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'THE WAY EVERLASTING.'

A REVIEW OF THE CONTROVERSY UPON ETERNAL EVIL,
IN A LETTER TO MR. ROBERT BAXTER.

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INTRODUCTION.

WILL Evil be eternal? This is the question of questions. Just in proportion as we are raised up out of the littleness and selfishness of the Fall, will the consideration of our own personal deliverance from the power of evil sink into insignificance before the overpowering interest of the question, Whether the universe is to be delivered from it,—whether we may look forward to a time, when 'there shall be no more curse,' or whether it will continue as long as there exists a power capable of inflicting it?

Recent discussions have shown the necessity, which in this case could scarcely have been anticipated, of defining the terms.

Eternal is used in the most extended sense conceivable with reference to the future, namely, that of never ceasing to be.

Evil may be either moral or physical. Moral evil is sin. Sin is the transgression of the law. The whole law is comprehended in one word, 'Thou shalt love.' If therefore there will never cease to be creatures who fail to render perfect love, moral evil will be eternal. Physical evil is pain. If therefore there will never cease to be creatures who are in pain, whether of mind or body, physical evil will be eternal.

Have we, or have we not, any means of ascertaining whether this will be the case. Whatever difficulty may attend the decision, a simpler issue could hardly be proposed.

On turning to the Divine Revelation, in order to ascertain whether it throws any light upon the subject, the cautious inquirer will endeavor to be on his guard against two opposite dangers. On the one hand he will be aware of the unavoidable bias created by his own repugnance to evil, and his consequent longing for its utter extinction. Knowing that he neither can nor ought to be indifferent as to the result of his investigation, he will feel it all the more necessary to beware lest he should wrest the Scriptures, even though it be to his own comfort, and obtain the desired answer by forcing upon them a meaning which they were not intended to convey. On the other hand he will guard against the danger of refusing to believe a thing, because it seems too good to be true. If God's word appears to declare that evil will sooner or later come to an end, he will not refuse to accept the assurance, lest after all he should find himself mistaken and incur a terrible disappointment. He will not reason with himself that a God who could permit the entrance of evil into the

universe would never wholly banish it; and that if evil was once necessary it must be always necessary. No! He will seek to carry out his investigation hopefully but truthfully. His abhorrence of evil, whether moral or physical, will be the measure of his desire to find solid ground for believing that it is but a passing cloud. And his love of truth will be the measure of his anxiety to make sure of the ground which he may think that he has discovered.

The writer of the following letter cannot pretend to have pursued the whole course of his investigations with such even steps. But he may perhaps be permitted to say, that, having examined and re-examined every branch of the subject with all the care he could bestow upon it, endeavoring to give due weight to the considerations adduced by a number of learned and pious men who take an opposite view, he believes not one whit less firmly, from the testimony of Scripture, that evil will ultimately cease, than he believes, from the facts before his eyes, that it at present exists. There is not one single truth, of all the things which are most surely believed amongst us, that he considers capable of being more clearly and completely demonstrated from Scripture than that Christ will ultimately reconcile all things 'to God, and that God will be all in all.' It appears to his mind equally evident, on the same authority, that this reconciliation' or heading up' of the universe in Christ will not be completed, until after a vast destruction of obstinate transgressors; and that such destruction, preceded by a retributive infliction of many' or few stripes 'according to their several deserts, and not an interminable existence in hopeless misery, with the smoke of their torment' forever darkening and defiling the universe—is the 'wrath to come,' from which sinners are urged to flee,' and from which a way of escape, to glory and honor and immortality, is provided in Him, to whom it hath been given to have life in Himself,' in order that He might become the light of life' to all who believe in His name.

The submission to God's word, which is so earnestly recommended, he does not feel, in this case, to be at all required. Great submission is needed to believe in God's love and wisdom and power, with reference to the present existing evil; but what Scripture reveals has only to be thankfully accepted, as enormously lessening the strain upon our faith, and supplying just the help which we so greatly need in our effort to maintain a submissive spirit.

The submission which some would exact—to party discipline and human tradition—he has not the slightest intention to yield. He purposes to believe and obey God rather than man; to believe what he sees in God's word, and to speak what he believes, in God's name. The contrary opinion of a long line of saints would possess a weight almost irresistible, had we no means of knowing the ground on which it rested. But when some of the ablest men living take the utmost pains to show us on what they rest their belief in the eternity of evil, and when we can plainly see that their reasonings are fallacious and that their whole case utterly breaks down, we naturally conclude that they of old time had no better ground for their belief, and that a mistaken idea having been once established in the Church it has been just handed down from generation to generation. An argument that can be proved unsound derives no additional force from any number of persons that may use it. If, for instance, the whole world were to press the favorite argument, that as man's soul retains its consciousness after the death of his body, the man himself may retain consciousness after the death of both body and soul, it would carry no more conviction to one who saw through its fallacy, than if it had been merely suggested by a child.

The question is not, how many persons have used an argument, but, what is the argument worth when it comes to be examined. The apostolic injunction is, 'Prove all things.' And the great Protestant principle of private judgment is simply the embodiment of obedience to that command.

Even the appearance of strength, however, which to some minds this chain derives from its great length, must be considerably diminished, when they discover that it falls short of reaching even the close of the apostolic era by about a century; and that its first link is attached to nothing more secure than an unknown forger. Till the middle of the second century, the Church seems to have adhered to the doctrine of Christ and His apostles, that the wages of sin is death,' and that those who refuse to be saved will 'perish everlastingly' by being destroyed body and soul in hell.' This fact has been most ably brought out by Mr. Constable, in the *Rainbow* for April, 1869. His conclusion is thus stated:— 'For the benefit of the readers of the *Rainbow* we subjoin a table, which will enable them at a glance to see the relative antiquity in the primitive Church, of the three great theories of future punishment, which are at this day maintained in the Church of Christ. In the accuracy of this table we fully believe; for its substantial truth we are prepared to contend; and we now challenge any gain sayer to controvert it. The dates given for the death of each father are, of course, only vouched for as the most probable approximations to truth. Exactitude is now unattainable.

Eternal Death.	Died A.D.
Barnabas	90
Clemens Romanus	100
Hermas	104
Ignatius. Martyr	107
Polycarp. Martyr	147
Justin. Martyr	164
Theophilus of Antioch	183

Irenaeus. Martyr 202
 Eternal Torment
 The Forger of the Clementina
 Athenagoras
 Tatian
 Tertullian

Universalist
 Origen 253

From the above table we see how comparatively late the theory of Augustine appears in the remains of patristic writing, while that of Origen is still later. This blank space between them and primitive truth is destructive to both.

