the day though eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”¹ Satan said, “Ye shall NOT surely die.”² Man, in the pride of his fallen nature, has endorsed the lie of Satan, and the forgery passes current still. But what saith the Scriptures? “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.”³

To be inherently immortal is to be as God, “**WHO ONLY HATH IMMORTALITY.**”⁴ Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, who lived about A.D. 170, has some excellent remarks on this point, to show that man was not *created* immortal, but *capable* of receiving immortality. I quote the following extract :—

“But some will say to us—Was man by nature mortal? Certainly not. Was he then immortal? Neither do we affirm this. But one will say to us—Was he then nothing? Not even this hits the mark. He was by nature neither mortal nor immortal. For, if God had made him immortal from the beginning, He would have made him as God. Again, if He had made him mortal, He would seem to be the cause of his death. Neither, then, mortal nor immortal did God make him, but, as we have said, capable of both; so that, if he should incline to the things of immortality, keeping the commandments of God, he should receive from Him immortality, and so become as God. But if, on the other hand, he should turn to the things of death, disobeying God, he should himself be the cause of death to himself, for God made him free, and with power over himself.” B. ii. 27.

“By one man Sin entered into the world, and Death by Sin; and

¹ Gen. ii. 17. ² Gen. iii. 4. ³ Gen. iii. 22, 23. ⁴ 1 Tim. vi. 16.

so Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”¹ But God in grace appeared. Under the hidden mystery, that the Seed of the Woman should bruise the Serpent’s head,² He promised to man that, through the Inspoken Word, the Incorruptible Seed, the Lord Jesus Christ, Death would be at last abolished, and Life and Immortality (*αφθαρσία*, incorruptibility) brought to light through the Gospel.³ In the fulness of time The Divine Redeemer was manifested (*ἐφανερώθη*) in the flesh.⁴ The First-begotten came into the world,⁵ not as an angel, but, *for the suffering of death*, He took on (*ἐπιλαμβάνεται*) the seed of Abraham; as it is written, “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that, through Death, He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil, and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”⁶ This Holy One, who saw no corruption, and whom the cords of Hades tried to hold in vain,⁷ is also called the Firstborn or Firstbegotten from the dead;⁸ He was “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”⁹ He is now alive for evermore, and holds the keys of Hades and of Death,¹⁰ and THROUGH HIM Immortality may be again *sought for* and found.¹¹ He hath reopened the gates of Eden, where the Cherubim had been placed, “and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life,”¹² and hath given the blessed assurance, “to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.”¹³ “I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.”¹⁴

Such is God’s method of bestowing on man that Immortality which had been forfeited by Sin: it is a *gift*, through Him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and without whom none can come to the Father.¹⁵ “He asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest it him, *even* length of days for ever and ever.”¹⁶ Men, however, are unwilling to give up the idea of their *independent* Immortality, and have endeavoured to prove it, although without success, by Scripture, analogy, philosophy, and metaphysics. They suppose

¹ Rom. v. 12. ² Gen. iii. 15. ³ 2 Tim. i. 10. ⁴ 1 Tim. iii. 16. ⁵ Col. i. 15; Heb. i. 6. ⁶ Heb. ii. 14, 15. ⁷ Acts ii. 24, 27. ⁸ Col. i. 18; Rev. i. 5. ⁹ Rom. i. 4. ¹⁰ Rev. i. 18. ¹¹ Rom. ii. 7. ¹² Gen. iii. 24. ¹³ Rev. ii. 7. ¹⁴ John xi. 25, 26. ¹⁵ John xiv. 6. ¹⁶ Ps. xxi. 4.

because God is immortal, and He created man in His own image, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, so that he became a living soul, that he must, therefore, be as immortal as God Himself. They forget that, *on the same ground*, as God is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent, man should be omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent also. They say that the soul is a *part* of God, and, as *He* is immortal, *it* must be so likewise. To this a writer in the "Christian Times," of 24th February, replies:—"If the soul be a part of God, then they must suppose that a part of God has sinned, that part of God blasphemes God, that part of God is to be eternally punished by God"! Let us look at the account of man's creation a little more closely.

1. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness : and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." ¹

The word used for image is צֶלֶם, and means form, representation, outward appearance. It is frequently applied to the idols of the heathen ; for example, in Daniel, no less than sixteen times. דְּמוּת, Likeness, is a little more specific than צֶלֶם, image ; it expresses rather the conformity or resemblance of *the parts*, while צֶלֶם refers more to the *general* form or delineation. It is used fourteen times in Ezekiel in connection with the four living creatures or Cherubim. We must remember, however, that these words do not imply *identity*, but only *resemblance*, and that the difference is still infinite between the Creator and the created. Further, they seem in this passage to convey the idea of *delegated authority* : God was over all, and He appointed man, as his viceroy, over terrestrial affairs. When man sinned he lost, in a great measure, his power ; the ground was cursed for his sake, and brought forth thorns and thistles, the elements affected his body, and the beasts of the field rebelled against him.² Under the New Adam, however, "The Second Man, The Lord from Heaven,"³ even Jesus, order will be again restored, for it is written, "Thou hast put all *things* under His feet,"⁴ and further, "When all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."⁵

¹ Gen. i. 26. ² Gen. iii. 15—19. ³ 1 Cor. xv. 47. ⁴ Ps. viii. 6.

⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 28.

Although God as a Spirit is invisible, He is declared or manifested by Jesus Christ,¹ and was doubtless so seen by Adam in the garden of Eden.² That Christ had the *appearance* of a man before His incarnation is evident from the interview Abraham had with Him at Mamre,³ Jacob at Peniel,⁴ Joshua at Jericho,⁵ and so He was also seen by Isaiah,⁶ Ezekiel,⁷ and Daniel.⁸ Christ is called the "Image of the Invisible God, the First-born, *πρωτότοκος*, of every creature,"⁹ "The Logos," and it was as such that "all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made."¹⁰ It was in this image or likeness that man was created, and that this form was outward is further evident from the following statement:—

2. "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground."¹¹ הָאָדָם עָפָר
מִן הָאָרֶץ:

Now, the *form* is here visible and tangible; nothing is *said*, whatever may be *implied*, of *qualities* or *properties* which are unseen. Man is called אָדָם, Adam,¹² literally, red earth, and Paul corroborates the fact—"The first man *is* of the earth, earthy,"¹³ *χῶϊκός*. It is well also to note that man was made out of the *common* ground, and not, as has been erroneously asserted, some mysterious essences being supposed to exist therein, out of the ground of *Paradise*, which was not planted until *after* his formation.¹⁴ The man was made perfect in his physical organization, but he still wanted *life*, and so God—

3. "Breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, or lives; and man became (literally) to a living soul," וַיִּנְשֵׁם חַיָּה¹⁵

This verse is the great stronghold of the orthodox for the soul's natural immortality, but it is soon taken. If our friends will only *compare Scripture with Scripture*, they will find that the words "breath of life," on which they build so much, are applied, equally with man, to *every bird, beast, and creeping thing* that moved on the face of the earth: yet *they died*. See Gen. vii. 15, 22. If it be said that it was God's "breathing" into man's nostrils that gave immortality, is it not strange that *He* should consider such breathing so ephemeral, for it is written, "Cease ye from man *whose breath is in his nostrils*, for wherein is he to be accounted of?" Indeed,

¹ John i. 18. ² Gen. iii. 8—11. ³ Gen. xviii. 1—33. ⁴ Gen. xxxii. 24—30. ⁵ Jos. v. 13—15. ⁶ Isa. vi. 1—5. ⁷ Ezek. i. 26—28. ⁸ Dan. vii. 13. ⁹ Col. i. 15. ¹⁰ John i. 1—3. ¹¹ Gen. ii. 7. ¹² Gen. v. 2. ¹³ 1 Cor. xv. 47. ¹⁴ Gen. ii. 8. ¹⁵ Gen. ii. 7, and Paul uses a similar expression in 1 Cor. xv. 45, *εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν*, into a living soul. ¹⁶ Isa. ii. 22.

as far as the mere breath is concerned, Scripture declares, "That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath, **זֶה וְרוּחַ אֶחָד לְכֹל**; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast: for all is vanity."¹ If it be argued, it is man's becoming "a living soul" that makes him immortal, then every beast, fowl, creeping thing, and fish are immortal also, for the same words are used for them in Gen. i. 20, 21, 24, 30, and many other places which it would here be too long to enumerate. If such expressions, therefore, prove immortality in man, they also prove immortality in the lion, the eagle, the serpent, the whale—yea, in the whole tribes of the animal creation. Unfortunately also for the theory of our friends, the word here translated soul, **נֶפֶשׁ**, so far from proving immortality, is actually applied, on twelve occasions, to DEAD BODIES!²

It may be said, How then did man in creation differ from a beast? I answer, Much every way; not only in his Godlike, upright form, but also in his moral and intellectual nature, and in his capability for the enjoyment of Immortality. He was made by special counsel of the Triune Jehovah to have dominion over all earthly things. Still, he was *only a creature on probation*, and the penalty of his disobedience was *death*. His knowledge was comparatively limited, and his righteousness and holiness would appear to have been but small, if we may judge from the fact of his having so readily broken the express command of God. He ate of the forbidden tree and died; that is, as I understand it, he at once lost all fellowship with God, and would have utterly perished, had it not been for the implanting of Jesus Christ, the incorruptible seed. He fell from the Light world of Love, into the Dark world of Self, and, from being a Son of God, he became actually the Son of Death, **בֶּן מוֹת**.³ He lost his inheritance by the Fall, and can have it restored only through his great kinsman Redeemer, **גְּאֹל**, the Lord Jesus Christ. "AS MANY AS RECEIVED HIM, to them gave He power to BECOME the Sons of God, even to them that should believe in His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."⁴

Through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ man is BORN AGAIN; he

¹ Ecc. iii. 19; see also Ps. xlix. 12—20. ² Lev. xix. 28; xxi. 1, 11; xxii. 4; Num. v. 2, vi. 6, 11, ix. 6, 7, 10, xix. 13; Hag. ii. 13. ³ Compare Gen. ii. 17, with 1 Sam. xx. 31. Hebrew. ⁴ John i. 12, 13.

thereby becomes a partaker of the Divine Nature,¹ and is renewed in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, "after the image of Him that created him."² Great, therefore, as was man's loss by the Fall, infinitely greater will be his gain through Redemption. The union of the new man with God becomes far closer than it was in Eden, and is incapable of dissolution, for Christ, in order to restore him, became bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, and joined his own Spirit with his. We are married to the Lord.³ "This is a great mystery : but I speak concerning Christ and the Church."⁴ We have eternal life through Him, and when He, who is our Life, shall appear, then shall we "also appear with Him in glory."⁵

The wish to be "as Gods, knowing good and evil,"⁶ still haunts men's minds. Satan well knew the power of that enticement when he put it before Eve, and he knows its power over her children still. The thought of Inherent Immortality puffs up the pride of the natural man, and we are told, "pride *goeth* before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."⁷ The spiritual man has humbler views of himself, and sees things in another light. Thus David says, "Behold Thou hast made my days *as* an handbreadth, and mine age *is* AS NOTHING before Thee."⁸ "My days *are* like a shadow that declineth, and I am withered like grass. But Thou, O LORD, shalt endure for ever, and Thy remembrance unto all generations. Thou *art* the same, and Thy years shall have no end."⁹ There appears in such passages an essential contrast and difference between life in God and man. Had the soul of every man been innately as immortal as that of God, I think it would have been impossible for such language to have been ever used.

We have Eternal Life through Jesus Christ, "who hath abolished Death and hast brought Life and Immortality to light through the Gospel."¹⁰ Some say that Eternal life existed before Christ came into the world, but was not brought to light till He preached it by His Gospel, and adduce Abel, Noah, Abraham, &c., in proof. No doubt of it ; this is truth, but it is not the *whole* truth. The saints under the Old Testament economy had life in Christ as well as those under the New. Although, in their days, He *had not come* in the flesh, the fact that He *would come* was in their case sufficient. The

¹ 2 Pet. i. 4. ² Compare Eph. iv. 24, with Col. iii. 10. ³ Rom. vii. 4. ⁴ Eph. v. 23—33. ⁵ Col. iii. 4. ⁶ Gen. iii. 5. ⁷ Prov. xvi. 18. ⁸ Ps. xxxix. 5. ⁹ Ps. cii. 11, 12, 27. ¹⁰ 2 Tim. i. 10.

Bill drawn by God on Christ was discounted, He well knowing that it would be duly paid at maturity. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad."¹ He "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."² Moreover, *in a certain sense*, there is life through Christ in every human being, for, had it not been for Him, the first Adam would have perished childless, when he sinned in the garden of Eden. In Christ, the Second Adam, "was life; and the life was the light of men. *That* was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."³ "The Bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."⁴ Life, however, is *eternal* to those only who are *quickened by Divine Regeneration*. "Except a man *be born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God."⁵ Life may be lost; a man may "lose himself, or be cast away."⁶ That which has had a beginning *may*, I might rather say *must*, have an end, *unless specially sustained by God's power*. This meets the argument of those who bring forward such passages as the following, to prove either man's Eternal Life in Misery, or the Universal Restoration of the human race. "The God of the Spirits of all flesh."⁷ "Have we not all one Father?"⁸ "All live unto Him."⁹ "In Him we live, and move, and have our being. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God."¹⁰ "The Father of Spirits."¹¹ This is all true; but in what sense? Surely in that of God being the *Author and upholder* of those creatures to whom He gave existence, but this affords no proof of their *eternal existence*. That is *another matter* altogether, and depends on *certain conditions being by them fulfilled*. Only of THOSE WHO BELIEVE in Christ is it written, "God hath given to us Eternal Life, and THIS LIFE IS IN HIS SON."¹²

It appears to me that the bringing life and incorruptibility to light through the Gospel, is something more than the mere *announcement* of a doctrine which had been hidden; it is the *manifestation* of it in the person of Christ through His Resurrection, and the *evidence* that, because He lives, we shall live also.¹³ In this view I am strengthened by the following remarks of Parkhurst, which are so apposite, that I beg to present them to your attention.

"*To bring to light* (with an acc.) 1 Cor. iv. 5, 2 Tim. i. 10. In this latter text the Apostle speaks of the *grace* or *favour* which was given or promised (see

¹ John viii. 56. ² Gal. iii. 6. ³ John i. 4, 9. ⁴ John vi. 33. ⁵ John iii. 3. ⁶ Luke ix. 25. ⁷ Num. xvi. 22, xxvii. 16. ⁸ Mal. ii. 10. ⁹ Luke xx. 38. ¹⁰ Acts xvii. 28, 29. ¹¹ Heb. xii. 9. ¹² 1 John v. 11. ¹³ John xiv. 19.

Tit. i. 2) to us in Christ Jesus before the world began, *φανερωθεῖσαν δὲ πρῶν*, but is now made manifest, *ἔα τῆς ἐπιφανείας*, by the appearance of our Saviour Jesus Christ (comp. 1 Tim. iii. 16, 1 Pet. i. 19, 20), who hath actually overcome death, namely, by his death (comp. Heb. ii. 14), and hath brought life and incorruption to light by the Gospel, i.e., not the doctrine, but the thing: Christ, by actually rising from the dead, and causing this important fact, as fulfilled in and by Him, to be published in the Gospel (see 1 Cor. xv. 1—4), having manifested or exemplified in his own person that life and incorruption which shall be the happy lot of all true believers (see 1 Cor. xv. 42, 45—55). So, when St. John, 1 Ep. i. 2, says in terms very similar to those of St. Paul, that *ἡ ζωὴ ἐφανερώθη*, the life was manifested, he does not refer to the doctrine of a future or eternal life, but to that which he had seen with his eyes, which he had looked upon and his hands had handled, even to the Incarnate Word, as is evident from the context. But to return to 2 Tim. i. 10, the word *φωτίσαντος* is not, (as too many have unhappily imagined), in this passage opposed to the obscurity of the doctrine of life and immortality* before the coming of Christ, but plainly to God's preceding purpose or promise of what was afterwards really fulfilled in our Redeemer, as a pledge of what should likewise be accomplished in all those that are His. See 1 Cor. xv. 23."¹

There is a distinction between Eternal Life and Immortality. The one belongs to the spiritual and the other to the bodily part of man—the former is bestowed immediately on belief, thus, "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, HATH everlasting life,"² *ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον*, the latter is not given till the Resurrection, WHEN this mortal, *τὸ θνητὸν τοῦτο*, shall have put on immortality,³ *ἀθανασίαν*, deathlessness. All believers, therefore, are in present possession of Eternal Life, but they have *not as yet* attained to Immortality; for all will die, except those "which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord."⁴ Thus, the great hope of the Christian should be, not, as generally supposed, *going to heaven at death*, but the *Second Coming of our Blessed Lord*. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."⁵ "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."⁶

The words "Mortal," "Immortality," "to corrupt," "corruption," "Corruptible," "Incorruptible," and "Incorruption," with

* "Observe, however, that the Apostle's term is not *ἀθανασία* immortality, but *ἀφθαρσίαν* incorruption, as referring to the resurrection of the body. Comp. Acts xiii. 34—37."

¹ Parkhurst's Greek and English Lexicon, under *Φωτίζω*, iv.

² John v. 24. ³ 1 Cor. xv. 53. ⁴ 1 Thes. iv. 15. ⁵ Col. iii. 4. ⁶ Phil. iii. 20, 21.

their cognates, as used in the original, are so important in the investigation of this subject, that I here give a list of *all the places* in which they occur in the New Testament.

Θνητός, mortal, liable or subject to death.

Rom. vi. 12 : Let not sin therefore reign in your *mortal* body.

Rom. viii. 11 : Shall also quicken your *mortal* bodies.

1 Cor. xv. 53 : And this *mortal* (must) put on immortality.

1 Cor. xv. 54 : This *mortal* shall have put on immortality.

2 Cor. iv. 11 : Might be made manifest in our *mortal* flesh.

2 Cor. v. 4 : Mortality (lit. the *mortal*) might be swallowed up of life.

Ἀθανασία, immortality, exemption from death.

1 Cor. xv. 53 : This mortal (must) put on *immortality*.

1 Cor. xv. 54 : This mortal shall have put on *immortality*.

1 Tim. vi. 16 : Who only hath *immortality*.

Φθείρω, to corrupt, spoil, destroy.

1 Cor. iii. 17 : If any man *defile* the temple of God, him *shall* God *destroy*.

1 Cor. xv. 33 : Evil communications *corrupt* good manners.

2 Cor. vii. 2 : We *have corrupted* no man.

2 Cor. xi. 3 : So your minds *should be corrupted* from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Eph. iv. 22 : The old man, *which is corrupt* according to the deceitful lusts.

Jude 10 : In those things they *corrupt themselves*.