There are many able champions of the popular view who can see the real point of an argument and easily expose any fallacy that may vitiate it. Will some of them condescend to grapple with the following argument on life and death? Will they attempt to meet these four positions:—That the crucial words of the controversy are life and death; That death invariably means the cessation or deprivation of life, whatever the nature of the life referred to; That the only life which the wicked will possess in the day of judgment, and consequently the only life of which they can be deprived by the second death' is their physical life of body and soul; and That this physical life is precisely what Christ declares they will be deprived of by their destruction—body and soul in hell? Until these positions have been successfully assailed, nothing whatever has been done. There are outworks, no doubt, of more or less importance, but these constitute the citadel. Let that be stormed, and then the author will be ready to admit, not that the popular doctrine is true, but that the final destruction of the wicked cannot be absolutely demonstrated from Scripture. While it stands, he is bold to deny that there is the slightest ground for any reasonable doubt upon the subject.

A LETTER, Etc.

MY DEAR MR. BAXTER, Your well-known Christian character and high standing in the Church demand from me some acknowledgment of the reply which you have made to my volume of sermons, entitled *The Glory of Christ.** And this acknowledgment I should have had the utmost satisfaction in tendering, but for the very serious preliminary complaint which I am compelled to make of the personal attacks that so frequently appear in the course of your little treatise.

I appreciate the forbearance that leads you to characterize what you charge me with as only verging upon blasphemy.' But you must be aware that in point of fact it would really be the direst blasphemy against God of which any responsible creature could possibly be guilty.

I also appreciate the delicacy of feeling that led to the titles of the works and the names of the authors being withheld, to allow of a more free discussion without the appearance of personality.' But you can scarcely suppose that this makes any practical difference. If I were to say that a certain eminent member of the legal profession, whom to avoid personality we will call Mr. R. B., in a firm which, that we may speak more freely, shall only be described as Messrs. R. B. and M., 'did not hesitate' to commit fraud and forgery (London Newspaper, Oct. 6, 1868),—would the fact of your name not being printed in full be accepted as an excuse for the offence in any court of justice, equity, or honor in the world? Would it be accepted in the Supreme Court? Yet how would such a charge be one whit more unjustifiable than the following?— . But in order to show how these heresies "eat as doth a canker" (2 Tim. 2. 17) into the spirit of those who energetically propagate them, we must mark the flippancy, and almost blasphemy, with which Mr. M. meets the solemn question—not• even hesitating to accuse God of acting unjustly and with cruelty (Pref. 16., p. 84, p. 28), and alleging that to adjudge a sinner to eternal punishment can only be an act of Satan (p. 102). After arraigning God for creating responsible beings, who, by their own fault, bring irremediable suffering upon themselves (p. 107), he shows the blindness of his own moral perceptions by adding, " I see no greater difficulty in the creation of beings who would have to suffer for no fault of their own, than in the creation of beings who would have to suffer by or for their own fault!" How deeply humbling is the experience of the effects of being "vainly puffed up" in the baseless speculations of a mind given over to "philosophy and vain deceit" (Col. 2. 8). The distinction between right and wrong is utterly cast aside. God is charged with being answerable for the misdeeds of responsible creatures, and denied the right to judge wickedness or to banish from His presence those who work evil.' Now with regard to abolishing the distinction of right and wrong, arraigning God for creating responsible beings, and charging Him with their misdeeds, I will only say that the whole indictment is a gross perversion of my argument. But the expression, to which I would direct your special attention, is 'not hesitating to accuse God of acting unjustly and with cruelty.' A moment's reflection would have shown you, what I am sure you now see, that you have said something totally different from what you meant to say. One who accuses another of acting unjustly, must either believe or disbelieve the accusation. Which would you have your readers understand to be my case? That I have called God unjust and cruel, knowing that I was bearing false witness against Him; or that I really believed Him to be unjust, and was daring enough to say so?

Your words can only bear one of those two meanings. And the same charge occurs again and again in your pages. You accuse me of thinking that God deals too hardly with sinners,' of hard words and repining against God's purpose of judgment,' of 'sitting in judgment upon God,' of arraigning God Himself,' and so forth.

Now when you meet before the judgment-seat of Christ many of your readers who never saw my book or this reply, and who discover then for the first time that you have misled them into judging and condemning as an awful blasphemer, one whose only fault in this matter was that of defending his heavenly Father's character against the aspersion cast upon it by a misunderstanding of His word; how will you excuse yourself even to them, to say nothing of your Master? You cannot plead the rashness and inexperience of youth; you cannot plead a mind unaccustomed to weigh the meaning of words; yet you will be compelled to admit that the whole stress of the very argument, which you describe as accusing God of injustice and cruelty, depends upon the assumption that God cannot be unjust or cruel; and that you might just as rationally have charged Paul with accusing God of unrighteousness because he argues that it would be 'unrighteous' in Him 'to forget our work and labor of love,' or with accusing him of perjury, because he argues that, if a believer were to perish, it would be a violation of the Divine oath. What you mean is; that I have accused the popular theory of imputing to God what, according to my reading of His word, would necessarily be unjust, inasmuch as it would be inflicting upon sinners a punishment immeasurably greater than that which He has Himself pronounced to be their desert. But how will you justify the describing of that as 'not hesitating to accuse God of acting unjustly,' when the whole purpose of my book is to prove, that He will not act in any such way? Or how will you justify the assertion, that in my book God is denied the right to judge wickedness, or to banish from His presence those who work evil,' when its avowed object is to prove that He will judge wickedness, and banish evildoers from His presence forever, by destroying them body and soul in hell?