Rev. xix. 2 : Which *did corrupt* the earth with her fornication.

Διαφθείρω, to corrupt, spoil entirely, destroy.

Luke xii. 33 : Where no thief approacheth, neither moth *corrupteth*.

2 Cor. iv. 16 : Though our outward man *perish*.

1 Tim. vi. 5 : Disputings of men of *corrupt* minds.

Rev. viii. 9 : Third part of ships *were destroyed*.

Rev. xi. 18 : Shouldest *destroy* them *which destroy* the earth.

Καταφθείρω, to corrupt, or destroy utterly.

2 Tim. iii. 8 : Men of *corrupt* minds (lit. *corrupt* [as to] mind).

2 Peter ii. 12 : And *shall utterly perish* in their own corruption.

Ἀφανίζω, to vanish away, corrupt, spoil, destroy.

Mat. vi. 16 : For they *disfigure* their faces.

Mat. vi. 19 : Where moth and rust *doth corrupt*.

Mat. vi. 20 : Neither moth nor rust *doth corrupt*.

Acts xiii. 41 : Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and *perish*.

James iv. 14 : A little time, and then *vanisheth away*.

Καπηλεύω, to corrupt by adulteration.

2 Cor. ii. 17 : Not as many, *which corrupt* the word.

Σήπω, to corrupt, to make rotten.

James v. 2 : Your riches are *corrupted*.

Σαπρός, corrupt, rotten, bad.

- Mat. vii. 17 : But a *corrupt* tree bringeth forth evil fruit.
 Mat. vii. 18 : Neither (can) a *corrupt* tree bring forth good fruit.
 Mat. xii. 33 : Or else make the tree *corrupt*, and his fruit *corrupt*.
 Mat. xiii. 48 : But cast the *bad* away.
 Luke vi. 43 : A good tree bringeth not forth *corrupt* fruit ; neither doth a *corrupt* tree bring forth good fruit.

Φθορά, corruption, destruction.

- Rom. viii. 21 : Delivered from the bondage of *corruption*.
 1 Cor. xv. 42 : It is sown in *corruption* ; it is raised in incorruption.
 1 Cor. xv. 50 : Neither doth *corruption* inherit incorruption.
 Gal. vi. 8 : Shall of the flesh reap *corruption*.
 Col. ii. 22 : Which all are to *perish* with the using.
 2 Peter i. 4 : Having escaped the *corruption* that is in the world through lust.
 2 Peter ii. 12 : These, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and *destroyed*.
 2 Peter ii. 12 : Shall utterly perish in their own *corruption*.
 2 Peter ii. 19 : They themselves are the servants of *corruption*.

Διαφθορά, corruption, dissolution.

- Acts ii. 27 : Neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see *corruption*.
 Acts ii. 31 : Neither His flesh did see *corruption*.
 Acts xiii. 34 : No more to return to *corruption*.
 Acts xiii. 35 : Thou shalt not suffer Thine Holy One to see *corruption*.
 Acts xiii. 36 : Was laid unto his fathers, and saw *corruption*.
 Acts xiii. 37 : But He, whom God raised again, saw no *corruption*.

Φθαρτός, corruptible, perishable.

- Rom. i. 23 : An image made like to *corruptible* man.
 1 Cor. ix. 25 : To obtain a *corruptible* crown.
 1 Cor. xv. 53 : This *corruptible* must put on incorruption.
 1 Cor. xv. 54 : So when this *corruptible* shall have put on incorruption.
 1 Peter i. 18 : Ye were not redeemed with *corruptible* things.
 1 Peter i. 23 : Not of *corruptible* seed, but of incorruptible.

**Αφθαρτος, incorruptible, immortal, eternal.*

- Rom. i. 23 : The glory of the *incorruptible* God.
 1 Cor. ix. 25 : Crown ; but we an *incorruptible*.
 1 Cor. xv. 52 : The dead shall be raised *incorruptible*.
 1 Tim. i. 17 : Unto the King, eternal, *immortal*.
 1 Peter i. 4 : To an inheritance *incorruptible*.
 1 Peter i. 23 : Not of corruptible seed, but of *incorruptible*.
 1 Peter iii. 4 : In that which is not *corruptible*.

**Αφθαρσία, incorruption, incorruptibility, incorruptness.*

- Rom. ii. 7 : Seek for glory and honour and *immortality*.
 1 Cor. xv. 42 : It is raised in *incorruption*.
 1 Cor. xv. 50 : Neither doth corruption inherit *incorruption*.

- 1 Cor. xv. 53 : For this corruptible must put on *incorruption*.
 1 Cor. xv. 54 : So when this corruptible shall have put on *incorruption*.
 Eph. vi. 24 : All them that love our Lord Jesus Christ *in sincerity*.
 2 Tim. i. 10 : And hath brought life and *immortality* to light.
 Tit. ii. 7 : In doctrine (showing) uncorruptness, gravity, *sincerity*.

From an examination of the foregoing passages of Scripture, we may draw the following conclusions, namely :—

1. That *θνητός*, *mortal*, is the *normal state* of all human bodies, whether of saints or sinners.

2. That *αθανασία*, *immortality*, is the original, independent property of *God only*, but, through Christ, it is put on by saints *at their resurrection*, as our Lord explains it in Luke xx. 36 : “Neither can they die any more : for they are equal unto the angels ; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.”

3. That *φθείρω*, and the various other words signifying *to corrupt, corruption, and corruptible*, are applied to men in their *natural, unrenewed state*, and to objects which are *capable of decay*.

4. That *ἀφθαρτος*, *incorruptible*, and *ἀφθαρσιά*, *incorruption*, imply a state or condition belonging *essentially to God alone*, but which He, in grace, imparts to saints *in resurrection*, and the expression is used of certain things which *do not fade away*.

You can now, dear Christian friends, see with your own eyes, and judge with your own minds, that there is not one single passage out of the many placed before you, and they are *the whole*, that, on these words, can be adduced from Scripture, which, even in the remotest degree, hints at the *inherent immortality of man*.

Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that, in order to prove from the Bible, man’s Natural Immortality, and the Eternity of Evil, it would require THE BIBLE TO BE RE-WRITTEN. Thus, as Mr. Minton shows, in an able pamphlet lately reprinted from the *Rainbow*,¹ God’s statements would have to be altered somewhat as follows :—

Gen. ii. 7 : For—“ Man became a living soul,”

Read—“ *Man became an immortal spirit.*”

Gen. ii. 17 : For—“ In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,”

Read—“ *Thou shalt surely incur the penalty of living for ever in misery.*”

Gen. iii. 19 : For—“ Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,”

Read—“ *For dust thy body is, and unto dust shall it return ; to be raised again*

¹ I strongly recommend this Periodical to all interested in the great doctrines—the Second Coming of our Lord, and Immortality only through Christ. It is edited by Dr. Leask, and published monthly, price 6d., by W. Kent and Co., Paternoster-row.

in immortal vigour, and with thy never dying soul, to live for ever in endless misery."

"More than SIXTEEN HUNDRED times does it (the Bible) mention either the human 'soul' or the human 'spirit,' and NOT ONCE as being immortal,' 'deathless,' 'never dying,' or anything of the kind. God's Word declares that *man* is mortal, that *man* is under sentence of death as the wages of sin, and that *man*, if he be saved by Christ from sin and death, will 'put on immortality' in the resurrection."¹

Man, in *his own nature*, is "corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,"² and, in order to *attain to Immortality*, he must be made a partaker of the *Divine nature*, through "being *born again*, not of corruptible seed, but of Incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."³

On the words "Life" and "Eternal Life," a late well-known clergyman of the Church of England makes the following judicious remarks:—

"Equally exclusive is the application of 'Life' and 'Eternal Life' in the Scriptures to God and the redeemed. In no one instance are the condemned said to have either, no more than immortality; while they are the usual, and, if one may so speak, the favourite, expressions for salvation; so much so, that in the language of the Bible there could not be a greater contradiction in terms than to say, The damned have immortality, or The unbeliever shall have eternal life.

"This being so, it must surely be regarded as a strange circumstance that the popular creed should distinctly maintain the contrary opinion: and, though not in those words, yet unequivocally assert that the unbeliever and the damned have eternal life, and are immortal; that immortality, or life eternal, is just the one thing of all others which man does not owe to Christ, and for which he is not indebted to redemption, being already a partaker of it by creation and natural constitution; and that, accordingly, the terms 'Life,' 'Eternal Life,' and 'Immortality' cannot be used in their proper sense in Scripture, (in which sense they apply to all), but are figurative expressions for happiness, glory, &c., as are the opposite terms, 'death,' 'second death,' 'perdition,' 'perishing,' and 'destruction,' also figurative; and, so far from being used in their true and obvious sense, that they actually denote the very opposite, are intended to express a condition of being—eternal life in other circumstances—immortality, but in a state of misery and suffering."⁴

The following letter, addressed to Mr. Griffith, Congregational

¹ A New Bible; or Scripture Rewritten, &c., Pp. 3, 17. Elliot Stock, Paternoster-row.

² Eph. iv. 22.

³ 1 Peter i. 23.

⁴ "Christ our Life," &c., pp. 3, 4. Edited by William Ker, A.M., Author of "Popular Ideas of Immortality." Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., London.

minister, Eastbourne,¹ which appeared in the "Eastbourne Gazette" of 22d February last, will doubtless prove especially interesting to members of the Church of England :—

"Ashchurch Rectory, Tewkesbury,
"Feb. 3, 1871.

"DEAR SIR,—Somebody has sent me a reprint of your letter to the *Eastbourne Gazette*. With respect to what the doctrine of the Church of England is on Future Punishment, perhaps you are not aware of two things :—1. In the Articles of 1552, forty-two in number, there was one which affirmed the immortality of the soul, and the endlessness of the miseries of the wicked. At each of the three revisions of the Articles afterwards, this *unscriptural* one was left out. 2. Then a *lawful* and *authoritative* Court has pronounced that endless pain of the wicked is *NOT* a doctrine of the Church of England.

"God prosper you in upholding this truth. The opposite came from heathenism, and was stereotyped by Popery in the dark ages ; for it was found so convenient for purgatory, masses, priestcraft, &c., &c.

"The great truth, the extinction of all evil through the cross of Christ, is winning its way. I uphold it in this locality, and, while there are many opposers, there are many friends. I thought you would like to know the above facts.

"I am, dear Sir, yours faithfully,

"H. S. WARLEIGH."²

The indisputable fact is, whether men like it or not, that there is for them **NO IMMORTALITY APART FROM CHRIST**. He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you,"³ literally in yourselves, *ἐν ἑαυτοῖς*. Men have sinned, and "the wages of sin *is* Death."⁴ "They which commit such things are worthy of death."⁵ "The end of those things *is* death."⁶ "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."⁷ Immortality is God's gift to man through Christ, and, in order to enter into His kingdom man must be **BORN AGAIN**

¹ Mr. Griffith is the author of the following excellent work lately published by Elliot Stock, Paternoster-row, "The Entire Evidence of Evangelists and Apostles on Future Punishment, with Notes on the teaching of Dr. Angus, and others." In this work he gives the following solemn testimony :—"After more than twenty years of inquiry and pause, reconsideration and prayer, examination of all the orthodox arguments, and study of all the New Testament evidence, I have reached a settled conviction that the popular doctrine of hell is an error—that there is no more authority for it in Scripture than there is for the Romish doctrine of purgatory, or for the Pope's headship and infallibility."

² Mr. Warleigh has ably shown Mr. Minton to be right and the "Record" wrong on the question of Endless miseries. See his pamphlet on that subject, also published by Mr. Stock.

³ John vi. 53. ⁴ Rom. vi. 23. ⁵ Rom. i. 32. ⁶ Rom. vi. 21. ⁷ Jam. i. 15.

through Him "which liveth and abideth for ever."¹ The Bible in this country is an open book for every one. If man's natural Immortality be *taught* there, surely it can be *shown*. T. N. has offered 1,000*l.*, the Author of "Immortality only in Christ," 105*l.*, and myself 100*l.* for ONE passage in proof of the popular creed. These offers have been published for months, but not one verse has been produced. With what consistency, then, can those who profess to take the Bible as their rule, talk of man's natural Immortality being a *Scriptural* truth, when they cannot bring forward one passage to prove their assertion ?

¹ 1 Pet. i. 23.

SECTION III.

THE ARGUMENT FROM THE SCRIPTURES CONTINUED :—INFERENCES.

OLD TESTAMENT.

THE orthodox, although compelled to confess that they cannot give ONE TEXT from the Scriptures in proof of Man's Natural Immortality, and, as a consequence thereof, the endless misery of the lost, say that they can bring forward INFERENCES, which, in their opinion, sufficiently establish the verity of their doctrine. Inferences are sometimes true, but they are often false, and are not, therefore, to be always trusted; and if we consider it wrong to hang a man on inference, surely it is ten thousand times worse to blacken the character of God on inference, by supposing Him to be capable of consigning untold millions of His creatures to Eternal Torment. Let us, however, now examine the Inferences. There are only four which can be adduced from the OLD TESTAMENT Scriptures, namely :—

1. Ex. x. 17 : "Entreat the LORD your God, that He may take away from me this death only."

2. Ps. ix. 17 : "All the wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God."

3. Isa. xxxiii. 14 : "Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"

4. Dan. xii. 2 : "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt."

1. Ex. x. 17 : "Entreat the LORD your God, that He may take from me this death only," רק את המות הזה.

This inference is brought forward to prove that death does not mean the cessation of existence, for the plague of locusts, sent on the land of Egypt, which only destroyed the green trees and herbs, is spoken of by Pharaoh as a death. Death is used here figura-

tively as a great calamity, but, so far from this passage proving death to be a continual existence, it would appear *to do the contrary*, for Pharaoh entreats that that calamity SHOULD CEASE. Paul also speaks of Death metaphorically when he talks of himself as being "in deaths oft," *ἐν θανάτοις πολλάκις*.¹ But such expressions do not at all touch the question of the death that came by Adam's sin. One may be dying for a long time, but death itself is not continuous but instantaneous. Thus the phrase "eternal death" is warranted neither by Scripture nor reason. Life, on the other hand, is spoken of as eternal, because those who are possessed of it exist in a continuous state. Thus John, speaking of those who are born of God, says, "This is the record, that God hath given to us Eternal Life, and this life is in His Son"² That death, which is the wages, or result, of Adam's sin, I consider to be twofold in its character:— 1st. The cessation from a state of life in this world, a doom which passes upon all men, "for that all have sinned";³ this implies the death of the body, but not a state of unconsciousness as regards the soul. 2dly. The cessation of existence altogether in the death of the souls of those who, on account of unrepented sin, are called "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction,"⁴ who, after the last resurrection, will be adjudged to Gehenna, "the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the Second Death,"⁵ where "into smoke shall they consume away,"⁶ and "shall be as though they had not been."⁷

2. The Second Inference brought forward is from Ps. ix. 17, (in Heb. v. 18), "The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God."

The translators of our Authorized Bible were good and learned men, and, as a whole, they did their work remarkably well, but it certainly was not perfect. They had their own theological notions, and they were not allowed to alter ecclesiastical terms. The passage above quoted is a case in point. It is but fair to add, however, that, in their time, the word "hell" conveyed the idea more of a place of *covering* than of *torment*, which, of later years, it has exclusively obtained. The expression "into hell" is in the Hebrew *לשאול*, into Shaool, or Sheol, that is, the Intermediate State between Death and the Resurrection, corresponding to the

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 23. ² 1 John v. 11. ³ Rom. v. 12. ⁴ Rom. ix. 22. ⁵ Rev. xxi. 8. ⁶ Ps. xxxvii. 20. ⁷ Obad. 16.

Greek word ἄδης, Hades. Its root is the verb שאל, to ask or demand, from the fact of Death always demanding his victims, thus, "Shaool and destruction are never full;"¹ "who enlargeth his desire as Shaool, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied."² The translation of the words שאל and ἄδης in our version is exceedingly unsatisfactory, being variously rendered "the grave," "the pit," and "hell," so that frequently it is quite impossible for the unlearned reader to know what is really meant.

Shaool in the Old Testament is understood to be the abode for a season of all who die, good and bad, "the house appointed for all living."³ "I will go," said Jacob, "into Shaool unto my son mourning,"⁴ not meaning an earthly grave, the proper term for which in Hebrew is קבר, as he supposed Joseph to have been torn by wild beasts, and not to have been buried at all; and it is into Shaool that "the wicked shall be turned." It has its separate compartments for good and bad, and its lower and lowest depths. That its locality is in the centre of the earth is proved both by Old and New Testaments, from the ground cleaving asunder, so that Korah and his company "went down alive into Shaool,"⁵ and from our Lord's declaration that, "As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart (καρδία) of the earth."⁶ To apply this prophecy to the body of Jesus being laid "in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock,"⁷ is a great mistake. David, speaking of Christ, said, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Shaool."⁸ The subject of the Intermediate State is exceedingly interesting, and will amply repay most careful study, but it is unnecessary here to pursue it further. I think enough has been said to show that the passage we have been considering *implies no state of Eternal Torment.*

3. The Third Inference is taken from Isa. xxxiii. 14, "The Sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"

The orthodox argument may be stated thus: The burnings are everlasting; something is to be burned, that something is man; therefore man is immortal. Only put a piece of paper into the fire and you will see the fallacy of this argument. It is not necessary

¹ Prov. xxvii. 20. ² Hab. ii. 5. ³ Job xxx. 23. ⁴ Gen. xxxvii. 35. ⁵ Num. xvi. 28—33. ⁶ Matt. xii. 40. ⁷ Mark xv. 46. ⁸ Ps. xvi. 10.

that the thing that is to be burned *should last as long as the fire that burns it*; the fire will last after the paper has been destroyed. Let me remind you that this passage was written about 700 years before Christ, consequently about 3,300 years from the creation of Adam. Would it not be strange, passing strange, that a punishment so awful as Everlasting Torment should not have been hinted at for 3,300 years by the Judge of all the earth, who ever must do right? Earthly legislators plainly tell beforehand the penalties to be inflicted for offences that may be committed, and the Divine Legislator told Adam that the penalty of disobedience would be Death. What Death meant Adam must assuredly have known by observing some of the lower creatures around him ceasing to exist. But if you say Adam might never have seen the death even of an ephemeron, under such circumstances it is only reasonable to suppose that, *in common justice*, God would have explained to him what the penalty of Death implied. His own definition of it, after man had sinned, was, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,"¹ meaning, undoubtedly, the extinction (if Divine grace had not interposed) of the whole being, for it was the WHOLE man to whom the warning was given, "THOU shalt surely die," without one word being said about endless misery.