Thank God, that neither you nor I will have to stand before the bar of a fellow-mortal, but that we shall both be judged by One who will possess a full knowledge of, and give due weight to, all the circumstances of each particular case. I know not how you feel, but for myself, when I see the judgments that even Christians, in spite of their Master's warning, are too ready to pass upon their fellow-Christians, and think of the judgment which they so sternly require to be passed upon impenitent sinners hereafter, I can only say, Let me fall into the hand of God, for His mercies are great; and let me not fall into the hand of man.' But how can I be surprised at your treatment of me, when you can allow yourself to accuse such a man as Mr. Birks with yielding to the skeptical bias of the age'? It positively takes away one's breath to read the language in which you speak of him. If you had accused Dr. Cumming of Romanism, Mr. Ryle of Ritualism, Dr. Pusey of Puritanism, and Mr. Bright of Toryism, the charges would not have been one whit more directly in the teeth of the evidence than that which you have taken upon yourself to prefer against Mr. Birks. If any man living should have been safe from such an attack, he is assuredly the man. But who is safe from anything in controversy? He who descends into that arena carries his life in his hand, and can only commit his way unto the Lord,' in full assurance, that at the last day, if not before, He will bring forth his righteousness as the light, and his judgment as the noonday.' This cry of infidelity,' grounded on the assumption of your own infallibility, is the key-note of your book. To disbelieve your interpretation of Scripture is to disbelieve Scripture itself. You accuse Mr. Birks and myself of denying one of the solemn truths which lie at the very root of the Christian faith,' and therefore, in danger of making shipwreck concerning the faith;' of being leading authorities' in tin two main lines of argument, by which the philosophy of our day directs its attack against man's moral responsibility and God's judicial government of the world.' You say that,—

'Among the strange and subtle workings of infidelity, no suggestion is more dangerous than that which draws the mind of man to sit in judgment and determine what God ought to be or to do, instead of humbly taking and resting on God's own revelation of Himself and His purposes given in the Written Word:' which is clearly intended to apply to the two 'leading 'infidels already mentioned. After quoting several texts of Scripture, you add, 'All this is plainly and emphatically declared in Scripture,' and in the face of these plain declarations of Scripture, it becomes us to bow our heads in reverence;' evidently implying, that if we understand these plain declarations differently from you, it must, be because we refuse to bow our heads in reverence before God. You say,—

'So long as we abide under the plain declaration of God's Holy Word concerning the being of God Himself and concerning his purposes towards the creatures He has made, we are safe from all delusion. But when we begin to sit in judgment upon God, and like Peter in his honest but ill-judged zeal for his Master say, Be it far from Thee, Lord' (Matt. 16. 22), we proudly lift ourselves up, as though we were able to scan God's purposes and prescribe His ways 'which of course means, that those who take your view of certain passages of Scripture, abide under the plain declaration of God's word,' while those who take any other view of them sit in judgment upon God,' and proudly lift themselves up.' And again,— . The question is not what Mr. M. thinks he knows, or thinks other Scripture declares, but what is really the meaning of the Scripture he quotes; '—in other words, the question is not what Mr. M. 'thinks 'to be really the meaning of Scripture, but what Mr. B. 'thinks' to be really its meaning.

And now I ask you to contemplate the position in which you have placed yourself. Here are two ministers of Christ, who have been for more than a quarter of a century pastors in the Church of which you are a member. They profess to believe implicitly every word of the Bible as Divinely inspired, to receive unhesitatingly everything that they can see to be therein revealed. Neither of them has ever said or written a word to throw the slightest doubt upon the sincerity of his profession; and one of them, who is distinguished no

less by his personal humility than by the brilliancy of his talent and the consistency of his life, has been pre-eminent amongst the defenders of the plenary inspiration of Scripture. Yet because they take a different view from yourself of its teaching on one solitary point, you take upon yourself to sit in judgment upon them both, and condemn them as leaders in two main lines of infidelity,' and that of the worst kind,—' there is none more dangerous; 'as influenced by the skeptical bias of the age;' as vainly puffed up with a fleshly mind; as given over to philosophy and vain deceit;' as adopting heresies which eat as doth a canker' into our spirit as wanting discernment of the guilt of sin as in danger of making shipwreck of the faith; as proudly lifting themselves ap;' as denying a solemn truth which lies at the very root of the Christian faith;' as being seduced by a spirit of delusion as presuming to sit in judgment upon God—prescribing what He ought and ought not to do;' as 'arraigning God,' uttering hard sayings and repining against God's purpose,' 'doubting whether that which God says He will do, is right,' nay, in one case at least, as guilty of the daring blasphemy 'of not hesitating to accuse God of acting unjustly and with cruelty.'

And what is the one point of difference between us? We are agreed on the supreme authority of Holy Scripture, on the fall of man, on the whole scheme of his redemption by Christ, and on the pre-snit as well as future blessings that flow from it to everyone that believeth. We are also agreed that the finally impenitent and unbelieving will incur a doom which is described by our Lord, whether his words are to be taken literally or figuratively, as being cast into Gehenna. We disagree solely on the question, what will become of them after they have been cast into it. You and Mr. Birks gather from the various declarations in God's word that they will be preserved in it, body and soul, alive for ever; but you differ as to the intensity of the anguish they will endure, and as to the state of mind which will be ultimately induced by their sufferings. I gather from the same declarations that they will be destroyed body and soul forever, that they will perish and come to a fearful end, perish everlastingly, be blotted out of Creation, and no place be found for them. And this is the difference which you think justifies you in applying to us the apostolic anathemas against deniers and perverters of the fundamental truths of the gospel. This is what you and others call 'vital error,' preaching another gospel,' striking at the root of the Christian faith,' and even taking away the meaning, the object, the force, the life out of the entire gospel scheme.'

Do you really believe that Christ meant what He said when He uttered the words, Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again'? Do you really believe His plain declaration,' that The word which I have spoken, the same shall judge you in the last day'? If so, with what measure do you expect that it will be meted out to you? You denounce the doctrine of destruction as 'utterly demoralizing,' and ascribe it to a want of discernment of the guilt of sin.' Suppose it should prove to have been Christ's doctrine. Suppose it should be found that when He threatened destruction body and soul in hell to the wicked, he intended this to be understood in the plain, natural, obvious sense of the words. Then, if you are to be judged by the Master, as you now judge His servant, you must be charged with the blasphemy of having not hesitated to accuse Christ of preaching demoralizing doctrine, and not discerning the guilt of sin; with the infidelity 'of disbelieving His plain declaration;' with proudly lifting yourself up,' and indulging in hard sayings and repining against God's purpose.' I do not charge you with this; I dare not do to you as you have done to me.' But there is One that judges; and I desire that you should judge yourself, that you be not judged of the Lord.

That you may have the whole case before you, it is necessary to call your attention to one or two other matters of fact, before we proceed to the doctrinal question.

You say,— 'The skeptical bias of the age, however, not only acts upon those without the circle of devoted servants, but is strong enough to make its way within, and cause a deflection in the current of thought from the right line of simply ascertaining what the Scriptures reveal, into the devious path of first doubting, whether that which God says He will do is right as it is plainly written, and then inventing some strange theory to supersede plain Scripture by an unwarranted addition.'

And the same account of the history of my mind upon this subject is given in another part of your book, — 'This is the frightful progress of wild speculation—first to doubt, then to frame a theory, next to cast scorn on all who hold the contrary, and, finally, to arraign God Himself, if His dealings contradict the theory!'

Now, may I ask who told you that my devious path' began by first doubting whether what [you think] God says He will do, is right, as it is [to your mind—for this is of course what you mean] plainly written'? In my sermons, I am led to begin the subject by having to consider how the popular theory agrees with what seems so 'plainly written' about the reconciliation of all things; although the Christian Advocate, in reviewing them, strangely says that my starting point is simply an a priori conception of the thinker's own mind'; that I 'begin my inquiry by pronouncing the doctrine to be incredible on the verdict of my own moral consciousness.' I do indeed say, that anyone might very easily be first led to inquire into the scriptural ground for the popular doctrine, from perceiving the tremendous strain which it puts upon our faith, just as a Roman Catholic might first be led in the same way to doubt the truth of transubstantiation. But I never said that it was my case; and, in point of fact, it was not. I do not consider it of the smallest consequence at what point anyone begins the investigation, provided that at each step he conducts it fairly; but my own doubts happen to have been first excited by the unscriptural nature of the doctrine. It was not until I became thoroughly satisfied that it was a mistaken tradition of men, that I allowed myself full liberty to look its moral character full in the face; when I was at once appalled

with the spectacle that presented itself to my view. As far as I am concerned, therefore, your little history is a pure fiction, and ought to have been put forth, if at all, avowedly as a conjecture of your own.

Again,—." Everlasting," he says, applied to the saved, means without end, "because we know from other statements," that it will never come to an end. But applied to the lost, it cannot mean absolutely endless, "because Scripture positively declares, that evil will come to an end, and the irreclaimably wicked be utterly destroyed." Would it not be more convenient when Mr. M. proposes to prove or disprove anything, that he should be a little more specific, than coolly to assert it is so," " because we know from other statements," or " because Scripture positively declares," and condescend to give us the Scriptures on which he relies? 'Now did you not know, when writing this, that the three sermons preceding the one under consideration were entirely devoted to an examination of the specific Scripture on which I relied,' and that when, afterwards, I spoke of what we know from other statements,' and of what Scripture positively declares,' I did so on the assumption of the alleged proofs being conclusive? And if so, was it either courteous or fair to speak of my coolly asserting' it, and to suggest that it would be more convenient' if I would condescend'—to do what I had just done?

I must also ask whether, when you charged me with treating this question as a mere matter of opinion, with little or no bearing on the life and character,' you were not aware that two whole sermons in the volume you were criticizing, were exclusively devoted to pointing out, in very strong language indeed, its numerous and important bearings on the life and character'?

And lastly, may I ask whether you consider the following statement an honest representation of the case between us?— 'In so doing they raise two skeptical doubts, unsettling the faith of those who entertain them. (1.) Is God just to inflict such punishment? (2.) Are the Scriptures true when they declare it?' The natural meaning of these words is, that we doubt whether God is just, and whether the Scriptures are true. Yet you know perfectly well, that neither Mr. Birks nor myself have the slightest doubt with reference to either the justice of God or the truth of Scripture. You know perfectly well, that the two questions raised in *The Glory of Christ*' are—1. Does Scripture declare the doctrine of eternal torture? 2. Would it have been just in God to inflict such a punishment for sins committed in this life? Do you really mean, that it is skeptical 'to ask such questions? Was it skeptical in Abraham to urge his petition with the plea, Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right; 'in other words, to argue with Him, that it would not be right 'or just 'if He were to slay the righteous with the wicked'? Was it skeptical in the Bereans to search the Scriptures daily whether these things were so'? Answer these questions to your own conscience in the sight of God.

Now I am aware how I shall be blamed for taking any notice whatever of these attacks. Pass them by in silence,' has been said to me over and over again, qui s' excuse s' accuse.' Perhaps so, in some cases. But I am not excusing myself. This has not been written in self-defense. It has been written in obedience to the Divine command, Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and shalt not suffer sin upon him.' If yours had been an isolated case, I should have written to you privately. But it is not so. You are no greater offender than many other good men—not so great as some. It is only your character and position that renders you so conspicuous amongst them. The fault of your book is not the fault of the individual, but of the atmosphere that surrounds you. An old friend of mine and yours. of advanced age and high reputation, returned one of my printed papers which had been sent to him, scored all over with hypocrisy, 'blasphemy," infidelity,' and other similar words. Another old friend whom I may describe in much the same language, with whom, as with the former one, I had long been closely associated in every kind of Christian enterprise, and was singularly in accord on almost every disputed topic, wrote to tell me that some persons had always doubted whether I was truly converted,' and that now I had become a leader and a patron to all who desire to reject the evangelical doctrines of the gospel.' And these are only samples of many others.

The *Dublin Tract Repository*' commences with the following sentence,— 'The infidelity which openly denies the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is less dangerous than that [that infidelity, of course] which professes (I) to reverence their Divine authority, while it really nullifies their value by corrupting and perverting their meaning.' The writer cannot of course mean that the persons referred to are sincere in their profession of reverence for the Divine authority of Scripture,—or how could they be guilty of infidelity? He distinctly implies that they conceal their infidelity under a false profession of being believers in the Bible; in other words, that they are infidels, and hypocrites as well.

Another writer, who signs himself 'J. M. C.,' and is highly lauded by the editor of the *British Herald*, admits that his own former objections to the popular doctrine 'were dictated by enmity against God,' and evidently considers that similar enmity must lie at the root of all objections to it; so much so that he more than once intimates a doubt whether they may not be sufficient to exclude me from heaven. 'If he be found amongst them in that day,' and if he ever finds himself there,' are expressions the tone of which no reader of his pamphlet can possibly mistake.

Take another specimen from the same writer. In *The Glory of Christ*' I have argued that the words 'In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,' do not of themselves prove that Adam would never have died if he had never sinned, but that what is said of the Tree of Life does prove it, inasmuch as it was the specially appointed supernatural means ('every green herb for food' being the natural

means) of keeping him alive so long as he continued to eat of it. J. M. C. quotes the beginning and end of the paragraph, substituting asterisks for that part of it which refers to the Tree of Life, and on the ground of it charges me with a bold and broad denial of God's word,' in saying that Adam would have died whether he had sinned or not.