In this passage of Isaiah men imagine a case where God did not permit the penalty of Sin, as Eternal Torment, to be announced for 3,300 years after its first committal, during which period innumerable millions of persons must have died without knowing the nature of the penalty, and, when it is at last proclaimed, He does not announce it Himself, but permits it to come from the lips of those whom He calls sinners and hypocrites! Absurdity is written on the very face of the supposition. The famous philosopher Locke has some weighty remarks on this point:—

"By 'death' some men understand endless torments in hell-fire; but it seems a strange way of understanding a law which requires the plainest and directest words, that by death should be meant eternal life in misery! Can any one be supposed to intend by a law which says *for felony thou shalt surely die*, not that he should lose his life, but be kept alive in exquisite and perpetual torments? And would any one think himself fairly dealt with that was so used?"²

The plain fact is that the utterance in the passage we are examining is attributed to wicked Jews, who express themselves as

¹ Gen. iii. 19.

² "Reasonableness of Christianity," p. 8.

afraid of the spoiler spoken of in the beginning of the chapter. Bishop Lowth's translation is as follows :—

“Who among us can abide the consuming fire ?
Who among us can abide these continued burnings ?”

The same chapter tells us that “fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites,” but “he that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly—bread shall be given him, his water shall be sure.”

4. The Fourth Inference in the Old Testament is from Dan xii. 2—“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt.”

It is the word “everlasting” on which the doctrine of Immortality is here attempted to be based. Let us look at the position of the second “everlasting.” It is not placed before the word “shame,” but before the word “contempt.” But this proves no eternity, for persons may be held in contempt *long after* they themselves have passed away. The passage, from the limitation of the word “many,” instead of its being “all,” seems applicable to the *First*, not to the Second Resurrection at the Last Day ; and, from the context, it will be seen that it refers to *Daniel's people*, the Jews, and not to the Gentile nations. The learned Jewish Rabbi Saadias Gaon paraphrases the passage thus :—

“This is the resurrection of the dead of Israel, whose lot is eternal life, but those who do not awake they are to be destroyed of the Lord, who go down to the habitation beneath, that is Gehenna, and shall be an abhorring to all flesh.”¹

The Rabbi seems evidently to be referring to the punishment of the transgressors mentioned in Isa. lxvi. 24, “they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh,” and this supposition is confirmed by the same word, דראון, being used to express “an abhorring” and “contempt.”

¹ Quoted from Mr. Minton's Tract on The First Resurrection.

SECTION IV.

THE ARGUMENT FROM THE SCRIPTURES CONTINUED :—INFERENCES.

NEW TESTAMENT.

WE shall now examine the INFERENCES in the NEW TESTAMENT, which may be divided into eight classes :—

1. The “undying worm” and “unquenchable fire” of Mark ix. 43, 44, to which may be added the “furnace of fire” of Matt. xiii. 42, 50, and the “everlasting fire” of Matt. xviii. 8, xxv. 41, and the “eternal fire” of Jude 7.

2. The “everlasting punishment” and “life eternal” of Matt. xxv. 46.

3. The “outer darkness” of Matt. viii. 12 ; xxii. 13 ; and xxv. 30 ; and the “mist and blackness of darkness reserved for ever” of 2 Peter ii. 17, and Jude 13.

4. The “eternal damnation” of Mark iii. 29.

5. The “rich man and Lazarus,” Luke xvi. 19—31.

6. The “abiding wrath” of John iii. 36.

7. The “torment night and day for ever and ever” of Rev. xiv. 10, 11 ; xix. 3 ; and xx. 10.

8. The “Lake of Fire,” Rev. xx. 13—15 ; xxi. 8 ; and xxii. 15.

1. The first passage we shall consider is Mark ix. 43, 44, which is the counterpart, although more strongly expressed, of Matt. xviii. 8, 9 ; “And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off : it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, *εἰς τὴν γέενναν*, into the fire that never shall be quenched : *εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβέστον* : where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” These words were addressed by our Lord to Jews, who were familiar with the portion of Scripture to which they referred, Isa. lxvi. 23, 24, which speaks of the punishment of sinners in the Millennial age ; “And it shall come to pass, *that* from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come and worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall

go forth, and look upon the CARCASSES, פְּנֵי, of the men that have transgressed against me : for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched ; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

You will observe that the same expressions regarding the worm and the fire are used in both places. The Jews well understood the allusion, as, "by the entry of the east-gate"¹ of Jerusalem, there was a place called the Valley of the son of Hinnom, from which the word Gehenna is derived, where their ancestors at one time, like the Gentiles, sacrificed their children to Molech. It was also called Tophet, either from the Hebrew word תַּפְתַּח, a firestove, because of the burning, which took place inside of the idol, or from תֶּהָה, a drum,² as it was with beating of drums that these sacrifices were offered. We are told of King Josiah that "he defiled Topheth which *is* in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech."³ The manner of its defilement was by making this valley a receptacle for the dead bodies of malefactors and the filth of the City, and a fire was kept burning for the purpose of consuming such. The worm preyed on, and the fire burned up, the dead bodies that were thrown there. They were instruments of *destruction*, the most effectual that could be got, yet, by a strange inconsistency, many, strong in their idea of Innate Immortality, make the objects intended to be affected by them not to be affected at all, as far as their existence is concerned. How different from the teaching of the Lord Jesus, which meant to show the utter hopelessness of life to those who rejected Him : thus, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish:"⁴ "Fear not them which kill, ἀποκτείναι, the body, but are not able to kill the soul : but rather fear Him which is able to DESTROY, ἀπολέσαι, both SOUL and BODY in hell," γέννη.⁵

If, as the orthodox say, the death of the wicked in hell does not mean their *ceasing to exist*, but *being in endless misery*, it ill becomes them to bring forward the text of the "undying worm," for the whole force of their argument to prove Eternal Torment from this passage depends on their using the word "die" in *the same sense* as their opponents, their worm shall not *cease to live*. With

¹ Jer. xix. 2.

² See Bate's and Parkhurst's Hebrew Lexicons under תַּפְתַּח and תֶּהָה, and Cruden's Concordance under Tophet.

³ 2 Kings xxiii. 10. ⁴ Luke xiii. 3. ⁵ Matt. x. 28.

what justice, then, can they use the word "death," in other places to mean an endless existence?

Besides, it is expressly declared that DEATH ITSELF SHALL BE DESTROYED: "O Death, I will be thy plagues; דְּבַרֶיךָ, O Shaool, I will be thy destruction,"¹ קִטְבְּךָ. This explains the meaning of the following passages in the New Testament:—"The last enemy *that shall be destroyed is Death*;"² "Death and Hades were cast into the Lake of Fire. This is the Second Death,"³ thus proving the SECOND DEATH to be DESTRUCTION, and not endless life in misery.

As to the word which our Bible Translators rendered in v. 43,⁴ "that never shall be quenched," it is expressed in Greek by the single word ἀσβέστον, literally unextinguished. The verb from which it is derived, σβέννυμαι, is used in the following passage of the Septuagint version, "But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath-day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and *it shall not be quenched*."⁵ I need scarcely remind you that the palaces of Jerusalem have long since been burned, and the fire has long since been *spent*.⁶ The expression simply meant that the fire would not be quenched *till its purpose of destruction had been accomplished*. This is further corroborated by classical testimony. In Homer we read that the Trojans hurled unquenchable flame, ἀσβέστη φλόξ, against the Grecian ships, although by such *only one was half-burned*.⁷ Eusebius writes respecting some martyrs, "Cronion and Julian were scourged, and afterwards consumed with unquenchable fire;" and again, "Epimachus and Alexander, who had continued for a time in prison, enduring innumerable sufferings from the scrapers and scourgers, were also destroyed with unquenchable fire."⁸

With respect to "the unquenchable fire," above referred to, "the furnace of fire," τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός, of Matt. xiii. 42, 50, and "the everlasting fire," τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον, of Matt. xviii. 8, and xxv. 41, I have not the slightest hesitation in admitting that the *fire may burn* for eternity. The wicked are

¹ Hos. xiii. 14. ² 1 Cor. xv. 26. ³ Rev. xx. 14. ⁴ Mark ix. 44, last clause of 45, and V. 46 are omitted in critical editions. ⁵ Jer. xvii. 27.

⁶ I think it not improbable that this word may be derived from σβέννυμαι, through the Latin *spendo*, so that ἀσβέστος might thus be translated *unspent*.

⁷ Iliad, *lib.* xvi. 123 and 194. ⁸ Eccl. *His.* b. 6, c. 41.

Revelation, and it is remarkable that, in thirteen of these, it is used in its *strongest* form, εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων—literally, into the ages of the ages. The one exception is in our first quotation, Rev. xiv. 11, where it is εἰς αἰῶνας αἰῶνων, into ages of ages; and it is likewise remarkable that, in looking into Schmidt's Greek Concordance, I find it to be the *only* expression of that particular rendering in the whole New Testament. There is meaning in this, for God expresses His ideas in the most correct language. It is the *only* passage, of the three above referred to, where *human beings* are represented as undergoing punishment, and the duration of continuance has certainly not the intensity expressed in the other passages.

Some have attempted to weaken the force of the word βασανισμός by changing its meaning from *torment* to *testing*, owing to its derivation from the Lydian stone used to test gold, but the application of it and its collaterals in other parts of Scripture forbids, in my opinion, this modified idea. I would remark, however, that the punishment is stated not to fall on *all* the lost, but *on that particular number only* who “worship the Beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand.”¹ The punishment is connected with the Fall of *Babylon*, the smoke of whose burning ascends up for ever and ever, long after those within her have been destroyed. It is well also to notice that the punishment on this city is likewise called *torment*, βασανισμός, on three separate occasions—Rev. xviii. 7, 10, 15. In this verse (Rev. xiv. 11) we read, “They have no rest day nor night, who worship the Beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.” Here, again, that exact number of those punished is stated, namely, *the worshippers of the Beast*, and nothing whatever is said respecting *the vast majority of the human race*, who lived and died during the six thousand years that elapsed *before* the Beast ever appeared upon the scene.

I do not lay stress on the argument that is sometimes used, that the mention of day and night precludes the idea of eternity, for it is said of those who came out of the great tribulation that they are “before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple.”² Besides, while it is quite true that, as regards the Holy City, *it* “had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it,”³ and that “there shall be no night *there*,”⁴ “nevertheless we,

¹ Rev. xiv. 9, 10.

² Rev. vii. 15.

³ Rev. xxi. 23.

⁴ Rev. xxii. 5.

according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness ;”¹ and we read of “the Tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, and yielded her fruit every month.”² Now, a month supposes seasons, and seasons involve day and night, and “while the earth remaineth . . . day and night shall not cease.”³

In all argument we should be *perfectly fair*, and never seek to prove a point which we cannot *honestly* maintain. For my own part, being simply desirous of knowing the truth, I have rejected all reasoning which did not appear to me sound ; and I would never have dared to incur the great responsibility of writing this Letter had not my own mind been thoroughly convinced, after the most searching and candid examination, that on this question the popular theology is altogether erroneous.

The next passage, Rev. xix. 3—“Her smoke rose up for ever and ever,” εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων—now deserves our consideration.

Some, in order to get rid of the difficulty, bring forward the following text in Isa. xxxiv. 9, 10, relative to Idumea :—“The streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day ; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever.” This *appears* to meet the case exactly, but I cannot accept it, as I am inclined to think that this prophecy is *still future*. Others remind us of the acknowledged limited meaning of the word *aiōn* already referred to ; but I do not like this explanation here, as the words used, “for ever and ever,” are the very strongest anywhere applied in Scripture. I prefer to take them literally. Let us see, then, *whose* the smoke is which is to rise up for ever and ever. Look at the context, 2d verse of this 19th chapter, and you will observe that it is the smoke of “the great whore which did corrupt the earth with her fornication ;” and who she represents may be seen from the 18th chapter, even *the City of Babylon the Great*, as it is written, verses 8—10, “Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine ; and she shall be utterly burned with fire : for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication, and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke

¹ 2 Pet. iii. 13. ² Rev. xxii. 2. ³ Gen. viii. 22 ; see also Jer. xxxiii. 20—26.

of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torments, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city ! for in one hour is thy judgment come." Sodom and Gomorrah "are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire,"¹ so, only in a far more remarkable way, will Babylon the Great when again rebuilt. The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah perished in the burning of these ancient cities, and so will perish those of Babylon. They who apply this text to the eternal torment of lost souls understand, in my humble judgment, "neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm."²

We now come to the passage, Rev. xx. 10, "The Devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the Beast and False Prophet *are*, and shall be tormented night and day for ever and ever," εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων.

Some say that this statement refers *only to the Devil*, as the word "are" is not in the original, and that the ellipsis should be read thus, "where the Beast and the False Prophet *were cast*," referring to the previous intimation of their fate in Rev. xix. 20. This is not, however, sound criticism, because the verb βαρνασθήσουσαι, they shall be tormented, is in the future plural, the adverb ὅπου, where, is used instead of the preposition εἰς, into, and the conjunction καὶ, placed, in critical editions, before both the Beast and the False Prophet, strengthens the case. Who then are to be tormented ? The Trinity of Hell—the Devil, the Beast, and the False Prophet. But even their torment will not, I believe, be eternal, in the sense of the eternity of God, for, in accordance with the root meaning of the word αἰών, it will last only as long as its subjects are capable of lasting, and, we know from Scripture, that the Devil and his works will be eventually destroyed, that God may be All in All.³

As for the Devil, we know that he is not a man, and, as regards the Beast and the False Prophet, nobody as yet seems to claim their acquaintance ; we are informed in Rev. xiii. 1, 11, that the former rises *out of the Sea*, and the latter comes *out of the Earth*. As for *man* being included in their punishment, it is not even hinted at ; on the contrary, we find, from Rev. xix. 20, 21, that, after the Beast and the False Prophet were *cast alive* into the Lake of Fire, "the remnant *were slain* with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which *sword* proceeded out of his mouth : and

¹ Jude 7. ² 1 Tim. i. 7. ³ Heb. ii. 14, 1 John iii. 8, 1 Cor. xv. 28.

all the fowls were filled with their flesh." The Beast is doubtless the same as that spoken of in Dan. vii. 11, 26, as having "his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame," the explanation being, "they shall take away his dominion to consume it and to destroy it unto the end." Again it is twice declared that he "goeth into perdition,"¹ εἰς ἀπώλειαν. I am really amazed how any one from this passage, taken from the last and most symbolical book of God's word, should have ever ventured to build upon it an argument for the Eternal Suffering of *all the lost of Adam's race*, seeing that the punishment, whatever may be its duration, refers to THREE PARTIES ONLY, which are distinctly named, the DEVIL, the BEAST, and the FALSE PROPHET. It only shows how easily men may be mistaken, and how dogmatic assertion of error often prevents the truth from having an honest examination, especially among those who, from indifference or indolence, are content to take their creed from others instead of judging for themselves.

8. The Lake of Fire, Rev. xx. 13—15, xxi. 8, and xxii. 15. The Eighth and last class of Inferences from the New Testament, from which the endless misery of the lost is thought to be established, now demands our notice. They, like those of the Seventh class, are also taken from the Book of Revelation.

Rev. xx. 13—15, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell (ἀδης), delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the Lake of Fire. This is the Second Death. And whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the Lake of Fire."

This is the result of the Last or General Judgment, and most solemn it is. The First Resurrection had taken place a thousand years previously, and those who had been accounted worthy to obtain a place in the Millennial Age, and the Resurrection, that one, out from among the dead, τῆς ἀναστάσεως τῆς ἐκ νεκρῶν, having already appeared before the βῆμα,² are not judged at this κρίσις. Those saved at this last Tribunal will occupy an inferior position to those who were awarded to the Millennial kingdom. They do not reside *within* the Holy City, but, "*shall walk in the light of it.*"³ Paul expressed his earnest desire thus, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of (from ⁴) the dead," εἰς τὴν ξανάστασιν τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν,

¹ Rev. xvii. 8, 11. ² Compare Luke xx. 35, John v. 29, Rom. xiv. 10, 2 Cor. v. 10, and Rev. xx. 6. ³ Rev. xxi. 24. ⁴ Phil. iii. 11, so all the ancient authorities.

that is, not the *Last* or General Resurrection, which even the lost will have, but the *First*, of which it is written, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the First Resurrection : on such the Second Death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." ¹

Those whose names are not written in the Book of Life will be cast into the Lake of Fire ; but, that they will exist for ever, or have eternal life in it, as the orthodox assume, is an inference altogether unwarranted from the above passage, in which there is not the slightest allusion to *duration*. The only possible supposition as to existence there, may be drawn from the following passages which occur, *in narration*, after the new heaven and the new earth have been mentioned, namely :—

Rev. xxi. 8, "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone : which is the second death," and

Rev. xxii. 15, "For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."

An examination of the verses occurring *just before* the above will dispel this illusion, thus, Rev. xxi. 6—7, "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things ; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful," &c., and Rev. xxii. 14, "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without *are* dogs," &c. It will thus be seen that there is a simple statement made to the Apostle John of certain events that will happen to the righteous and wicked hereafter ; the former will be received by God, and the latter sentenced to the Lake of Fire. They are words of encouragement for the good, and of warning to the evil, uttered before the Final Judgment commences, from which there is no appeal.

What the End of the Wicked will really be may be gathered from other portions of God's word ; I quote a few out of many that might be given :—

"He shall perish for ever like his own dung : they which have seen him shall say, Where *is* he ?" *Job* xx. 7.

¹ Rev. xx. 6.

"The wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD *shall be* as the fat of lambs : they shall consume ; unto smoke shall they consume away." *Ps.* xxxvii. 20.

"A fire goeth before Him, and burneth up His enemies round about." *Ps.* xcvi. 3.

"They are quenched as the fire of thorns : for in the name of the LORD I will destroy them." *Ps.* cxviii. 12.

"And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners *shall be* together, and they that *forsake* the LORD shall be consumed. And the strong shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench *them*." *Isa.* i. 28, 31.

"Under His glory He shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire. And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and His Holy One for a flame : and it shall burn and devour His thorns in one day." *Isa.* x. 16, 17.

"*They are* dead, they shall not live ; *they are* deceased, they shall not rise ; therefore hast Thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish." *Isa.* xxvi. 14.

"They shall be as though they had not been." *Obad.* 16.¹

"He will make an utter end : affliction shall not rise up the second time. For while *they be* folden together as thorns, and, while they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry." *Nah.* i. 9, 10.

"For behold the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven ; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble : and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." *Mal.* iv. 1.

"He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." *Matt.* iii. 12.

"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul : but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." *Matt.* x. 28.

"As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire : so shall it be in the end of this world." *Matt.* xiii. 40.

"If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered ; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned." *John* xv. 6.

"The end of those things *is* death." *Rom.* vi. 21.