This having been copied into the British Herald, I wrote to the editor, pointing out its dishonesty, and asking permission to correct it. Upon his refusing permission, I wrote again, showing him the position in which it placed him as now a knowing accessory to the crime; but without the least effect. He was satisfied that I was preparing the way for the Beast and the False Prophet,' and he wanted no intellectual gladiatorship with me.' In other words, any amount of falsehood and misrepresentation is justifiable against one who denies the precious doctrine of eternal torment, and who ventures to promulgate any-thing so horrible, as that it is God's purpose to reconcile all things to Himself by Jesus Christ. It seems that the principle of 'no faith with heretics' is not confined to one section of Christendom.

I must confess that, when I remembered who this editor is, and what he has written, 'my feet were almost gone, my treading had well-nigh slipped.' I was tempted to say in my haste, 'All men are liars,' and Truth has perished out of the earth.' But I took warning from the Psalmist's infirmity, and refrained my lips, fearing to condemn the generation of God's children.

Still the sore is so deep that, however painful the operation, it must be probed. Farther on, in the same pamphlet, this writer adds a sentence of his own to what he gives as an extract from one of my sermons; and on the ground of that addition charges me with inconsistency and absurdity. The pamphlet is entitled 'Eternal Punishment,' and is published by Partridge & Co. The suppressio veri will be found on p. 14; the additio falsi is on p. 20, and lies in the words 'Of course it would not exist for a moment,'—just indicating the point of comparison in which no one would expect the analogy to hold good, but which I am actually made to insist upon.

We need not, however, go beyond your own reviewer to see how thoroughly the poison—not in his case of dishonesty, but of intolerance resulting from assumed infallibility—impregnates the air we breathe. Our views result from 'assumption depending on the pride of intellect,' yours from 'childlike and becoming submission of man's judgment in all matters connected with the deep things of God.' We are guilty of 'the sinful presumption of prescribing what God ought to be and do, 'while you 'meekly seek to know what His word reveals.' To adopt your interpretation of Scripture shows a spirit like that of 'Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus;' while to adopt ours indicates one 'whose heart is haughty, and who exercises himself in things too high for him.' To forsake the traditional view of what Scripture reveals on this subject, is 'forsaking the sure word of revelation.' And the difference between yourself and us, is that you ask 'How reads thou?' while we ask 'What thinks thou?' by which I presume he does not mean that you read without thought, while we think upon what we have read.

'Mr. Baxter's recognized abilities are here exhibited in association with the childlike and becoming submission of man's judgment in all matters connected with the deep things of God. In approaching the solemn and awful subject of the condition of the lost, he pretends to no special illumination to exalt him above his fellows, and he discards all assumptions depending on the pride of intellect. In discussing the question of God's purposes he begins by acknowledging in distinct terms the sinful presumption of man in prescribing what God ought to be and do, instead of meekly seeking to know what His word reveals. Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus to learn His will, or the humblest Christian reverently seeking the enlightening influence of God's Holy Spirit in the study of the Bible, is in such a matter a truer philosopher than the brightest genius whose "heart is haughty" and who "exercises himself in things too high for him." The celebrated Dr. Chalmers found peace when he came, as he tells us, to recognize the wisdom of the question "How reads thou?" in preference to the question "What thinks thou?" Yet Dr. Chalmers was a man of genius, endowed with a commanding intellect. . . . Mr. Baxter has accomplished a very difficult and delicate task both with judgment and ability. There is in this little book a remarkable concentration of logical Scriptural truth on a very solemn and painful subject. In examining and combating the opinions which have lately been broached, distinct quotations are given from the works of the respective authors to whom he alludes, with the pages where they occur. But "the titles of the works and the names of the authors are withheld to allow of a more free discussion without the appearance of personality." It is our earnest prayer that both of the authors referred to may be induced to see that in forsaking the sure word of revelation they are wandering into bye paths, full of peril to themselves and of still greater peril to those by whom they have been justly esteemed both for their talent and their general adherence to the truth.'—The Record.

I have no idea who the reviewer is, but he is not improbably as good a man as yourself, and was as entirely unconscious of what he was doing. We have become so habituated to believe in our own infallibility, and in the impossibility of any honest man being otherwise minded,' that we cast about our 'firebrands, arrows, and death' in the blandest tones, and let the words 'infidelity 'or 'unbelief 'drop from our pens as freely—if it were sufficiently courteous I should almost be tempted to borrow your favorite word, and say as flippantly—as if Christ had never declared that 'he who believeth not shall be damned,' and Paul had never invoked a solemn curse on any one who should 'preach another gospel.' But it is a grievous sin, notwithstanding; and one of the incidental blessings which the controversy has conferred upon me, is, that a sense of this sin has been impressed upon my mind in what is always the most forcible manner, namely—experience.

I trust that these few words of Christian faithfulness will help you and others to share in the blessing; so that none of us may have cause to be 'ashamed before Him at His coming,' and 'suffer loss' in the great day of account.

I now leave this painful part of the subject, and turn to examine the way in which you have endeavored to meet my arguments from Scripture. A man of your recognized abilities 'must necessarily have made the best of your case. The Record pronounces that you have accomplished a very difficult and delicate task both with judgment and ability,' and that you have produced a remarkable concentration of logical scriptural truth.' If this should be found somewhat too high praise, every one will admit that the fault must lie in the weakness of the cause, and not in that of its advocate.

Against a large portion of your book I have not a word to say. Indeed the pains you take to demonstrate certain fundamental principles of Christianity, would almost suggest that you had taken the opportunity, while replying to Mr. Birks and myself, of uttering a protest against some—must I say other—forms of infidelity,' which go the length of denying any future judgment whatever.

Neither shall I say anything of your observations upon Mr. Birks' view, which—I know he will pardon me for saying—I regard as the convulsive effort of an honest mind and sound heart, to relieve the fearful strain which an erroneous interpretation of Scripture puts upon his moral instincts.

My business lies only with the objections that you make to the views propounded in *The Glory of Christ*.' And first, I must hail with the utmost gratification, both on your own account and for the truth's sake, the virtual surrender that you make of the direct question of Eternal Evil.

* The following is Mr. Spurgeon's criticism taken from *The Sword and the Trowel*, Sept. 1869.