"The enemies of the cross of Christ : whose end *is* destruction." *Phil.* iii. 18, 19.

"In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ : who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." *2 Thess.* i. 8, 9.

"That which beareth thorns and briers *is* rejected, and *is* nigh unto cursing ; whose end *is* to be burned." *Heb.* vi. 8.

"Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." *James* i. 15.

"These, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption." *2 Peter* ii. 12.

¹A similar idea is conveyed in Deut. xxviii. 63, "to destroy you, and to bring you to nought."

It seems to me impossible for language to be *more explicit* than this as to the ultimate destruction of the wicked. The necessities of a cruel theology have, however, endeavoured to *mystify* it, by saying that the Bible has a *peculiar language of its own*, so that the destruction mentioned there does not mean destruction as commonly understood, *but existence in endless torment*. What is this but closing its pages to the unlearned? With such a mode of interpretation the Bible at once becomes "a book that is sealed,"¹ and words are of no value, for they may thus be made to mean anything; death may be called life, darkness light, and bitter sweet.² I strengthen my own remarks on this point with the following quotations from two very distinguished scholars. In a recent letter to Mr. Minton, of Eaton Chapel, Dr. MORTIMER, late Head Master of the City of London School, writes as follows:—

"I hesitate not to bear my testimony to the correctness of your statements as to two matters of much importance—first, that ἀπόλλυμι, whenever and wherever it occurs in a Greek author, has but one meaning—the destruction of the object to which it is the active verb; secondly, that an immortality in man is an unscriptural figment. Our future life, and our future immortal life, are everywhere in Scripture represented to be the gift of God in Jesus Christ."

In a similar manner, Dr. WEYMOUTH, Head Master of Millhill School, addresses Mr. Edward White, of Hawley-road Chapel:—

"My mind fails to conceive a grosser misrepresentation of language than when the five or six strongest words which the Greek tongue possesses, signifying 'Destroy,' or 'Destruction,' are explained to mean an everlasting but wretched existence. To translate black as white is nothing to this."

The Scriptures, as we have just seen, compare the end of the wicked to fat and smoke *consuming away*, to briers, thorns, tow, stubble, chaff, tares, *burnt up by fire*; yet, after all this, Popular Theology declares that the life of the lost will be as everlasting as that of Jehovah Himself! Surely that teaching cannot be of God which so **FLATLY CONTRADICTS** His own revealed Word.

"The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and My people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?"³

I have now completed my attempt to prove from THE SCRIPTURES that GOD IS MISUNDERSTOOD, as to His future dealings with the lost, and that Endless Suffering is quite at variance with what is taught there, respecting the character of Him who is "Love," and

¹ Isa. xxix. 11.

² Isa. v. 20.

³ Jer. v. 31.

who "Cannot deny Himself." You, dear Christian Friends, who have followed the argument thus far, are now in a different position from what you were before you began to read, for like thousands who have never seriously considered the question, you were doubtless not aware on what a sandy foundation the dogma of unending torment rested. You must now, I think, see, at least if you *are willing* to see, that those passages which once *appeared* to give sanction to your belief as to its eternity, *do not do so in reality*, after they have been fairly examined. I might now cease. Our appeal has been made to God's Own Word, and we have heard its distinct judgment, "The Wages of Sin *is* DEATH ; but the gift of God *is* ETERNAL LIFE, through JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD."¹ There are, however, some Collateral Arguments, for and against the doctrine of Eternal Evil, which could not be treated while we were considering the Main Argument from The Scriptures, and which it may be well to examine now. Truth is never afraid of being regarded in every light.

¹1 Rom. vi. 23.

compared to tares which "are collected together and burned with fire," (so Alford *in loco*), which fire is declared to have been prepared, τὸ ἠτομασμένον, for the Devil and his angels. We are told that "the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away;"¹ and there is no difficulty in supposing that, as the fire was burning long before lost human creatures will be put into it, God is equally able to keep it burning long after they have been destroyed, as a monument of His hatred of Sin.

As to the passage in Jude 7, "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire," πρὸς αἰώνιον δίκην ἐπέχουσαι, it evidently refers to the cities Sodom and Gomorrah, and those about them. It is *these* which are set forth, or lie before us, as an example, πρόκεινται δεῖγμα, having been destroyed with fire and brimstone. This fact is corroborated by the kindred passage in 2 Peter ii. 6, "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah INTO ASHES, condemned *them* with an overthrow, making *them* an example unto those that after should live ungodly." Their inhabitants were of course overwhelmed in their ruin, and suffered the effects of that fire which may exist after they are no more.

2. Let us now look at the next Inference, Matt. xxv. 46—"These shall go away into everlasting punishment, εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον, but the righteous into life eternal," εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

This is "the proof text" of our orthodox friends. They say, Here we take our stand; if the punishment of the lost be not eternal, neither is the life of the saved, for it is the same adjective which qualifies both. The apparent difficulty is sometimes met by saying that the word αἰώνιος does not always mean eternal in the fullest sense. Every Greek scholar knows that; for it is applied to Jewish ordinances which have ceased, and to the hills which will pass away. I prefer, however, in this passage to take the word in its strongest meaning. The question, therefore, between us is not as to the *eternity* of the punishment, for that is at once admitted, but *in what does the punishment consist?* I would here venture to caution our friends of the danger arising from making deductions from *one particular text*. It is thus Roman Catholics plead for Transubstantiation, by quoting "This is my body,"² and Unitarians deny the Godhead of Christ by citing "My Father is greater than I."³ We must take the *scope* of Scripture, remembering that,

¹ Ps. xxxvii. 20.

² Matt. xxvi. 26.

³ John xiv. 28.

though certain passages may *seem* to contradict each other, they do not do so *in reality*.

The not properly understanding the meaning of the word "punishment," is the great cause of difficulty in this important passage. Popular theology takes it always to mean *a state of continuous suffering*, forgetting that it has a *negative* as well as a *positive* side; that is, that it may imply *deprivation* as well as *pain*. Take an illustration. A returned convict garottes a gentleman in the street, and is caught in the act. He is tried, and is sentenced to be lashed, and to have six months' imprisonment with hard labour. Another man cuts his wife's throat, is tried, convicted, and hanged. Which of these men will suffer most *pain*? Assuredly the garotter; but which receives the worst *punishment*? Certainly the murderer. Read the text literally. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment,¹ but the righteous into everlasting life." Here we see that the punishment is put in direct contrast with the life. The opposite of life is death, and, that this will be the doom of the finally impenitent, the Scriptures elsewhere declare; "The Wages of Sin *is* Death";² "Who shall be punished with Everlasting Destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power."³ From this text, therefore, we may clearly gather that the punishment of the lost is *Death*, not *Eternal Suffering*; it is the *Loss or Deprivation of Life*.

¹ It may be useful to append here a valuable note on the word *κόλασις*, from page 9 of Mr. Edward White's excellent pamphlet, "Life and Death," &c., lately published by Elliot Stock, Paternoster-row:—

"That *κόλασις* bears the general meaning of *punishment*, and not the specific meaning of *torment*, in the ante-Messianic Jewish writings, will be clear from the twenty passages collected by the lamented Professor Hudson, of Cambridge, U.S.A.; a man of whom it may be said that no one who has appeared on the other side of the controversy has exhibited more exact learning or superior candour. Here are samples:—

"In Ezekiel xiv. 3, 4, 7; xlv. 12 (marg.), *κόλασις* occurs in the Septuagint as the equivalent of *stumbling-block*; that is, whatever is the cause of misfortune, or punishment, is called a stumbling-block. But the *punishment* threatened in Ezek. xiv. 8—10 is being 'cut off' or 'destroyed.' In Ezek. xviii. 30 we have 'so iniquity shall not be your *ruin*,' in English, but it is *κόλασις* in the LXX. And the punishment is explained in v. 31: 'Why will ye *die*!'

"In Esdras viii. 29: 'Whoever will not do the law of thy God and the law of thy King, let judgment be executed, *κολασθήσονται*, whether it be unto *death*, or banishment, or confiscation of goods, or imprisonment.' Here the *κόλασις* is shown to include every variety of punishment, including *death*.—See Hudson's 'Christ our Life.'"

² Rom. vi. 23.

³ 2 Thess. i. 9.

It has been said that Destruction is no punishment to the lost, as it puts an end to their misery ; in the same way it might be argued that death is no punishment to the murderer, as it puts an end to his. But such is a gross fallacy : man's greatest inflicted punishment is *the deprivation of natural life*, and God's greatest inflicted punishment is *the deprivation of Eternal Life*. Oh ! what an awful punishment is this ! It is not the loss, as in the case of the executed criminal, merely of a few years of natural life, and these such as would have been embittered by sighs and tears ; but it is the loss of Eternal Life, of interminable ages of "joy unspeakable and full of glory."¹ It is the loss of fellowship with God, with angels and with men. It is the loss of all that can exalt the intellect and delight the heart. To have the name blotted out of the Book of Life is a punishment the severity of which Infinitude alone can realize, but which, even to my poor, finite mind, is terrible beyond degree. As far as I am able to understand God's solemn word, I can see no escape for those who pass the gates of the Second Death. They leave all hope behind.² They enter

" That undiscovered country from whose bourn
No traveller returns."

"Into smoke shall they consume away."³ Theirs is a sleep that knows no waking—a night that knows no morrow—a grave that knows no resurrection—a death that knows no life,—their loss is infinite—their Punishment is Eternal.

3. The Third Inference now demands our notice, Mark iii. 29—
" But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation," *αἰώνιον κρίσεως*.

The two most ancient N. T. manuscripts, namely, the Sinaitic and the Vatican, read *ἀμαρτηματος*, sin, instead of *κρίσεως*, damnation or judgment. The late Dean Alford gives the rendering, "is guilty of eternal sin." Compare this passage with Matt. xii. 32, and you will get the key to its understanding : "And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him : but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world to come*." The plain meaning is, according to the words of the Disciple whom

¹ 1 Pet. i. 8.

² "Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch' entrate."—DANTE.

³ Ps. xxxvii. 20.

Jesus loved, "There is a sin UNTO DEATH: I do not say that he shall pray for it."¹ This sin is the sin against the Holy Ghost, which, from Mark iii. 30, appears to be saying that Christ had an unclean spirit, and "cast out demons, δαιμόνια, by Beelzebub, the prince of the demons."² He that commits this sin, in the words of the Athanasian Creed, "without doubt he shall perish everlastingly." Eternal Damnation no more means being *continually* damned, than Eternal Judgment means being *continually* judged, or Eternal Redemption means being *continually* redeemed. It simply implies that *the effects of it are eternal*. So Everlasting Destruction does not mean being *continually* destroyed, but that the *result* or *effect* of such destruction will be *everlasting*.

4. The Fourth Inference to which your attention is requested is the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, recorded in Luke xvi. 19—31.

Some take this as an allegorical representation of Jew and Gentile. The rich man is the Jewish nation, God's peculiar people; Lazarus represents the Gentiles, who are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, having no hope, and without God in the world. The Gentiles, through faith in Christ, become dead to sin, which refers to the death of Lazarus, and his going into Abraham's bosom. The Jews grew worse in sin, their temple is destroyed, and they become a proverb and a bye-word among the nations. This figures the death of the Rich Man, and his torment in Hades. The Jews rejected the Messiah, and they cannot enter into God's rest because of their unbelief. Supposing, however, this interpretation of the Parable to be true, I do not think that He, who is the Truth, would have thus lifted the veil from the Hidden State, and used such imagery, unless it were based upon reality.

First of all, let us carefully note that, although the Rich Man has been consigned to *Hell* by our translators, he was sent only to *Hades* by God. The word rendered "hell" in this passage is, in the Greek *ἀδης*, from *α* and *εἶδο*, literally not seen, the place of departed spirits between death and the resurrection, corresponding to the Hebrew word *הַאֵדָם*, in the Old Testament, on which I have already made a few remarks.³ It was to Hades that our Lord went at His death, as it is written, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades."⁴ From this He arose, for He holds "the keys of

¹ 1 John v. 16.

² Matt. xii. 24, *Δαιμόνια* should not be translated *devils*, but *demons*: there is only *one* Devil, ὁ Διάβολος. ³ Page 30, 31. ⁴ Acts ii. 27.

Hades and of death,"¹ and from this His Church shall rise, for "the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."²

The thoughts of Protestants on the state of those who have departed this life, I do not hesitate to say, are almost entirely unscriptural. The Reformers, anxious to do away with the horrid doctrine of Purgatory, went to the opposite extreme of ignoring an Intermediate State altogether. The Assembly's Shorter Catechism teaches that, at death, the souls of believers "do immediately pass into glory,"³ and the converse of this is that unbelievers go straight to Hell. The error of teaching that saved souls go at once, on their leaving earth to heaven is fully exposed by the two following passages of Scripture. Our Lord declared, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of Man which is in heaven;"⁴ and Petersaid, "David is not ascended into the heavens."⁵ With two such plain passages so directly against them, I confess I can see no excuse for our theologians having fallen into so gross an error. The thief, who repented on the cross, went to *Paradise*, where he was to meet Jesus that day—and that paradise is not heaven is proved by the contrast afforded in 2 Cor. xii., where Paul, in v. 2, states that he was caught *εως*, unto, that is, to the confines of the third heaven; and, in v. 5, that he was caught *εις*, into, that is, *inside of* the paradise, where he "heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter," thus showing two raptures to two distinct places.

Let me ask you a plain question,—“If the souls of believers do at death immediately pass into glory,” and those of unbelievers into Gehenna, what would be the use of a resurrection of the body at all, seeing that their award had thus been already made? Surely none; and this is *practically* allowed, for modern preachers scarcely ever refer to the resurrection in their sermons. One might almost suppose that they had imbibed the heresy of Hymenæus and Philetus, “who, concerning the truth, have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already.”⁶ The Swedenborgians seem, in this matter, to be more consistent than so-called orthodox divines, for they boldly deny any resurrection of the body, either of Christ or of His people, as a thing quite superfluous; and though it does not like to confess it, the whole of Christendom seems tainted with this Swedenborgian error. Of

¹ Rev. i. 18. ² Matt. xvi. 18. ³ Answer to question No. 37. ⁴ John iii. 13.

⁵ Acts ii. 34.

⁶ 2 Tim. ii. 18.

one thing, therefore, we may be certain, that the state referred to in this parable is *Intermediate*, not *Final*—it is that of *Hades*, not *Gehenna*; and God's Word declares that Death and Hades, after the Last Resurrection, will be "cast into the Lake of Fire. This is the Second Death."¹ Consequently it is clearly proved that the state of the Rich Man in Hades, although one of suffering, has *no eternity* connected with that suffering.

5. Let us now examine the Fifth Class of Inferences, the "outer darkness," τὸ σκότος τὸ ἑξώτερον of Matt. viii. 12; xxii. 13; xxv. 30; and "the mist, or blackness of darkness for ever," ὁ ζόφος τοῦ σκότους εἰς αἰῶνα, of 2 Pet. ii. 17, and Jude 13.

I class these passages together, as they evidently refer to the same condition. As the element of *duration*, however, is entirely wanting in those of Matthew, they need not detain us; and, with regard to the passage in Peter, as the expression "for ever" does not occur in the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS., and is rejected as spurious by Tischendorf and Alford, it may also be summarily dismissed. With regard to that in Jude, as the words "for ever" are in the original, it deserves a brief consideration. The language used is *highly figurative*, the wicked referred to being called "spots in your feasts of charity, while they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear; clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." I must say, I can see no argument for *eternal existence* here; on the contrary, fruitless trees, twice dead, plucked up by the roots, seem to me to convey about the strongest illustration that could be used to express *destruction*, and we have all seen what are called falling stars, disappear in the blackness of darkness for ever. This is further borne out by the kindred passage in 2 Pet. ii. 12, where of such persons it is written, "But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall **UTTERLY PERISH** in their own corruption," ἐν τῇ φθορᾷ αὐτῶν καταφθαρήσονται, in their own corruption shall be utterly corrupted.

6. The Sixth Inference is from John iii. 36:—"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; *but the wrath of God abideth on him.*"

¹ Rev. xx. 14.

From the last clause the orthodox say that the wrath of God, as exhibited in agonizing torment, will abide on the lost throughout eternal ages. Christ, however, only said it abideth, *μένει*, without reference to duration at all. He does not speak of it as He does of the Comforter, "that He may abide with you *for ever*,"¹ *ἵνα μένῃ μεθ' ἡμῶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*. It remains as long as the subjects of it are capable of feeling, but they cannot feel for ever, for we are told they "shall not see life;" that is, eternal life, and there is no consciousness without life; their "end is destruction,"² "the end of those things is death."³ The teaching of this verse is exceedingly plain; it is, indeed, the climax of one of the most important chapters in the whole Bible, which declares that, unless a man be BORN AGAIN, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. This Regeneration, or New Birth is given through faith in Jesus Christ, who, as the Incorruptible Seed, or Word of God, is formed in the believer's heart, the hope of glory, and produces in him Eternal Life. "*Whoso findeth Me*," crieth Divine Wisdom, "*findeth life*, and shall obtain favour of the LORD. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death."⁴ This is in exact consonance with another passage written by the same Apostle, "This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the SON HATH LIFE; and he that hath not the Son of God HATH NOT LIFE."⁵ I am, indeed, surprised that our friends should have ventured to bring forward the above passage in proof of their theory of eternal life in misery, as a little consideration will show that there is no eternal life at all for any who are NOT BORN AGAIN. The natural man is *χοϊκός*, of the dust,⁶ he is *ψυχικός*, having only soulish, or animal, not spiritual life,⁷ (*πνευματικὴν ζωὴν*;) he is *φθειρόμενος*, "corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,"⁸ "That which is born of the flesh is flesh,"⁹ and "he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption."¹⁰ Now, wherever there is corruption there is decay, and wherever there is decay there must finally be death. It is only by regeneration, through the Lord Jesus Christ, that incorruptibility, *αφθαρσία*, is bestowed on man.¹¹ God, in abounding grace, sent Him into the world, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, *μὴ ἀπόληται*, but have everlasting life,"¹² *ζωὴν αἰώνιον*.

¹ John xiv. 16. ² Phil. iii. 19. ³ Rom. vi. 21. Prov. viii. 35, 36.

⁴ 1 John v. 11, 12. ⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 47. ⁶ Jude 19. ⁷ Eph. iv. 22. ⁸ John iii. 6.

⁹ Gal. vi. 8. ¹⁰ 1 Cor. xv. 42; 2 Tim. i. 10. ¹¹ John iii. 16.