A laudable attempt to meet the modern [revival of the Primitive and Apostolic] doctrine of annihilation for [the destruction of] the lost.' Here is much of Scripture and good intention, but no argument, no grip of the subject, such as so difficult a question imperatively requires. Not to maintain one's position with a fair amount of clearness, is to fail hopelessly, in a discussion of this character. We are persuaded that the result of a perusal of this little work would not be likely to produce correction on the part of an opponent, and it might create confusion amongst friends.' It is not for an opponent' to say how far this criticism may be just. But if it is, what must be the essential weakness of a cause, for which a man of Mr. B.'s recognized abilities' can find no argument,' and which a book, characterized by such a 'remarkable concentration of logical' power, fails hopelessly' to maintain,' with even a fair amount of clearness'? One opponent at least will do Mr. B. the justice to say, that he has never yet seen any defense of Eternal Evil, that would not have filled him with confusion,' if he had been on the same side.

+ Nothing is more instructive in this controversy than to observe the dread which is almost universally manifested of the words Eternal Evil. There is hardly a writer, who can help kicking at that prick, and trying to show that what he believes is not Eternal Evil. And no wonder. For those two words are of themselves enough to overthrow the whole theory. We have only to realize what God is as revealed in the Bible, and what would be involved in eternal evil, to see how absolutely contradictory are the two ideas. Yet to escape from it on the popular theory is manifestly impossible. He evidently treats it as if it were a continuance of evil,' writes Mr. Baxter. Why, what else is it? Is it not evil for God's creatures to hate Him? And will they not continue to hate Him to all eternity? What is that but Eternal Evil? Are not pain and sorrow evils? Will it be good for Judas to be writhing in agony forever? If not, it must be evil for him. And what will that be but Eternal Evil? That the punishment of the wicked may be overruled for the good of others in no wise lessens its evil to them, except on Mr. Birks' supposition, which is condemned as vital error 'and wild speculation.' My opponents therefore are quite right in saying, that I 'will persist' in calling it Eternal Evil,—until they can prove that evil is good.

Nothing can be more happy than the inconsistency with which in a book intended to prove that sin and misery will last forever, you virtually admit the 'impossibility of their doing so. Some very decided opponents of my view, in speaking to me of your book, were evidently quite aghast at your fatal admissions. And well they might be. For what could I myself say more, than that 'He who created all things for His own glory, will put down all resistance to His holy will, and Himself reign in righteousness, filling all creation with peace and blessedness;' that when that dispensation shall have come when 'there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, sin will have been wholly put away;' that 'sin must be wholly purged before creation is perfected;' that 'all pain and sorrow shall cease when the tabernacle of God is with men;' that 'although this world [of which, remember, hell forms part] passed away with the fire of judgment, there shall be a new heaven and a new earth;' that creation is defiled, so long as sin works in it; the stain is washed out only when sin is put away and shut out of it forever; by the very fact of God being a God of holiness, sin must thus be put away for ever;' that 'to abide in hatred against God necessarily brings banishment from God's presence, and God's creation;' and that 'it is just and necessary that God may be all in all, and righteousness and happiness may pervade creation'?

There spoke out the true Christian. Your heart swelled till it burst the strait-waistcoat of your unhappy theory, and the Spirit of God compelled you to prophesy. Yet how strange the inconsistencies in which that theory involves you! Who could imagine what was to be found in the context of those very passages? Who could believe that you expected such glorious anticipations to be fulfilled by sin being 'shut up in an eternal prison house,' by the 'cleansing' being confined to 'the new heaven and the new earth, the abode of the glorified saints '? Do the new heavens and earth include the whole 'creation' or not? If they do, how can they be 'cleansed' while sin remains 'shut up' within them? If they do not, how can creation 'be 'perfected,' by sin being merely shut out' from them, and shut up 'in some other part of it? Where is the eternal prison-house supposed to be— in creation' or out of it? If the latter, it can have no existence; if the former, how can 'righteousness and happiness pervade creation,' while the prison-house retains its prisoners? Would a man have perfectly cleansed his house who had gathered together all its filth, and shut it up 'in one room of the house, there to lie festering and corrupting as long as he himself continued to possess the house? Or could righteousness and happiness be said to S pervade' a house, while a number of raving maniacs, or fiendish wretches, were locked up in one of its cellars without light or food or clothing, to execrate and torment one another, while music and dancing and feasting went on in its upper rooms, whose happy inmates, filled with love, and freed from every particle of selfishness, would only sing the louder when they caught the faint echo of wailing beneath?

* The Glory of Christ' it was stated to be part of the popular view that the endless sufferings of the condemned will heighten the enjoyment and enhance the blessedness of all holy creatures throughout the universe.' To this I. M. C.' replies Whosoever believes this, I do not. I repudiate the thought. The imputation is utterly false.' Yet, after a few sentences, he says, 'That the righteous will approve, and even rejoice in (!) God's judgments when they take place, is perfectly true.' How they are to 'rejoice in' the judgments, without their enjoyment being heightened' thereby, it is not easy to see.

No doubt they will rejoice. But when my opponent adds, Let his objection fall upon the Scripture which tells the holy apostle to rejoice over the downfall of the great whore,' he confounds my objection with his own. I fully believe that the destruction of all incorrigible evil-doers will 'enhance the blessedness of all holy creatures.' In the figurative language of the Old Testament, The righteous will rejoice when he sees the vengeance, he will wash his footsteps in the blood of the ungodly; 'it will 'heighten his enjoyment' to know that the universe is rid of them. What I deny that holy creatures could rejoice in, is the endless perpetuation of evil doers in a state of hopeless misery.

But further: you say, By the very fact of God being a God of holiness, sin must be thus put away forever.' Quite true. And how can that be accomplished except by its being brought to an end? Where can sin be put away out of God's sight and beyond His reach, while it exists at all? Are not His eyes in every place? If I climb up into heaven, Thou art there; if I go down to hell, Thou art there also.' Put away the condemned sinners to the utmost bounds of creation, shut them up in the depths of the largest sphere, even there will their writhing be ever present to His eye, and their shrieks of agony be ever ringing in His ears. Nay, more; He will have unceasingly to put forth His almighty power to maintain them in existence. Let Him withdraw His sustaining hand for an instant from any creature, great or small, and it sinks into nothingness. What is distance or locality to the Omnipresent?