7. We now come to the Seventh Class of Inferences, namely, the three expressions in Revelation ; xiv. 11, "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever ;" xix. 3, "Her smoke rose up for ever and ever ;" xx. 10, "Shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

It will be desirable here to make a few remarks on the word *αἰῶν*, translated "ever." Its root meaning is *continuous being*, from *αι* for *ἀεί*, always, and *ῶν* being. It should be distinctly noted, however, that this particle *ἀεί* does not radically mean of itself *endless*, but *continuous*, and the continuity may be long or short, having an end or none ; it may apply to the life of an insect or of God. Dr. G. S. Smith, of Trinity College, Dublin, makes the following judicious remarks on its derivative adjective *αἰῶνιος*, everlasting :—

"There is no mystery or ambiguity about the word *αἰῶνιος*. Like many other words in the Lexicon, it has several meanings, but this creates no difficulty : the relation and genesis of its different meanings are well ascertained ; and, as a general definition, it may be safely held that it commonly means A CONTINUOUS DURATION AS LONG AS THE SUBJECT IS CAPABLE OF."

A good illustration of this may be found in the same verse,¹ where the mountains and the ways of God are called everlasting. Now we know from 2 Pet. iii. 10 that the mountains will be dissolved, but God's ways are eternal. Seeing, then, that the word *αἰῶν* denotes *continuity*, but not necessarily *endlessness*, we find that in Scripture the word is generally *multiplied* when long duration is meant to be expressed, in order to intensify its meaning.

There are three very interesting instances in the Septuagint, where we find the translators, in rendering the Hebrew words *לעלם ועד*, for ever and ever, evidently not satisfied with the limited meaning of *αἰῶν*, strengthened the idea of duration by adding the words *ἔτι* and *ἐπέκεινα*, namely :—

Ex. xv. 18, "The LORD shall reign for ever and ever ;" *τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ ἐπ' αἰῶνα καὶ ἔτι*, the age and upon age and FURTHER.

Dan. xii. 3, "And they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever ;" *εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας καὶ ἔτι*, into the ages and FURTHER.

Mic. iv. 5, "And we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever ;" *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ ἐπέκεινα*, into the age and BEYOND IT.

The word *αἰῶν*, in its combinations, occurs fourteen times in the

¹ Hab. iii. 6.

SECTION V.

THE ARGUMENT FROM THE ATONEMENT.

SOME have thought, although on what grounds I have never yet been able to learn, that Christ's coming into this world to save only from Destruction, and not from Eternal Suffering, would lessen our ideas of the Atonement. I cannot conceive how this would be the case; on the contrary, in my opinion, it enhances them greatly, inasmuch as it requires more love to save from a lesser than from a greater calamity. Thus, to suppose a case, it would show deeper affection in a man to give his life to save his friend from bankruptcy than from death. It is incredible that a Being, who is Love, could, from his very nature, have made human creatures liable to eternal torment, without having provided some means by which they might escape from such a fearful doom. But it is not incredible that that Being might, on account of their sins, without any derogation from His goodness, permit them to lapse into the nothingness from which they first were brought.

God, in the Atonement, has exhibited the exceeding depth of His love toward sinners, by providing the means of saving them from *Death*, for "They which commit such things are worthy of *Death*,"¹ "the end of those things *is Death*,"² "the wages of sin *is Death*."³ There is not the smallest hint, in all the Bible, of the Atonement having been made to save from Eternal Torment. Such is a pure fiction invented by man, and never taught on one occasion by our Lord or any of His Apostles. "Peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."⁴ "God so loved the world, that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not *perish*, but have everlasting life."⁵

¹ Rom. i. 32. ² Rom. vi. 21. ³ Rom. vi. 23. ⁴ Rom. v. 7, 8. ⁵ John iii. 16.

Christ is man's Perfect Substitute : "the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."¹ "Christ also hath once suffered for (*περι*) sins, the Just for (*ὑπὲρ*) the unjust, that He might bring us to God."² "He is the Propitiation (*ἰλασμός*) for our sins : and not for our's only, but also for *the sins of the whole world.*"³ The Atonement is thus, *in its provision*, co-extensive with the Fall, but, *in its effects*, it is beneficial to those only *who comply with its requirements.* A starving man may have plenty of food before him, but, if he obstinately refuses to partake of it, he will die, for *eating is the condition* of the benefit to be derived. So, while the Atonement of Christ is amply sufficient for all, its benefits will be applied to those only *who accept of God's condition*, which is, *faith in His Son.* "As many as *received Him*, to them gave He power (*privilege, ἐξουσίαν*) to become the Sons of God, *even to them that believe on His Name.*"⁴

The Pascal Lamb prefigured Christ. The command concerning it was, "The whole Assembly of the Congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening."⁵ It was *slain, not kept alive in torment.* So "Christ our Passover is sacrificed, (has been slain, *ἐτύθη*), for us."⁶ If the wages of sin were Eternal Suffering, Christ, as the Sinbearer for us, would have had to suffer such for ever, otherwise His Substitution would not be perfect. But we know that Christ did not suffer Eternal Torment, because He arose from the dead, and that His Substitution *was* perfect, because He hath ascended "into heaven itself, now *to appear in the presence of God for us.*"⁷ Therefore the wages or desert of sin is *not* Eternal Torment. The Scriptures tell us it is *Death*, and so Christ, the Substitute, came to suffer *Death* for us : He "became obedient unto *Death*, even the *Death of the Cross.*"⁸ To this it may be replied : Neither does even the *death* of Christ meet the case of perfect substitution, for, if the wages of sin be *Death*, from which there is no recovery, in order that the substitution be perfect, Christ *should have had no resurrection.* This reasoning would be unanswerable if Christ had been *only man*, but, as He is *God* as well as *man*, it is of no avail. It only establishes the fact that, with respect to mere human beings, "none of *them* can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him ;"⁹ and that the Atonement, in order to be effectual, required the union of the Divine with the Human nature.

¹ Isa. liii. 6. ² 1 Pet. iii. 18. ³ 1 John ii. 2. ⁴ John i. 12. ⁵ Ex. xii. 6.
⁶ 1 Cor. v. 7. ⁷ Heb. ix. 24. ⁸ Phil. ii. 8. ⁹ Ps. xlix. 7.

Christ really died, ἐξέπνευσε, He breathed out His Spirit. He could say, "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father."¹ "As the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given the Son to have life in Himself."² This Essential Immortality the Son had ever possessed *as God*, but it was also given to Him as *the Son of Man*. Incarnation was a necessity for Redemption, and Immortality a necessity for Incarnation, for, "if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished,"³ ἀπόλωντο.

If, still pressed with the argument—Christ was a Perfect Substitute, but He suffered Death and not Eternal Torment, therefore the wages of sin is not Eternal Torment, you say,—Christ, *being Infinite*, His bodily death was sufficient for all purposes, to this it may be answered,—Christ, *being Infinite*, could pardon sin by coming into the world, *without dying at all*. His mere coming would be sufficient for all purposes. In neither of these cases, however, *would the Substitution be perfect*, and Substitution is the groundwork of Atonement, for without Substitution there could be no Regeneration, and without Regeneration there could, for man, be no Eternal Life. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels *for the suffering of death*, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should *taste Death* for every man."⁴ So, "by faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God *was able to raise him up*, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure,"⁵ ἐν παραβολῇ, in a figurative representation.

Again, if a man owes another 100*l.*, and cannot pay a penny himself, if a friend pays the sum for him he is *wholly* freed from the debt. But, if his friend pays only 50*l.*, the man would not be free, being liable for 50*l.* still. So, if the wages of sin be Eternal Torment, and Christ died without suffering *that*, man would be amenable to it still. "And, if Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain."⁶ Blessed be God, "Christ *hath*

¹ John x. 17, 18.² John v. 26.³ 1 Cor. xv. 17, 18.⁴ Heb. ii. 9.⁵ Heb. xi. 17—19.⁶ 1 Cor. xv. 14.

redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us : for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree."¹ "For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."² So far, therefore, from the Wages of Sin being Death, and not Eternal Torment, in any way *lowering* our views of the Atonement, I do not hesitate to say that it *greatly exalts* them, and is the only Scriptural solution of the case.

Before leaving this part of the subject, I would refer to the case of Infants. It is written, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men, for that (in whom, εἶς ὁ) all have sinned : for until the law sin was in the world : but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come."³ If this death, consequent upon Adam's sin, brings, according to the orthodox theory, Eternal Torment, unless averted by faith in Christ, then, it necessarily follows, *that all Infants will be eternally tormented*, as they died *without faith*. In order to counteract in some degree this terrible consequence, and, at the same time, to exalt the power of their Church, Romanists invented the fiction of Baptismal Regeneration, by which they said that those Infants which were baptized by their priests would be saved. Calvinists, in this matter, more unscrupulous than the Romanists, boldly referred it to the *Decrees of God*, declaring that it was His purpose that a certain number of those who had never actually sinned, but had only sin imputed to them through Adam's transgression, would be tormented for ever ! Hence the well-known saying, "There is many an infant, a span long, in hell." Evangelicals, writhing under this difficulty, know not what to do, as they like neither the Baptismal Regeneration of the Romanists, nor the "horrible decree"⁴ of Calvin. For the most part they try to find a shelter under a kind of modified Popery, by having their Infants sprinkled by their ministers, and hoping that God is not so cruel as their creed.

Let us see to what conclusions this theory leads. It either, by Baptismal Regeneration, puts the salvation of Infants in the hands of an earthly priesthood ; or, by the decrees of Reprobation, it sup-

¹ Gal. iii. 13, compare with Deut. xxi. 23. ² Heb. x. 14. ³ Rom. v. 12—14.

⁴ Calvin himself, treating of Predestination, confesses, "*Horribile decretum fateor.*"

poses God to be the most unjust Being in existence, in inflicting eternal suffering on those "that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression;" or it compels the orthodox at least to hope, if not actually to acknowledge, that Death does NOT bring ENDLESS MISERY to a LARGE PORTION of the human family. Thus, the Scriptural statement, "The Wages of Sin is Death,"¹ has TWO VERY DIFFERENT MEANINGS in the orthodox system of theology: in the case of impenitent Adults it is supposed to signify *Eternal Life in Torment*, and in that of Infants simply *Natural Death*. But there is no warrant whatever in Scripture for *this ecclesiastical distinction*, which is only made to meet the exigencies of popular belief. Mr. Hunt, the author of "*Religious Thought in England*," incidentally remarks, in an article in the *Contemporary Review* for February:—"The announcement to Adam simply was that if he sinned he should die. To have extracted from this, that he and his posterity were to suffer endless life in hell, must have required the ingenuity of a theologian."

God said, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,"² literally, dying thou shalt die, מוֹת תָּמוּת. Man ate, and immediately died in spirit. He lost his πνεῦμα, and with it all fellowship with that which is divine. His eyes were opened, he knew that he was naked, and sought to hide himself from God amid the trees of the garden. His physical or animal life, ψυχὴ, still survived, but the process of decay began, which in course of time resulted in the death of the body (σῶμα), and would have eventually terminated, but for the interposition of God in giving Christ, in the total extinction of being. "When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth Death."³ "The soul that sinneth, it shall die;"⁴ that is, the unrepenting sinner shall incur not only the death of the *body*, to which saints as well as sinners are liable, but the death of the *soul*, the *Second Death*, by which saints will not be hurt.⁵ Thus Jesus gave that most solemn warning, "Fear Him which is able TO DESTROY BOTH SOUL AND BODY IN HELL,"⁶ καὶ ψυχὴν καὶ σῶμα ἀπολέσαι ἐν γέεννῃ. So far from Infants being *eternally tormented*, they are exempted, through the Atonement, even from *destruction*, for our Blessed Lord expressly declared of them, "Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones

¹ Rom. vi. 23. ² Gen. ii. 17. ³ James i. 15. ⁴ Ezek. xviii. 20. ⁵ Rev. ii. 11.

⁶ Matt. x. 28.

should perish.”¹ “For of such is the Kingdom of God.”² The more I consider the subject the more do I wonder how any real Christian, with the Bible in his hands, and common sense in his head, can believe in such an unscriptural and untenable doctrine as the sin of Adam involving Eternal Torment.

¹ Matt. xviii. 14. ² Mark x. 14.

SECTION VI.

THE ARGUMENT FROM POPULATION.

THE Population of the world was lately estimated at one thousand, two hundred and eighty-eight millions, of which, in rough numbers, there were reckoned to be as follows :—

Protestants	89,000,000
Roman Catholics	170,000,000
Greek Church	76,000,000
Jews	5,000,000
Mohammedans	160,000,000
Heathen	788,000,000

Total..... 1,288,000,000.

Of this number it will at once be seen what a small proportion are even *professing* Christians, while those, who are savingly converted, may be supposed to be a mere fraction of the whole. It is calculated that more than one person dies every second, over 4,000 every hour, and about 100,000 every day. The vast majority of the human race are, after death, according to the orthodox theology, abandoned to the Devil, to share with him “the pains of hell for ever.” Protestants are apt to express their surprise at the credulity of Roman Catholics in believing the dogmas of Purgatory, Transubstantiation, the Pope’s Infallibility, and the Immaculate Conception, but the belief in such is a mere trifle in comparison with their own in the doctrine of Eternal Torment ; “they strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.”¹ The belief of the former shows want of head, but of the latter want of heart, in supposing the good and holy God to be capable of permitting such unparalleled horrors. To a man who *thinks*, and whose feelings have not been *utterly blunted* by it, this doctrine is appallingly awful, as he attempts to picture the untold millions that have

¹ Matt. xxiii. 24.

already passed away, and the tens of thousands that are daily passing away, into the place of torment, to blaspheme God throughout eternal ages. Even Dr. W. Archer Butler, one of the ablest defenders of the orthodox system, thus writes on this point :—

“ Were it possible for man’s imagination to conceive the horrors of such a doom as this, all reasoning about it were at an end ; it would scorch and wither all the powers of human thought. Human life were at a stand could these things be really felt as they deserve. Even for him who can humbly trust himself, comparatively secure in faith and obedience, were the thin veil of this shadowy life suddenly undrawn, and these immortal agonies, that never-dying death, made known in the way of direct perception,—and those, it may be, that such a one, with the keen sympathies so characteristic of the Christian, loves and values, seen to be at last among the victims of that irreparable doom,—can we doubt that he would come forth with intellect blanched and idealess, from a sight too terrible for any whose faculties are not in the scale of eternity itself ? It is God’s mercy that we can believe what adequately to conceive were death.”¹

Can such a dogma BE TRUE ? If, even to those who believe it, the adequate conception of it would be death, I think it is evident that IT CANNOT COME FROM GOD. Jesus said to His Disciples, “ Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.”² But this doctrine represents the Blessed God of Love to be *without any mercy whatever*. The author of it is Satan, the father of lies, who contradicted God’s word of truth by saying, “ Ye shall NOT surely die.”³

How persons holding the doctrine of Eternal Torment can *ever marry* shows to what a degree of callousness they have come, that they can thus willingly enter into a state in which they may beget children, the probability of whose salvation, judging from the preceding statistics, is so exceedingly small in comparison with the probability of their being eternally tormented. It discloses a phase of human selfishness altogether without parallel. “ If the case of the man be so with *his* wife, it is not good to marry.”⁴ But God declares, “ *It is not good that the man should be alone,*”⁵ that “ marriage is honourable in all ;”⁶ and He said to Noah, *after the earth had been cursed*, “ Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.”⁷ Can any sane person really imagine that the Just and Good God, unto whom are known, “ All His works from the beginning of the world,”⁸ would thus have spoken had mortal man

¹ Sermons, Second Series, p. 383. ² Luke vi. 36. ³ Gen. iii. 4. ⁴ Matt. xix. 10. ⁵ Gen. ii. 18. ⁶ Heb. xiii. 4. ⁷ Gen. ix. 1. ⁸ Acts xv. 18.

been capable of begetting immortal beings, by far the greater portion of whom would be tormented throughout eternity? Impossible! He knew that the stream cannot rise above its source, that the like begets its like, each seed its own seed, "neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."¹ He knew that IN HIMSELF ALONE IS ESSENTIAL IMMORTALITY,² and that no man can ever be immortal by NATURAL GENERATION, that to become so he "MUST BE BORN AGAIN,"³ "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."⁴ "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."⁵

I am disposed to think that no person in existence *actually believes* in the doctrine of endless suffering. The real conception of such a fearful state would be too much for human nature to sustain. The shrieks of despair of most of our dead relatives would, in imagination, be continually sounding in our ears, and the agonies expected soon to befall many of our living friends, if not ourselves, would sap every thought of joy. Men, if they *really* believed it, would become either blaspheming infidels or raving maniacs. They may *subscribe* to it with their hands, and *suppose* that they believe it with their minds, but, in their *heart of hearts*, they give their creed the lie. This is, indeed, evident from the fact that no one can bear to *think or speak about it*; and, when death removes those who never showed a spark of religion while they lived, their relatives at once dismiss the idea that *they* have gone to endless misery; they try to remember some good deed done, or kind word spoken, and hope that, in *their* case, God will be more merciful than their theology allows. They cannot endure the thought that *their own* fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, children, or friends should be tormented for ever and ever in the flames of an unquenchable fire. And no wonder that people have such hopes; they are most natural. God has so constituted the heart that it has a deep sympathy for human suffering, and an innate sense of His justice, and, as the Poet says:—

"One touch of nature makes the whole world kin."

I well know that Peter Lombard and others of his stamp have *said*, though I can scarcely believe they *thought* so, that the torments of the damned will heighten the bliss of the redeemed; but I

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 50. ² 1 Tim. vi. 16. ³ John iii. 7. ⁴ John i. 13. ⁵ John iii. 6.

believe such a statement to be a most atrocious slander against both God and man. The joys of heaven will not harden, but soften the heart; and, to know that our relatives were enduring torment while we were enjoying bliss, would change our love of God into hatred, and make of Heaven a Hell.

“ Were I a soul in heaven,
Afar from pain,
Yea, on Thy breast of snow,
At the scream of one below
I should scream again ;
Art Thou less piteous than
The conception of a man ?”

R. BUCHANAN.

SECTION VII.

THE ARGUMENT FROM SIN CONSIDERED AS AN INFINITE EVIL, AND FROM THE DIVINE JUSTICE.

THE Argument from Sin considered as an Infinite Evil is frequently brought forward, and has derived some notoriety from its having been used by a great and good man, Dr. Jonathan Edwards. Without the sanction of such a name it is doubtful whether it would have survived an hour, as, in itself, it is worthless. It may be stated thus:—Sin is an Infinite Evil, because it is committed against an Infinite Being; therefore it deserves Infinite Torment. In a similar manner it might be argued:—Good Works are an Infinite Merit, because they are done toward an Infinite Being; therefore they deserve Infinite Reward. The reasoning is just as fallacious in the one case as in the other.

It is, indeed, true that Sin is the greatest evil which attaches to responsible creatures, but that it is *infinite* is a gross misconception, because it is committed *in time*, which bears no proportion to ETERNITY. Dr. Southwood Smith justly remarks as follows:—

“Besides, were sin an infinite evil, there could be no degree in transgression: for when speaking of infinity, it is absurd to talk of greater or less. All human actions, therefore—all the language of mankind—all laws, human and Divine—and all punishments—contradict this opinion: for they all proceed upon the principle that some crimes are of greater magnitude than others. We know, too, the Deity distinguishes in the most exact manner between different offences; that He apportioned to each an equitable degree of punishment, and that he who has sinned greatly shall be beaten with many, and he who has offended less with fewer stripes.”¹

Let me ask you a question. There is evidently a *proportion* between the many and few stripes;² if it requires Eternity to inflict the *many*, should it not require *less* than Eternity to inflict the *few*? You may say, perhaps, the stripes in the one case may

¹ The Divine Government, 5th Ed., p. 190. Trübner and Co., London.

² Luke xii. 47, 48.

be given *more frequently* than in the other, while Eternity is the same to each; but, I reply, What proportion can *few* bear to *Eternity*? If *one* stripe only were given in a million of years, the stripes, instead of *few* would become *innumerable*, for a million of years, in comparison with Eternity, is less than a particle of dust to the universe.

Evidently not satisfied with the argument that sin, *in this life*, is an Infinite Evil, some of the orthodox defenders of Eternal Torment suppose it would not be unjust in God to punish men for sins *committed in the next*, and, as it is presumed that they will sin there *continually*, God may justly continue to punish them there *for ever*. Dr. W. A. Butler, in his Sermons on Everlasting Punishment, Second Series, thus puts the case:—"The punishments of Hell are but the perpetual vengeance that accompanies the sins of Hell. An eternity of wickedness brings with it an eternity of woe. The sinner is to suffer for everlasting, *but it is because the sin itself is as everlasting as the suffering.*" Such reasoning reminds me of the casuistry of Fathers Bauny and Escobar,¹ but how it can satisfy any honest mind is to me a mystery indeed. It is never said in Scripture that men are to be punished for sins *committed in Hell*, but for deeds done *in* (*διά*, through, by means of) *the body, while they lived on earth*. "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me."² "Who will render to every man according to his deeds."³ "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*"⁴ I am tempted to give one extract bearing on this subject, as I consider it of great importance with reference to the character of God. It is from the masterly pen of Prebendary Constable, in his work on "The Duration and Nature of Future Punishment," which I earnestly recommend to your careful perusal:—

"No man can deny that God is able to destroy what He was able to create. No man can deny that God had a power to choose whether He would inflict death upon the sinner, or an endless life of agony. Which would He choose, the gentler or the more fearful doom? Will you say the latter? Why? There must be a reason. Is it to please Himself? He repudiates wholly this kind of character.⁵ His mode of dealing here contradicts it; where pain is sharp it is short. Is it to please His angelic or redeemed creation? They are too like Him-

¹ See Pascal's Provincial Letters.

² Matt. xxv. 45.

³ Rom. ii. 6.

⁴ 2 Cor. v. 10. ⁵ Ezek. xviii. 23.

self to take pleasure in such a course. Did no pity visit the Creator's bosom they would look up into His face and plead for mercy. Is it to terrify them from sin? Would it? What is sin? Is it not preeminently *alienation from God*? What would alienate from Him so completely as the sight or knowledge of such a hell as Tertullian taught? Pity, horror, anguish would invade every celestial breast. Just fancy a criminal with us. He has been a great criminal. Let him be the cruel murderer; the base destroyer of woman's innocence and honour; the fiendish trafficker in the market of lust; the cold-blooded plotter for the widow or the orphan's inheritance. Let him be the vilest of the vile, on whose head curses loud and deep have been heaped. He is taken by the hand of justice. All rejoice. He is put to death! No. That is thought too light a punishment by the ruler of the land. He is put into a dungeon, deprived of all but the necessities of existence, tortured by day and by night; guarded lest his own hand should rid him of a miserable life; and this is to go on till nature thrusts within the prison bars an irresistible hand, and frees him from his existence. Now, what would be the effect on the community at such a course? The joy at the criminal's overthrow, once universal, would rapidly change into pity, into indignation, into horror, into the wild uprising of an outraged nation to rescue the miserable man from a tyrant, and to hurl the infamous abuser of law and power from his seat. And this is but the faintest image of what a cruel theology would have us to believe of God! Nature steps in in the one case, and says there shall be an end. Omnipotence, in the other, puts its might to stay all such escape. *For ever and for ever!* Millions of years of torment gone, and yet torment no nearer its close! Not one, but myriads to suffer thus! Their endless cries! Their ceaseless groans! Their interminable despair! Why, heaven, and earth, and stars in their infinite number—all worlds that roll through the great Creator's space—would raise an universal shout of horror at such a course. Love for God would give way to hatred. Apostasy would no longer be partial but universal. All would stand aloof in inexpressible loathing from the tyrant on the throne—for a worse than Manicheism pictured would be seated there—the *One Eternal Principle would be the Principle of Evil.*¹

¹ Longmans and Co. 2d Edition, p. 68.

SECTION VIII.

THE ARGUMENT FROM ANCIENT OPINION.

A FRIEND of mine, whom I greatly love and esteem, while lately speaking of the Non-Eternity of Future Torment, remarked to the following effect : How can I believe this new doctrine, while so many of God's dear people do not ? This is but the old question in a new form—"Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him ?" ¹ On this principle Jesus need never have taught at Jerusalem, nor Paul preached at Antioch, nor Luther proclaimed his propositions at Wittenburg. I do not wish to give offence, but truth compels me to say that to call this doctrine *new* only betrays ignorance. It is at least as old as Eden. Like hidden memorials of the past, it has been long concealed beneath the rubbish of tradition, but every now and then it has been sought for and found ; and, especially in these last days, many a faithful worker is striving diligently to bring it to light, in order that its true, unvarnished testimony may gladden the mourning heart, and enable the troubled mind,

"To vindicate Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to man."

It would be impossible, in a Letter like this, to go fully into the opinions of the Ancients on this subject. Such would, indeed, be *interesting*, but, after all, it could *decide* nothing, for it is not the opinion of men, but the Word of God, which can alone settle this solemn question. A few general remarks, however, may not be out of place.

The Jews, before and about the time of our Lord, held that they, as a nation, with the exception of a few Apostates, go at death to a place of peace, called Abraham's bosom, and that the pious among the nations would have a share with them in the world to come, לעולם הבא : the rest of the Gentiles, generally, would, after suffering great torments, be CUT OFF and PERISH in

¹ John vii. 48.

their sins. Thus the Hilcoth T'shuvah, c. iii., expresses as follows : " All Israel has a share in the world to come, . . . and also the pious of the nations of the world have a share in the world to come. . . . These are they who have no part in the world to come, but who are cut off and perish, and are condemned, on account of the greatness of their wickedness and sin, for ever, even for ever and ever, the heretics, and the Epicureans, and the deniers of the law," &c.¹

The Christians of the First and the greater part of the Second Century held the Apostolic doctrine of Immortality only through Christ, but by degrees, as the love of the Church began to grow cold, the philosophy of Plato crept in, till at last the endless hell of Tertullian and Augustine was built over the ruins of the truth. The following table, taken from Prebendary Constable's excellent work already referred to, p. 79, shows at a glance the relative antiquity of the three great theories of Immortality only through Christ, Eternal Life in Torment, and Universal Restoration :—

<i>Eternal Death.</i>		<i>Eternal Life in Pain.</i>	<i>Universal Restoration.</i>
<i>Died A. D.</i>		<i>Died A. D.</i>	<i>Died A. D.</i>
Barnabas	90		
Clemens Romanus ...	100		
Hermas	104		
Ignatius Martyr ...	107		
Polycarp Martyr ...	147		
Justin Martyr	164	The Forger of the Clementina and Recognitions of Clement.	
Theophilus of Antioch	183	Athenagoras ²	190
Irenæus Martyr ...	202	Tatian	200
Clemens Alexandrinus	212	Tertullian	235
			Origen 253

" In the accuracy of the table appended we fully believe : for its substantial truth we are ready to contend : and we challenge any gainsayer to controvert it. The dates given for the death of each Father are, of course, only vouched for as the most probable approximation to truth. Exactitude is now unattainable. From the above table we see how comparatively late the theory of Augustine appears in the Patristic writings, while that of Origen is later still. That blank space between them and the primitive truth is fatal to both."

¹ Quoted from No. 1 of the late Dr. M'Caul's splendid work, "The Old Paths."

² I am inclined to suppose that the Prebendary grants even too much in placing this Father in the second column.

I subjoin a few testimonies gathered from the writings of the early Fathers, which are valuable as showing what their thoughts were respecting Immortality, which they considered to be attainable only through Christ :—

BARNABAS.

“Who is there that would *live for ever* !—Let him hear the voice of *my Son*.”—*Epis.*, c. 9.

CLEMENT OF ROME.

“How wonderful are the *gifts* of God! *Life in Immortality*, splendour in righteousness, faith in assurance, self-control in holiness!”—*1st Epis.*, c. 35.

HERMAS.

“All who will not repent have *lost their life*—they shall *utterly die*.”—*The Shepherd*, iii.

IGNATIUS.

“For this end did the Lord suffer the ointment to be poured upon His head, that He might *breathe Immortality into His Church*.”—*Epis. to Eph.*, c. 17.

POLYCARP.

“If we please Him in this world, we shall obtain the *coming one also*, as He hath promised to *raise us from the dead*.”—*Epis. to Phil.*, c. 5.

JUSTYN MARTYR.

“Our Jesus Christ, having been crucified and dead, arose, and, having gone to heaven, now reigns—the joy of those *who wait for the Immortality announced by Him*.”—*Apol. I.*, c. 42.

THEOPHILUS OF ANTIOCH.

“Death was sent as a benefit to Adam, that he might not continue for ever existent in sin. Like a vessel marred and re-cast, so it happens to man through death. For he is broken that he may be found sound at the resurrection,—spotless, just and *immortal*.”—*B. II.*, 26.

IRENÆUS.

“He who shall preserve the life bestowed upon him, and give thanks to Him who imparted it, shall receive *also length of days for ever and ever*. . . . But he who shall reject it, and prove himself ungrateful to his Maker, deprives himself of continuance for ever and ever.”—*Treatise against Heretics, B. II.*, Sec. 3.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA.

“We have put aside the old man, and have put on the *Immortality of Christ*. . . . We are brought into union with Christ through His blood, by which we are redeemed; and *into Immortality* through His guidance. The spiritual communion of faith . . . drawing off the lusts of the flesh, *commits man to eternity* along with those who are divine, *immortalizing him*.”—*The Pædagogus, I.*, 6.

For the most complete view of the opinions of Ancient Jewish Belief, and the Christian Writings of the First Two Centuries, I refer you to the very able work, (already mentioned),¹ of Mr. Deniston, who has gone into the subject in a scholarly manner, and whose remarks are well worthy of thoughtful consideration.

¹ P. 11.

SECTION IX.

THE ARGUMENT FROM IMMORALITY, SUPPOSED TO FOLLOW FROM PREACHING THE NON-ETERNITY OF TORMENT.

SOME have thought that, if the Eternity of Hell Torments be not preached, one of the great incentives to lead men to repentance, namely, the fear of consequences, would be taken away, and that they would plunge recklessly into all kinds of wickedness. The same argument was used when Luther preached Justification by faith alone: then, it was said, if man can be saved without works, they will do all manner of evil. The very reverse of this was found to be the result in actual experience. Moreover, those saved sought to lead a holy life, saying, like Paul, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"¹ The truth is, that it is Love, not Fear, which is the Gospel's great motive power: "On earth peace, goodwill toward men:"² "God so loved the world:"³ "We love Him, because He first loved us."⁴ Fear, for the most part, only repels, it cannot attract. Love begets love, it "is the fulfilling of the law."⁵

The dogma of Eternal Suffering has now been taught for over 1,600 years, but it does not seem to have had much success in improving the morals of mankind. Some ministers occasionally give their people what is conventionally termed, "A good shaking over Hellfire," by depicting the horrors of the damned, with all the exuberance of a Dantean imagination, a few specimens of which were given in Section II. of this Letter. Such declamations may perhaps frighten some of their more sensitive hearers at the time, but the impression soon wears away, as further reflection shows their unreasonable absurdity. As for the great mass of the people, they

¹ Rom. vi. 1, 2. ² Luke ii. 14. ³ John iii. 16. ⁴ 1 John iv. 19. ⁵ Rom. xiii. 10.

will not come to hear such sermons at all; either their better feelings reject such an outrage on the character of God, whom they say is not half so bad as the parsons make Him out to be, or they turn away, with hatred and disgust, from a Being who is represented to be so merciless and unjust. The tendency of such preaching is not to Christianity but to Infidelity; it is too horrible for belief, and defeats the object intended. The Missions to the Heathen have been attended with comparatively small results, but how could it be otherwise with such a garbled gospel preached? Meetings have lately been held in London to consider the reasons why the working classes do not attend Church or Chapel. I believe it is the doctrine of Eternal Torment, which is *the great stumbling-block*, and it is true now, as Isaac Taylor said long ago, "At this moment we may be quite sure, that no scheme of religious belief will be able to hold its footing abroad in the world, or beyond the walls of closets and salons, which does not in some intelligible and coherent manner, make provision for securing our peace of mind in regard to the present lot, and to the prospects of the human family."

In comparing the sermons of our Lord, Peter and Paul, with those of some of our favourite Evangelists, we cannot but be struck with their *great difference*. In the calm declarations of the former there is *not one allusion* to man's Natural Immortality, nor to the eternal pains of Hell,¹ which too frequently constitute the prominent topics of the discourses of our modern preachers. Why is this? Simply because the former proclaimed the gospel in its *purity*, and the latter preach it *adulterated with the traditions of men*. The consequence is—much wasted effort, and most painful failure, both at home and abroad. Nor can we expect anything else, till Evangelists retrace their steps, and preach only those Scriptural truths which were once delivered unto the saints. Professor Barlow, in his admirable Essay, "Eternal Punishment and Eternal Death,"² has some weighty remarks on this subject, to an extract from which I beg to call your notice:—

"All know that the sanguinary penal code of the last century operated indirectly, but powerfully, as a stimulus to crime. Witnesses would not come forward, juries refused to commit, when the result of their action would be the sacrifice of the life of a fellow-creature for a trifling offence. Severity of punish-

¹The *apparent* exceptions have been already treated in Section IV.

²Longmans and Co., chapter vii.

ment, therefore, defeated its own end, by annexing a sort of security to crime, and thus removing the principal restraining force—certainty of retribution. Now, although no such mode of evasion can avail the sinner, when he stands before the Judge at the penal assize, where no subordinate agencies, open to the weakness of human sympathies, can intervene in the arrest of judgment; yet, in this case also, the severity of the penalty denounced, very often produces, though in quite a different way, precisely the same practical effect. The train of thought by which, by the dogma of *eternal* punishment, the sinner deduces the conclusion, that he shall escape *all* punishment, is short and simple. He may be aware that the load which rests upon him is great and terrible, but still he feels that no amount of private sin can *justly* render him liable to infinite punishment. And the voice of conscience within him, in spite of every theologian, loudly proclaims that the Judge at whose bar he is about to stand, is just. Feeling then, and rightly feeling, that the infinite sentence would be unjust, and, being at the same time told by our popular theologians, that he is sure of either eternal hell or heaven, it is easy to see how hope may spring up within him, and how he may bring himself to believe that, as God is surely just, and hell eternal, and, as bad though he may be, he does not deserve *eternal* punishment, he may be admitted to heaven after all."

If Evangelists preached that the wages of sin were Death, and the gift of God Eternal Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, that God is not only good but Just, and will punish men, according to their sins, with many or few stripes, and that, unless they repent, they will, after the Judgment, be cast into the Lake of Fire to be destroyed, people would be more ready to understand and believe such teaching, because it would recommend itself as being equitable and right. But, to say that the sins of a short life, many of them aggravated by circumstances beyond control, are to be visited with the pains of *Eternal* Torment, so shocks all sense of justice, that the message is rejected with contempt, and, what is meant to be a warning, is felt to be no warning at all.

SECTION X.

THE ARGUMENT FROM THE ORIGIN OF EVIL.

THE defenders of Eternal Suffering, being obliged to acknowledge that they thereby hold the Principle of Eternal Evil, bring a sort of *argumentum ad hominem* against its opponents, by saying—the difficulty is not the *Eternity* of Evil, but the *existence* of Evil at all, and, as it *does* exist, it *may* exist for ever. The answer to this is easily given. Although the *kind* may be the same, there is a vast difference in *degree*, between a grain of sand in the eye, and the innumerable grains on the sea-shore ; but, infinitely greater still, is the difference between Evil as a *passing circumstance*, and Evil as an *eternal condition*, because the one is a thing of *Time*, and the other is a thing of *Eternity*.

The Origin of Evil is a question which has for ages exercised the thoughts of angels and of men ; and, from its very nature, will never probably be fully apprehended by any but the infinite intelligence of God Himself. The famous argument of Epicurus, as given by Lactantius, is as follows :—

“The supposed Deity and maker of the world was either willing to abolish all evils but not able ; or He was able but not willing ; or thirdly, He was neither willing nor able ; or else lastly, He was both able and willing. This latter is the only thing that answers fully to the notion of a God. Now that the supposed Creator of all things was not thus both able and willing to abolish all evils is plain, because then there would have been no evils at all left. Wherefore, since there is such a deluge of evils overflowing all, it must needs be that either He was able and not willing to remove them, and then He was impotent ; or else He was able and not willing, and then He was envious ; or lastly, He was neither able nor willing, and then He was both impotent and envious.”¹

This argument is unanswerable by those who hold the common theory of the Eternity of Evil, for, in such case, God would either be unwilling, from want of goodness, or unable, from want of

¹ De Ira Dei, cap. 13, p. 942, Ed. Walchii.

power, to make Evil to cease. Either, therefore, His *Love*, or *Power* must be sacrificed to meet the requirements of the popular doctrine.