Again:— · What shall a Holy God do with sin? It is to Him what darkness is to light; what death is to life; what hatred is to love; what misery is to joy; what torment is to peace; what despair is to hope I What shall He do with it? * * The emphatic and unhesitating answer is, He must put sin away, and with the sin the sinner who walks in it and refuses to turn from it.' Undoubtedly. But alas! the sentence for which I have substituted asterisks contains a groundless assumption, directly opposed both to Scripture and 'reason, which stultifies the whole paragraph. It is this: 'The Beings who embrace sin were created by Him with an endless existence, and cannot cease to be.' In other words, God 'must put sin away,' and yet He cannot' put sin away. He has created beings, who have fallen into sin, whom He is unable either to convert or to destroy, and who therefore cannot cease to be 'for ever to Him'—however creatures of limited power may be enabled to forget their existence—ever-present 'darkness, death, hatred, misery, despair'! Is this conceivable? Is this the 'common-sense' for which a friend of yours and mine commended your book to me? No; it is the utmost possible outrage upon all the reason that God has given us, and that He expects us not to hide in a napkin, which some writers seem to consider the highest exercise of faith, but to use to the full extent of its power. And in this case, reason and Scripture are in manifest harmony. For instead of Scripture containing one word to sanction such a glaring absurdity as that God is unable to destroy anything which He has created, it distinctly tells us that He will destroy the wicked, body and soul in hell; that although man was created capable of 'endless existence,' yet that, having forfeited his right to the tree of life, only those who receive eternal life' as a 'gift 'from Christ, and seek it by patient continuance in well-doing,' will possess immortality,' and 'live for ever.' God is love. The whole universe is to be reconciled 'to Him '• and therefore all who will not love Him must be put away,' wholly removed,' and 'shut out of creation' for ever. When their place is sought for, it will nowhere be found; God will be 'all in all,' and not a jarring note mar creation's harmony.

While on this point, it may be well to observe, how entirely the 'theory 'you have 'framed 'of necessary immortality with regard to the soul, breaks down when applied to the body. You naturally shrink from the idea of Divine power being exerted to sustain a creature in existence for the sole purpose of enabling it to bear endless torture, and therefore you use such expressions as 'must live'

and cannot cease to exist.' But, whatever may be the thought of the soul, we see that the body is mortal. It can cease to exist. And, moreover, we know that its power of enduring pain is very limited indeed. According to your theory, therefore, God will raise this mortal body from death, and endow it with immortality, in order that, for sin committed in its mortal state, it may be able to bear an amount of punishment that is beyond its natural power to bear. The gift of 'immortality,' which we are encouraged to 'seek by patient continuance in well doing,' and which in 1 Corinthians xv. is mentioned as the glorious privilege of those who are in Christ, will be bestowed at least upon the bodies of the wicked, as the direst curse that even Omnipotence itself could inflict upon them.

Once more:— We see clearly God must rule in His own creation, and put all His enemies under His feet, and that all who dwell with God must be holy. The obedience God requires is that of the heart—a loving, willing, service. To refuse this is to hate God, and to abide in hatred towards God necessarily brings banishment from God's presence and God's creation, and the punishment of everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.' Beautiful! But how disappointing to proceed! It sounds as if two persons were playing different tunes together on the same instrument.

He that hates God will continue eternally to fight against God, unless his warfare is crushed and his hatred is paralyzed; and this God reveals shall be brought to pass in the Lake of Fire; not by extinction of being, but by a punishment which renders it powerless for action and a warning to all creation.' And elsewhere you say,— 'The wicked are shut up in an eternal prison-house, where they can no more work wickedness.'

Yes they can. Wickedness consists in refusing to love God. The whole law is comprehended in one word, 'Thou shalt love.' To withhold that love is the one all-comprehending sin. The outward manifestations of it are mere accidents, which depend upon circumstances, and which no doubt may be restrained in 'the eternal prison-house;' but sin itself, that is, enmity against God, will continue in all its intensity. The 'warfare' of God's enemies against their fellow-creatures may be 'crushed;' but their 'hatred' of Him, will not be paralyzed; on the contrary, it will acquire vastly increased strength, and retain the highest degree of energy and vitality forever. Why, it is just for the 'vital error,' the 'dangerous delusion,' the 'philosophizing speculation,' the 'skepticism' of Mr. Birks in daring to 'frame' such a 'theory,' that you and others wish to expel him from the Evangelical Alliance. He hopes that 'sin' will really be put away,' and 'hatred' be really paralyzed,' though punishment may continue. And what you think of him for indulging such a hope we all know.

Well may you say that there is a manifestation in the lake of fire of what God is not.' In the lake of fire that Scripture reveals, there will be manifest a God who cannot tolerate evil in the universe that He governs, who will perfect' everything that He begins, who will have all creation pervaded by righteousness and happiness,' and will be Himself all in all.' Those who will not love and serve Him must perish, and all who will must be blessed for ever. In your lake of fire there would be manifested a God—but no, I dare not proceed—I dare not pen the burning words that alone would do justice to the feelings which straggle for utterance. The timid would be alarmed, the unthinking would be shocked, the prudent would remonstrate, the bigoted would throw dust in the air and cry out, Blasphemy; while some would perhaps charge me with not hesitating to accuse God' of every crime that could be named. I will only say that in the eternal prison-house of your imagination there would be manifested almost everything that God is not. And therefore we hardly need the positive declarations of His word, strong and manifold as they are, to assure us that no such thing will exist—that there shall 'no place be found' throughout the universe of God for aught that is not in harmony with His righteous will.

Everyone admits that the crucial words in the whole controversy are Life and Death. Mr. Garbett 'accepts the issue' unreservedly: so much so, that having secured, as he thinks, a verdict in his own favor on that count, he says, 'The point is practically settled.' And who could deny it? Life and Death—Life and Death—these are the words with which the Bible rings from beginning to end. The presumption surely is, that they carry their own meaning with them, and not that they require to be explained from a parable and a metaphor, or from a highly figurative scene in the book of Revelation.

Now death is simply the cessation of life. There are various kinds of life, and therefore there are various kinds of death; but death, regarded as an act, is the cessation of life, and nothing else. Regarded as a condition, it is the state of anything from which life has departed. We speak inaccurately of dead matter, meaning only that it is without life; but properly speaking, nothing is dead that has not died, and nothing can properly be said to die that could not have been said in some sense or other to possess life. The first question therefore is, What kind of life will the wicked possess in the day of judgment to be deprived of? If they are then to suffer death, it must be by the deprivation of some life which they then possess. What can it be?