The ancient Persians, strong in their conviction of the essential goodness of the Deity, and that evil was altogether inconsistent with His character, acknowledged two Gods, Oromasdes and Arimanius, the Good and the Evil, and, in later times, the Manichæans asserted the same principles. And, it must be confessed, that such thoughts, *apart from revelation*, and judging merely from outward circumstances, are by no means unnatural. Indeed, "the world by wisdom, knew not God,"¹ and it is only through His own Word, that His character can be rightly known. It has been suggested, and, it appears to me, with every probability of truth, that it was in order to counteract the false idea respecting these two opposing principles of Good and Evil, that God thus revealed himself in the two following passages of Scripture; namely, "*There is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.*"² Again, "Shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?"³

The freedom of the Will is an undoubted fact, else the creature, whether angel or man, would be a mere machine, an irresponsible agent; but, that that freedom is mysteriously controlled, without its being seemingly touched, is another truth also indisputable. How to reconcile these two apparent contradictions is, at least in this life, impossible. But, though such be beyond our philosophy, the fact is proved by passages such as the following:—"But as for you, ye thought evil against me; *but* God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as *it is* this day, to save much people alive:"⁴ "And truly the Son of Man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom He is betrayed!"⁵ "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."⁶ Dr. Jonathan Edwards, in his Treatise on the Freedom of the Will,⁷ has some just remarks on this point to which I would direct attention:—

"There is no inconsistency in supposing that God may hate a thing as it is in itself, and considered simply as evil, and yet that it may be His will it should come to pass, considering all consequences. I believe there is no person of good understanding who will venture to say he is certain it is impossible it should be

¹ 1 Cor. i. 21. ² Isa. v. 6, 7. ³ Amos iii. 6. ⁴ Gen. i. 20. ⁵ Luke xxii. 22. ⁶ Acts ii. 23. ⁷ Part IV., Sec. IX.

best, taking in the whole compass, and extent of existence, and all consequences in the endless series of events, that there should be such a thing as moral evil in the world. And, if so, it will certainly follow, that an infinitely wise Being who always chooses what is best, must choose that there should be such a thing ; and, if so, then such a choice is not evil, but a wise and holy choice, and, if so, then that providence which is agreeable to such a choice, is a wise and holy providence. Men do will sin as sin, and so are the authors and actors of it ; they love it as sin, and for evil ends and purposes. God does not will sin as sin, or for the sake of anything evil ; though it be his pleasure to order things, that the permitting sin will come to pass ; for the sake of the great good that by His disposal shall be the consequence. His willing to order things so that evil should come to pass, for the sake of the contrary good, is no argument that He does not hate evil as evil ; and, if so, then it is no reason why He may not reasonably forbid evil as evil, and punish it as such."

Turnbull, in his "Christian Philosophy," p. 35, quoted by Edwards, in corroboration of the above extract, writes to similar effect :—

"If the Author and Governor of all things be infinitely *perfect*, then, whatever is, is right ; of all possible systems He hath chosen the *best*, and, consequently, there is *no absolute evil* in the universe. This being the case, all the seeming *imperfections* or *evils* in it are such only in a *partial* view ; and, with respect to the *whole* system, they are *goods*."

The fact of evil existing *only for a time*, if it be over-ruled for good, and finally put away, does not militate against the character of God ; but were it to exist *throughout Eternity*, it would be wholly irreconcilable with His character ; for, in that case, it would show either want of Love in God *in willing* its continuance, or want of Power in Him *to prevent* its continuance. Indeed, the real question at issue seems to be, not, Will Evil be Eternal, to which an answer in the affirmative appears too extravagant for intelligent belief, so much as,—Will impenitent creatures be ultimately Destroyed or Restored ? To a benevolent mind, especially to one who loves much, because much has been forgiven, there is something very fascinating in the theory of Universal Restoration, especially as it seems to harmonize with the gracious character of God. We must remember, however, that God is not only Good, but Just ; not only Love, but a "Consuming Fire."¹ The revulsion of feeling from the horrible dogma of Eternal Torment is so great, that it is apt to go the opposite extreme,

"Vaulting ambition overleaps itself,
And falls on the other side."

¹ Heb. xii. 29.

This is a question to be decided by the Scriptures only. In my own investigations of them, I find certain passages announcing Destruction to the finally impenitent in a manner, which, to my mind, affords no hope of reprieve for those who will be adjudged to the SECOND DEATH. I think I see, however, a glimpse of the silver lining which shines beyond the cloud of the FIRST Death, and am inclined to believe that, while Restoration will *not* be universal, *Salvation will be far more extensive* than is generally supposed. I cannot venture at present to enter upon this great subject. I feel that it requires still further prayerful and patient examination, but, I hope, if the Lord will, to give, on another occasion, what appears to me to be the *Scriptural* solution of the grand problem—What is to become of Man ?

Never have I felt so much as now the exceeding value of the Holy Scriptures. They are a perfect mine of spiritual and intellectual wealth, and, the deeper they are searched, the more riches will be found. Those, who tread only the surface of the earth, know little of the priceless treasures that are hidden underneath.

In examining the subject of the Origin of Evil, it seems to me that, *in a state of probation*, wherever there is the freedom of the Will, there must be *the possibility of sin*, for, were it not so, the creature would be as infallible and unchangeable as the Creator, which would involve an absurdity.

“To err is human, to forgive divine.”

But the freedom of the Will is God's highest natural gift to the creature. *Without it there would be no true worship*, for worship, to be acceptable, must be *free*. “The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth : for the Father *seeketh* such to worship Him.”¹ O, the depth of the meaning comprehended in the word “*seeketh*,” as used in this passage ! It shows that The Infinite One hath a want to be supplied, not indeed for His own sake, as in Himself He is perfect, but for ours. He is Love, and He knows that it is only in Himself that the creature can be truly happy, so he yearns over us with sympathetic heart, that we, in willing, spiritual adoration, may draw near to Him, and drink, out of His own deep well, the living water springing up into everlasting life. God, therefore, foreknowing all things, *chose the best*. He gave the freedom of the will, with the possibility of

¹ John iv. 23.

sin, being certain, that, by the developement of Himself as Love, through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, He would bring every repenting sinner to Himself, while those not finally repenting would perish, through their own sin and folly, having refused to come to Him that they might have life.¹

God might, of course, had He pleased, have made men as mere animals, without a reasoning mind; and, in this case, sin would have been impossible, for they would have had no law, and "where no law is, *there is* no transgression;"² but then there would have been no revelation of Himself as Love. Man would have had no sin, but, it is equally true, he would have had no Saviour. The award of Matt. xxv. 34—40 would become an impossibility; for without sin, neither hunger nor thirst, nor nakedness, nor sickness, nor prison, could have existed; and, it is by their loving ministrations to such as are suffering under these effects of sin, that Jesus says to the righteous, "Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done *it* unto me." Even in natural things we see the use of Evil. For example, hunger is painful, and therefore evil; but, were it not for the feeling of hunger, we should soon die, for we would not know when to eat—and so in many other cases. Sin is but a parenthesis which comes in by the way—a passing episode in creation's unfinished history—it is the dark cloud which will be dispelled, when the Sun of Righteousness shall "arise with healing in His wings!"³ it is the scaffolding which will be removed when the building of God has been completed.

I have said more on this subject than I intended, but I was anxious to prove to the objector that Sin *may*—yea, actually *does*—exist without its being in any degree derogatory to the character of God. It is not the *Temporary*, but the *Eternal*, existence of Evil, which defies reconciliation with His character as revealed to us in the Scriptures. The difficulty, therefore, which the objector raised recoils upon himself; it is for him to prove that the character of God would not be affected by *the Eternity of Evil*, but to do so is a moral impossibility.

¹ John v. 40; Luke xiii. 3—5. ² Rom. iv. 15. ³ Mal. iv. 2.

SECTION XI.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

LIFE and Death are mysteries. They are inexplicable, but they are facts. Like almost everything in Nature their cause eludes our grasp. Philosophy makes deductions, but it seldom renders reasons. It is astonishing how little is really *known*. The life in a seed, the death of a fly, are both alike beyond our comprehension. The wisest, as Newton beautifully remarked, is but as a child gathering pebbles on the beach, while the undiscovered ocean lies beyond. In our search for truth, therefore, it becomes us to be *very humble*, and to have a mind *willing* to be taught. "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak."¹ "And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."² For my own part, I have learned little but the knowledge of my own ignorance. Much that once appeared to me to be true I have been compelled, on deeper investigation, to reject as false; and now, after years of study, I just feel myself to be—

"An infant crying in the night,
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry."

Do not be stumbled, dear Christian Friends, at the mystery of Death. Accept the fact: all is ordered well. The primeval rocks and the modern cemetery attest the same tale. Life is everywhere, in and on the earth, the sea, the air—and so is death. It follows it as its shadow. There is a great redundancy of the principle of life; of all animal and vegetable seed but a small portion is quickened—the larger part never reaches maturity at all, although its capability of living is not less. No one is hurt, no injustice is committed thereby—an analogy, by the way, against Universal Restoration. The law of Life, in *natural* generation, sooner or later, is Death. Sin, as an offshoot from natural life, and pain, as the fruit of sin, cannot last for ever. "The end of those things is Death;"³ and Death itself will at last be swallowed up in victory,⁴ לִנְצוֹחַ, for ever, entirely.

¹ Jam. i. 19.

² 1 Cor. viii. 2.

³ Rom. vi. 21.

⁴ Isa. xxv. 8.

Whence, then, Immortality for man? It is only through JESUS CHRIST, the Way, the Truth, and the Life.¹ "God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should NOT PERISH, but have EVERLASTING LIFE."² "He that hath the SON HATH LIFE; and he that hath not the Son of God HATH NOT LIFE."³ Christ did not come, as theologians often tell us, to *appease the wrath* of an offended God. He came to *exhibit the grace* of a loving Father. It was the Father who sent the Son;⁴ it was the Son who came to do the Father's will;⁵ "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."⁶ God's great controversy is with Sin as Sin; it is that which His holy nature abhors. For wise purposes He permits its continuance for a season; but, when the end is served, it will be abrogated for ever. Infinite was the sacrifice required, even the death of His Beloved Son, to effect this object; but it was made, and made freely.⁷ Our Blessed Saviour died upon the cross. "He appeared to PUT AWAY SIN by the sacrifice of Himself."⁸ "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same; that, through Death, He MIGHT DESTROY HIM that hath the power of Death; that is, THE DEVIL."⁹ For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, THAT HE MIGHT DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL."¹⁰

The doctrine of Eternal Evil is repugnant to every thought of love, antagonistic to every idea of what is right. Most Christians are, for the sake of their own peace, only too well aware of this; but, instead of searching for themselves, to discover whether or not this popular theory is founded on Scripture, they fly from its consideration, and bury their thoughts in tradition, as the ostrich tries to evade pursuit by hiding its head in the sand. In my own personal intercourse with several of late, I have found exact confirmation of this remark. When I have brought home to their minds some faint conception of what Eternity means, and asked them if the Good and Just Creator can, without contradiction of His character, adjudge unnumbered millions of His creatures—many of whom died young, and never even clearly heard the Gospel—to suffer intense agonies throughout unending ages, they have either gone away sorrowful, without attempting to reply, or have implored me to cease, as they cannot bear to think of such an awful subject. David said, "Oh, how I love Thy law! It is my

¹ John xiv. 6. ² John iii. 16. ³ 1 John v. 12. ⁴ John v. 23, 24, 30—38.

⁵ Heb. x. 7. ⁶ 2 Cor. v. 19. ⁷ Rom. v. 8. ⁸ Heb. ix. 26. ⁹ Heb. ii. 14. ¹⁰ 1 John iii. 8.

meditation all the day.”¹ No good man on earth dare say so with reference to the dogma of Eternal Torment. The better he is, the more he shrinks, from the very thought of such an unjust and merciless mode of treatment of the greater portion of the human race. Surely that doctrine cannot be from God, which so belies His character, and crushes out, with remorseless tyranny, the purest emotions of the Christian’s heart!

But, it may be objected, Sin still exists. It does, and will exist till the mystery of God is finished, and then the word will be accomplished, “Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.”² How could it be otherwise, seeing God is what He is, the good and omnipotent I AM? How could He permit Satan to have co-existence with Himself—the agonies of Hell to be as eternal as the joys of Heaven? Surely it is not thus that He could be All in All! The reign of Sin may appear long to us, but, in comparison with the reign of Love, it will be infinitely less than one drop of water to the illimitable ocean. The Past, the Present, and the Future meet in the Incommunicable Name, JEHOVAH: ³ God lives, as it has been not inaptly expressed, in “One Eternal Now.”⁴

Did you ever remark the imperturbable calm that pervades God’s Holy Word? There is no feverish excitement, no feeble indecision, no studied efforts to reconcile apparent contradictions; the effects of the Deluge are recorded as quietly as the death of James. Whence all this but from God’s consciousness of power, that He can make no mistakes, and orders all things well? At the Fall, He could look down the avenue of time, and predict, what it would take at least seven thousand years to accomplish, that the Seed of the Woman would bruise the Serpent’s head.⁵ He could command the childless Abraham to go forth, and look towards the countless stars of heaven, and promise to him, “So shall thy seed be.”⁶ He could inspire the mind of Paul to write, “The Last Enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* Death.”⁷

As a little child, walking with his father in the dark night, gathers strength from his firm step, and courage from his assuring

¹ Ps. cxix. 97.

² Job xxxviii. 11.

³ Such is the wonderful fulness of the Tetragrammaton יהוה, corresponding to the Greek periphrasis of Rev. i. 4, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, and thereby proving Jesus to be Jehovah.

⁴ The *Punctum stans* of the Schoolmen.

⁵ Gen. iii. 15.

⁶ Gen. xv. 5.

⁷ 1 Cor. xv. 26.

voice, so, my brother, my sister, may we, as we journey, with our Father, through the wilderness of "this present evil world."¹ "The night is far spent, the day is at hand ;"² the last river will speedily be crossed, the Morning Star will soon appear. Even now we may be comforted, as imagination pictures the resplendent beauties of our eternal home, and listens, with lingering delight, to

"The still, sweet fall of music far away,"

echoes of the luscious melodies that flow from Love's unfailling spring.

The question on the title-page of this Letter is answered—GOD IS MISUNDERSTOOD : ETERNAL EVIL IS NOT COMPATIBLE WITH THE CHARACTER OF GOD. He is not the Weak One who will permit a rival, but the Strong One who must reign Supreme. He does not promise and not perform, "for all the promises of God in Him *are* yea, and in Him Amen,"³ and at last we shall be able to say, "There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken."⁴ Two thousand five hundred years ago Isaiah prophesied that "The Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces,"⁵ and in the fulness of time this will be amply verified. In vision the Seer of Patmos saw Death and Hades cast into the Lake of Fire,⁶ and so, assuredly, the last pang of anguish, and the last utterance of Sin, will expire in the Second Death. Listen to the great voice out of heaven saying, after the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea, "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. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write : for these words are true and faithful."⁷

Dear Christian Friends, I must now conclude :

"What is writ is writ ; would it were worthier."

I have sought, however imperfectly, to help to roll away the reproach, that has so long darkened the character of our insulted

¹ Gal. i. 4.

² Rom. xiii. 12.

³ 2 Cor. i. 20.

⁴ Jos. xxi. 45.

⁵ Isa. xxv. 8.

⁶ Rev. xx. 14.

⁷ Rev. xxi. 3—5.

God, by making Him the Upholder of Eternal Evil. If, in the attempt, I have said anything to grieve any of you, forgive me, for such was unintentional; I have only meant your good. I am not aware of having made one statement which cannot be borne out by Scripture. If any of you *think* me wrong, try and *prove* me wrong: in such a subject as the one we have been considering *mere assertion* will not avail. The change in my own opinions, during the last thirty years, is the best guarantee you can have that I am at least open to conviction, for my single aim has been, and still is, to know *the Truth*, irrespective of all theories and sects of men. If, in the search, you find that *you* have been mistaken, I trust that you may faithfully confess your error, and “*be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.*”¹

With some of you I am unwilling to part, for, I feel assured, that the truths I have been endeavouring to teach have found a ready echo in your hearts. Your gentle spirits, so long weighed down by the oppressive nightmare of Eternal Evil, will awake in the sweet consciousness that the sun is shining through the window, and that the frightful dream is gone. You will now see God as you have long wished to see Him, but never could see Him before, through the gloomy mist of Traditional Theology. You will now be able to worship at His feet with a truer, higher, holier appreciation of His unchangeable Love and of His omnipotent Power. I thank God for the great privilege He has afforded to me in thus enabling me to minister to you, and if, in any way, I can be of further service, with regard to any difficulties that may still exist in your minds, I shall be happy, on your letting me know, to do my best to remove them.

And now, dear Christian Friends, I bid you all Farewell. “Let brotherly love continue;”² “God is Love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”³ “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”⁴ Amen.

I remain,

Faithfully yours in Christ, our Lord and Life,

D. WARDLAW SCOTT.

¹ 1 Pet. iii. 15. ² Heb. xiii. 1. ³ 1 John iv. 16. ⁴ 1 Thessa. v. 23.

SECTION XII.

FRAGMENTS GATHERED UP.

SINCE this Letter was sent to the press, my esteemed friend Mr. Edward White, who, for about thirty years, has, at great personal sacrifice, so ably advocated the glorious truth of Immortality through Christ only, lent me a book on that subject, which many years ago he purchased at an obscure bookstall, and which, in the good providence of God, was instrumental in changing the whole current of his life. I give the title below.¹ It was written by James Fontaine, and dedicated to Dr. Marsh, who, at the time of its publication, was Bishop of Llandaff. It is really refreshing to get the testimony of independent minds, of men who take their creed from personal study of the Bible, instead of deriving it, in the ordinary way, from tradition. God wants an honest, an intelligent, an unwavering belief—one that can enable those who hold it conscientiously to love, admire, and reverence what He teaches concerning Himself, and His manner of dealing with us. He, who has endued us with moral faculties and perceptions, never requires us to believe anything which, in its nature and results, is opposed to those principles of truth and rectitude which He has implanted, nor contrary to the Divine perfection of that character which He has drawn in the Scriptures of Himself.

As I presume it would be now exceedingly difficult to procure the book above referred to, which contains many valuable remarks, I think it may prove useful to give from it a few Fragmentary Extracts, which may perhaps either confirm what I have already stated, or supply what I may have omitted in the preceding pages. My object, in this Letter, is to throw as much light as possible on

¹ "Eternal Punishment proved to be not suffering, but privation; and Immortality dependent on Spiritual Regeneration: The whole argued on the Words and Harmony of Scripture, and embracing every Text on the subject." By a Member of the Church of England. London: J. Hatchard; and Deighton and Sons, Cambridge. 1817.

the very important question under consideration ; and I would here take the opportunity of thanking the various authors to whom I have been indebted in my own investigation of the subject.

The God of Nature and Christianity the same.

“Now if Christianity be true, the God of Nature and of Christianity must be the same. It cannot be true, therefore, if inconsistent with the Divine attributes, especially with that which is fundamental to all religion—the Divine goodness. Christianity will pass triumphantly through this test in all points but one, (the Doctrine of Eternal Misery in Hell) ; in all other respects it assumes and verifies the Divine attributes, and is the only scheme whereon they can be fully justified ; for although God has not left himself without witness, giving corn, and wine, and oil, in their seasons, yet it is the bread that came down from Heaven, it is the meat that perisheth not, that clearly vindicates Him as a righteous Governor, as a God of intellectual beings.”—Pp. 2, 3.

Importance of the Knowledge of Truth.

“The importance to us of the knowledge of truth depends exactly on our relation to the subject it concerns ; and, if it be material to us to know the relation in which we stand to our fellow-creatures, out of which arises our duties to them, it is transcendently so to know God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent, because to the highest object is united the most intimate and extensive relation. It is the noblest attainment human creatures are capable of, the most excellent gift that even Infinite Goodness can bestow. All error, therefore, in this respect, all misapprehension of God’s promises and threats, must taint and injure our whole state, and be to us matter of infinite concernment ; and as all that is estimable and lovely in human life is so, as, by being beneficial to mankind, it conduces to the honour of God, so will he be blessed in the very act who shall remove a misconception as to God’s dealings with His creatures, which, extensively prevailing, dulls in our apprehensions the lustre of His glory, and intercepts the beams that issue from Him to cheer, to animate, and to bless.”—P. 6.

Proportion between Crime and Punishment.

“The man who, with respect to human laws, should deny that there ought to be proportion between crime and punishment, would be considered an object of pity or derision ; of pity, if his faculties were so weak as not to perceive the necessity of such proportion ; of derision, if, with power to discriminate, he should fail to do it, and yet think himself qualified to discourse on the subject. Are human laws, then, more perfect than those of God ? or shall we think to vindicate the honour of God’s law by showing it to want that which is fundamental to all laws ? To enforce this by an instance : suppose a man to have been guilty in his twenty or thirty years of active life, of an accumulation of crimes, more than the history of a whole kingdom for a century would parallel,—to have spread ruin and devastation over provinces and empires,—to have been the cause of murdering, for his own immediate gratification, millions of his fellow-creatures :—as with him every act was a crime, so, if for every breath he drew a year of torment was awarded, the most vindictive would cry ‘Hold, enough !’ Six hundred millions of years would, if any duration could, expiate

even guilt like this ; and, if no duration could, what could justify the infliction ? But this is an instance of a monster in the history of the world, and the punishment is threatened not only to him, but to our next-door neighbour, and to ourselves, to all that fall short of the righteousness that shall inherit the kingdom of heaven. But the worst still remains behind ; for even to this most heavy infliction infinite misery is added. Will it be said, as by the demons of the Inquisition, ‘for the love of God’ ? Call down fire from heaven and be blameless ; but pollute not God’s holy name by ascribing to Him judgments like these.”—Pp. 12, 13.

Eternal Torment ineffectual to uphold Morality.

“To show that the doctrine is necessary to uphold morality, it must be proved that it is generally believed ; and that, where believed, it is effectual to this purpose : because, if not believed, it confirms what I have said, that it is useless. If believed, and not effectual, it is worse than useless, because it must exclude the love of God, the indispensable concomitant of spiritual life ; for, however we may in submission kiss the rod that chastens us, it must be done, I think, in the hope of conciliating the hand that guides it ; and, being the suggestion of hope, we should cease to do so when despair prevails.”—Pp. 21, 22.

Eternal Torment not the will of God.

“The highest attainment man is capable of is to resemble God. He is most like God when in all things he desires God’s will to be done :—that, being his highest attainment, is his highest duty. To desire God’s will to be done, he must know it as such. He cannot know that to be God’s will which he cannot desire ; because that cannot be man’s duty which it is impossible to perform.

“Man cannot desire God’s will to be done in all things, and yet not desire it, as to the great bulk of mankind, for the greatest duration. This argument is not founded in the ignorance of man, because it increases in strength in proportion to man’s approach to the perfection of his nature.

“The same argument may be thus stated :—

“It is man’s duty to desire God’s will to be done in all things.

“That which is his duty he must be naturally capable of performing.

“Man is incapable of desiring that the majority of his fellow-creatures should be eternally miserable in hell.

“Then it cannot be his duty to desire it.

“Then it cannot be God’s will.”—Pp. 26, 27.

Man’s Redemption evidenced by God’s Love.

“If there is any one truth in Scripture more certain than another, it is that the scheme of man’s redemption, by the sacrifice of the death of Christ, evinces the love of God towards mankind : and from the time when the sentence of death was respited in contemplation of that sacrifice, until He came on earth to complete it, it is always characterised by the Holy Spirit as good tidings of great joy to all men.—Now, if an interpretation of a particular text is offered, whereby it becomes a savour of death unto death, as to the great majority of the human race ;—if mortal, perishing man, without being made in any respect the better, is plunged into a new Styx with an opposite effect, and, instead of being made all immortal but the heel, has that lower extremity alone endued with an infinite

capacity for cursings ;—if the death of Christ turns the sentence, pronounced in mercy upon Adam's nature, 'In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,'¹ into a new grant of existence productive only of eternal, unvarying misery ;—how can it be justified, as the word of Him who cannot lie, that it is good tidings to those, who, but for it, would have known infinitely less misery both in kind and duration ?"—Pp. 30, 31.

What Man Lost.

Mat. xviii. 11.—“The Son of Man is come to save that which was *lost*.’

“What was lost ? Man's title to immortality. Christ brought life and immortality to light ; yet it is supposed all mankind are immortal, though they reject Christ, and of the flesh reap corruption.”—P. 49.

What Man Found.

John vi. 68.—“Thou hast the words of eternal life.’

“Twenty-eight times in the first six chapters of St. John, does our Saviour declare mankind can only have life by believing in Him ; yet in the face of this, a doctrine is maintained, which assumes, that men are naturally immortal.”—P. 62.

The Prophecy of Caiphas.

John xi. 49.—“Ye know nothing at all,’ &c.

“Surely the death that Christ was to die for the people, must have been the curse they were by nature subject to : the sting of it, the loss of that portion that was possessed of the Divine presence. The loss of that is, in the truest, the strictest, the most philosophical, and the most spiritual sense, the loss of life, including all its possible modifications : and to this all mankind were liable ; but Jesus submitted to it, that he might gather in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.”—P. 64.

The Vicarial Suffering of Christ made void by the Doctrine of Eternal Torment.

Isa. liii. 5.—“He *was* wounded for our transgressions,’ &c.

“Pearson on the Creed, p. 30, writes as follows :—‘It must not, it cannot be admitted, that Christ did suffer all those torments that the damned suffer.

“I conclude, therefore, that the descent into hell is not the enduring the torments of hell ; because, if strictly taken, it is not true,—if metaphorically, though true, it is not pertinent.’

“Here Bishop Pearson denies that Christ suffered the pains of the damned when He descended into hell, whilst he holds that state to be the punishment due to our offences ; thus striking at the root of the Christian system, to maintain a doctrine which no one of its advocates dare say he wishes may be true.”—Pp. 75, 76.

“It is the doctrine of Scripture, that Christ suffered the punishment due to our sins, and that by his stripes we are healed. Now this cannot be true, if his suffering was neither in kind or degree the same that God has threatened for our offences. The belief that this was Eternal Torment, led Calvin to think that our blessed Saviour endured the misery of the damned, between his death and resurrection, although He Himself had said on the cross, ‘It is finished.’²

¹ Gen. ii. 17.

² John xix. 30.

Previous to this, then, must have been the suffering He endured for us : and does not conviction flash on us, when we hear Him cry out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?'¹ Here He bore the full import of the curse, and by the infinite superiority of his nature, by his large experience and perfect knowledge of the blessing He submitted to be deprived of for our sakes. He satisfied the justice which our forfeited existence could not appease ; and by regenerating us (He being the person by whom all things were made), opened again the gates of life, closed against us by the just judgment of God on Adam's disobedience.

"If Eternal Torment was the punishment to which mankind was subject, previous to the coming of Christ, it must be that as the original curse, which He who knew not sin, endured for our sakes ; and it must be believed that Christ bore the torments of hell. Now, nothing can reconcile to the Divine justice, the making purity itself enter that state, the very nature of which is hatred of the divine government.

"This, Christ could not choose ; therefore, on this interpretation, Christ would not suffer the punishment due to our offences ; and the whole Christian scheme, which is founded on this vicarial suffering, is made void by this doctrine."—Pp. 79, 80.

Who live to God ? The Children of God.

Luke xx. 33.—" 'In the resurrection whose wife of them is she ?'

"Now, if we consider who it was that asked the question, the Sadducees, who deny that there is any resurrection ; and who it was that answered, He who knew what was in man, and needed not that any should reveal it unto Him, no words can more plainly exclude a state of Eternal Misery, and surely no authority can be more conclusive ; because the doctrine rests solely on a supposed declaration of our Saviour's.

"The object of the inquiry made by the Sadducees, was a future state generally ; and Christ's answer applies to their question, 'They that shall be accounted worthy to attain that world.' Whilst if there are two worlds, one of eternal happiness, and one of eternal misery—and the inquirers, from their unbelief, could only be interested in the latter—it will be impossible to account for our Saviour's limiting his answer to the former : but He has expressly declared there is no other ; for He says they are the children of God, because the children of the resurrection, and that all that exist live unto Him."—Pp. 77, 78.

How Grace Abounds.

Rom. v. 20.—" 'Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.'

"From v. 13 to 21 the whole argument rests on the superiority of the gift over the offence, which can only be maintained by considering death as a privation, life as an eternal blessing. It can then only be said 'that much more the gift by grace hath abounded unto many ;' 'that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.' If both are equal in duration, 'since many are called and few are chosen,' and vastly more on whom sin came and death by sin are not called, so grace cannot much more abound than sin, except by it alone possessing immortality. This scripture has never been true, up to the present day ; if the effects of sin are as actively durable as those of grace ; but it is gloriously so, if sin issues in the death of the sinner, and grace in life eternal."—Pp. 89, 90.

¹ Mat. xxvii. 46.

Death the portion of the Carnal Man.

"The Apostle, in the 8th chapter of Romans,¹ expressly asserts, that the carnal mind cannot be subject to the law of God; because it is enmity against him: 'so then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. Now it is easy to understand, why death should come upon those who cannot please God; and it is a most important doctrine to learn, since by it only can we be awakened to hunger and thirst after immortality; for 'they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.'* But why those who *cannot* please God should be eternally punished because they *do not*, no one can satisfactorily explain; for to say it is because they reject the state that is offered, is to say God causes an Eternal Misery, because man has refused to be happy; which must be a very insufficient reason."—P. 95.

Death itself to be destroyed.

1 Cor. xv. 26.—"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.' Can it be said death is destroyed whilst countless millions are for ever subject to its rule? No trifling verbal difficulties, no cold criticisms can weigh with one warmed, glowing, animated by the Apostle's description: a bright light shines round about him, as he leads you in faith through the tremendous grandeur of the last great day."—P. 114.

What is sown is reaped.

Gal. vi. 8.—"He that soweth to his flesh,' &c. Here St. Paul puts corruption in opposition to life everlasting, and that because one cometh of the flesh and the other of the Spirit. Now an eternal state to arise out of the corruption of the flesh, seems to me like a pyramid inverted, which the slightest touch will overthrow."—P. 124.

Everlasting Destruction implies Non-existence.

2 Thess. i. 9.—"Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.' Here the Apostle gives a description of Eternal Punishment, which makes the common interpretation matter of astonishment to me, that those who hold the omnipresence of God, and that He must be present in hell to punish, should not see that those who are destroyed from His presence, and are beyond His power, must be non-existent."—P. 137.

Immortality implies life in happiness, not in misery.

2 Tim. i. 10.—"Observe that it is Jesus Christ who hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel; yet eternal existence in misery requires immortality no less than in happiness. He hath abolished death; yet it is said death is misery, and misery is eternal."—P. 142.

The object of Christ's death.

Heb. 2, 8—15.—"Christ tasted death for every man, and, for the suffering of death, was crowned with glory and honour. Surely this was the curse on mankind, the threatened death for disobedience, and that to which all mankind were liable. Now Christ, through death, destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil; and when this shall be completed, He will have abolished death. I hold it to be impossible to show this to be true on the

¹ Vs. 7, 8.² Mat. ix. 12.

notion of Eternal Misery. Why halt we between two opinions? If Christ be God, choose Him; yea, let God be true, though all men be found liars."—Pp. 147, 148.

What Christ, the Engrafted Word, saves from.

James i. 21.—"Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."

"From what? from destruction, to which our nature tends; not from a state ten thousand times worse than not being. The power of language would fail should it be endeavoured to put us on our guard against such a danger. Either the Apostles give it up as hopeless (for it is plain they do not attempt it), or the fear is chimerical."—P. 159.

The Power of the One Lawgiver.

James iv. 12.—"There is *One lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy.*"

"If God willet not the death of a sinner, and yet cannot prevent his continuance in misery, who is the lawgiver 'who is able to save and to destroy?'"—P. 160.

The vanity of earthly life.

James iv. 14.—"For what is your life? It is even a vapour that *appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*"

"Most delusive, if we are immortal. Our life, then, is not a vapour, but a dense and solid substance, that the power of fire, the wishes of man, and the mercy of God, cannot dissolve."—P. 160.

What Satan seeks to do.

1 Pet. v. 8.—"Because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may *devour.*"

"The Devil is called the destroyer, and here said to seek whom he may devour; neither of these expressions are justified on the notions of man's natural immortality."—P. 163.

What those who deny Christ bring upon themselves.

2 Pet. ii. 1.—"Even *denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.*"

"By denying Christ they bring upon themselves *swift destruction*; rather an odd description of that which is to last through all eternity."—P. 163.

1 John iii. 15.—"No one that hateth his brother hath eternal life abiding in him: then can he bear Eternal Misery?"—P. 167.

Death swallowed up in victory.

Rev. xxi. 4.—"And there shall be no more death: then the power of death must end over his subjects."—P. 180.

Fallen man essentially mortal.

Gen. iii. 1—6, 17, 19, 22—24: "Compare with this Revelation ii. 7: 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.'

¹ Rom. iii. 4.

“From these texts I venture to deduce, that Adam, whose nature we inherit, was mortal; because he is declared liable to death, that is, the loss of the life God imparted to him, which essentially depended on the breath of life animating his body; for God said, ‘dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return.’ Having incurred the penalty of death, God expressly declares that He drove him out of paradise, because there was the tree of life, destined to have made him immortal if he had not sinned. Now as God removed him from paradise, lest he should eat and live for ever, he could not possess an immortal nature then. Yet the nature he possessed after having sinned, is that which we inherit from him; and death, the wages of sin, as the extinction of the life which God had given to Adam, is the fate of all who have not eaten of the tree of life; which Christ, having reopened to us the gates of paradise, gives only to His faithful followers to partake of.”—Pp. 185, 186.

God's judgments Privative, suffering being only incidental.

“I will first remark, that it seems to me to be universally true that all God's judgments on mankind are privative: according to the best observation I have been able to make, all recorded instances of them are such. Then, if they are punishments, they must last until that of which they *deprive us is restored*, or, until the course of nature would have effected that which punishment anticipates: and we shall see that this fully clears the meaning in the present case. Man is in possession of an existence, which, on certain conditions, would be to him the means of attaining Immortal happiness; he neglects to perform the condition on his part: his punishment I consider to be, the being deprived of this existence. Now, it is thought, this punishment ceases at death, if death is understood to mean extinction: but then, man, I reply, must be restored to the capacity for happiness of which it deprived him, else plainly the punishment continues, and will to all eternity. Torpid, and dull, and lost to all spirituality, must he be, who can doubt whether a sentence of banishment from the Divine presence is fitly described as a punishment, it being the very extreme of all punishments; and only needing the peculiarity of being eternal, to realize the blackness of darkness for ever. This explanation, so far from diluting and weakening the force of a threat, (viz., of eternal punishment), the efficacy of which depends on its strength, carries it to nature's utmost verge, even to destruction; and while it debars from the enjoyment of every thing that is good, just stops short of the evil which it would be contrary to God's nature (for He is love) to cause.”—Pp. 193—195.

Ultimate Destruction of the Fallen Angels.

“The expression used by the evil spirits cast out by our Saviour, proves that existence was not then a curse to them, since they deprecate being ‘destroyed before the time’;¹ and some are recorded to say destroy, and others torment, apparently in the same sense; if there *is one*, therefore, in which they agree, that must be the true meaning. Now, all conscious existence depending on the arrangement of the parts of which the organs are composed, so the destruction of that arrangement is attended with pain, and that in proportion to the importance of the organ in the system. Now, to destroy, and to torment, in this sense, must be synonymous, but to torment, without destroying the organiza-

¹ Mat. viii. 29; Mark i. 24; Luke iv. 34, viii. 28.

tion (if, according to God's laws, that be possible), would give the words a different meaning, whilst they are evidently recorded as having the same.

"Now, another intimation we have from St. Jude,¹ who says, 'The Angels which kept not their first state, He hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day,' and St. Peter, 2nd Epistle, ii. 4 : 'For if 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.'

"Here St. Jude calls that everlasting which is *unto* the judgment of the great day ; and St. Peter says simply, chains of darkness, with no mention of everlasting. Now, as we do justice to an expression, if we give it the whole meaning the context allows of ; (as when we understand everlasting, when said of the Levitical priesthood, to mean coextensive, with the purpose for which it was instituted),² so plainly here, everlasting is not meant to reach beyond that which it is said to reach unto ; and, as they are cast down to hell until then, at the day of judgment the purpose for which they have been there kept will be executed ; but this cannot be casting them into the fire, for they are therein already ; and it must be something consistent with what is revealed to us respecting the circumstances and consequences of the appearing of the great Judge of all.

"We know that Christ must reign till He doth put all enemies under His feet, and that the last enemy is death.³ Now, Christ's is a spiritual dominion (He reigneth by love), and it is not perfect, therefore, whilst any hate Him. It is not imagined the fallen angels are made to love Him ; whilst they exist, therefore, His dominion cannot be complete. If they have no power to disobey, they cannot have existence ; for if they exist, their will will rebel ; and to will is the act of disobedience.

"It must be considered a remarkable coincidence that the final punishment of the fallen angels should be, as in fact it is, made contingent on completing the number of the elect from among mankind, and that they should be kept in chains, under darkness, unto judgment ; and that until, and not a day longer, than successors are found meet to possess their lost splendour, their glory, their honour—and why not their immortality ?

"It will be admitted that immortality must depend on the union of God's spirit to incorruptible organs.

"That men are not to obtain such organs till the general judgment.

"The fallen angels are expressly declared to be reserved unto that period for judgment. Is it improbable that God's spirit will then be separated from their organs ; and, the last enemy being destroyed, that love, not power, will reign omnipotent ?"—Pp. 209—211.

¹ V. 6. ² Num. x. 8, xviii. 8 ; 2 Chr. ii. 4. ³ 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26.