Spiritual life they lost in Adam, and have never regained. They are already dead in 'trespasses and sins.' In that sense 'they have no life in them,' and therefore have none to be deprived of. They are already 'alienated from the life of God,' children of wrath,' aliens from the commonwealth of Israel," without God.' It cannot be therefore the loss of holiness or of God's favor that will constitute 'the second death,' to be inflicted on them at final judgment.

But it would be an utter abuse of language to call that taking away their life, or inflicting death upon them. We are waiving the question, whether happiness in itself, apart from holiness and the conscious enjoyment of God's favor, could ever properly be called life; and we are also waiving any consideration of the intermediate state—or else we should ask, What life does the rich man in Hades now possess, that can be taken from him when he is cast body and soul into Gehenna? The state of the wicked in this life is quite sufficient to decide the question. And we ask, What life do they possess, that can be taken away or destroyed, except their natural life, which consists in the possession of a reasonable soul and body?' What other death CAN they die, except physical death?

It would seem as if the matter were already 'practically settled' by the simple process of exhaustion. The 'theory' you 'frame' is, that the second death will merely be a continuation of their present spiritual death, that is alienation from God, with a vast addition to their unhappiness both in mind and body. But this is not the view that Scripture gives of it. Scripture tells them that they shall die, and not merely that they shall continue dead under circumstances of aggravated misery. It represents God Himself as inflicting death upon them, casting them into hell, and destroying them body and soul. And God never inflicts spiritual death upon anyone. They destroy themselves spiritually, and therefore God destroys them in some other way. What other way is there, except by depriving them of the only life they have left?

And is not that just the life, which our Lord Himself precisely defines to be what will be taken away from them? Fear not them which kill the body and are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell' (Matt. 10. 28). Now I put it to your conscience, whether you can find a more distinct and positive utterance than that upon any subject whatever in the whole Bible. Would it be possible for any human being who read that text with an unprejudiced mind, to have the smallest doubt as to its meaning? Does it not distinctly threaten that God will do to both soul and body that which man can do to the body, but is 'not able' to do to the soul—' kill 'them? And what is killing? Why, depriving of life. While the body retains one spark of life of any sort or description, it is not killed; and while the soul retains one spark of life of any sort or description it is not killed.

The mystification and confusion that have arisen on this subject result entirely from losing sight of the fact that man is a compound being. One part of him may die, while another part lives. And so because man's soul retains consciousness after his body dies, it is argued that consciousness may remain after the second death—the very essence of which is, that the whole man, soul and body, are to be destroyed.

Now, that the word 'destroy' in this text can only mean 'kill,' is admitted even by your great champion, Mr. Grant, who has been hailed by acclamation as the very Goliath of the controversy. Nay, so thoroughly impressed is his mind with the absolute oneness of the ideas, that, writing no doubt from memory, he actually substitutes the word 'kill' for 'destroy' in his quotation. To do him justice however it must be added, that he can scarcely find language to express his astonishment at any one who supposes the text to 'afford the most slender ground for the belief that God will in one single instance '—do that which we are told to fear Him, because He is able to do—' destroy the body and soul of any one of His creatures. It simply says that He can do it, that is, if so disposed.' To be the least afraid, that He ever may be so 'disposed,' is the most unwarranted notion that ever was entertained, so far as my reading extends, by any person possessing even an approach to average judgment.' I am sure you will agree with me, that the sling and stone are scarcely required here; although he 'has been followed by the selected champion of a religious magazine, the Bible Treasury, who considers it a proof of my carelessness,' that I have quoted our Lord as saying that God 'will destroy,' etc., when it is merely a question of power to be feared '—or rather not to be feared, if we are sure that He will never exercise it.

What then is your way of escape? I give it in extenso.

'It is clearly incumbent on anyone who advances a new theory contrary to the general belief of the Church to give full Scripture authority for his assertion. This Mr. M. affects to do, but with very small success. He first (p. 52) refers to the above quoted passage of God being " able to destroy both body and soul in hell," forgetting the statement in the book of Revelation (chap. 20. 10), that in hell, or in other words, the lake of fire and brimstone, they " shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." If the punishment be thus eternal, the word " destroy " cannot mean annihilation of being, because then the punishment would cease; but must be read as a judgment which swallows up both body and soul by an eternal punishment, which is an endless destruction.' Others must be left to judge of the success 'which attends the arguments that I 'affect' to bring (an expression by the way, that might have been spared, without much loss either to the strength of your position or the courtesy of your style), but it is easy to show the amount of success attending your refutation of them.

In the first place, so far from 'forgetting the statement in the book of Revelation,' four whole pages of the book you are criticizing are occupied with an endeavor to prove that that statement is perfectly consistent with the doctrine of destruction. Whereas all you can say is, that If the punishment be thus eternal, the word 'destroy' 'cannot mean annihilation of being;' that is, if your view of the passage, which you do not condescend 'to attempt to prove, be right, that which I endeavor to establish must be wrong. No doubt. But would it not have been more convenient 'if you had shown the unsoundness of my proffered explanation, instead of telling your readers that I had forgotten it?

But what is the principle of interpretation that you here lay down? Why this. That when we find our Lord making what appears to be as plain and positive a declaration as could be expressed in human language, with no parable or metaphor, but in direct categorical language, which declaration, so understood, is found to be in perfect accordance with the key-words of the whole Bible, Life and Death,—we are to go to one of the most highly figurative scenes imaginable, presented in vision to the mind of St. John some half century afterwards; we are to insist upon two or three words, picked out of it, being literally interpreted, while compelled to put a figurative interpretation upon almost every other word in the description,—and then, returning to our Lord's declaration, we are to use this gratuitous assumption as an instrument wherewith to dig it up by the roots and make it say the very reverse of what it appears to say, as well as contradict the united voice of all the Holy Scriptures from beginning to end. Any controversialist, who can convince people by such a process as this, has certainly achieved a great success.' More of this by-and-by. At present let us keep to the text we are examining.

It must be read as a judgment which will swallow up both body and soul by an eternal punishment, which is an endless destruction.' In other words, it must be read thus: Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him, which is able to inflict severe and lasting pain upon both soul and body in hell.' Need we go further? Why, man can inflict great pain even upon the soul, and do more to the body—he can kill it. Your friends are quite right in saying that Christ here puts it as 'a question of power;' and in that aspect, to kill is a greater exercise of power than to inflict. pain. If words have any meaning, our Lord here extends the power of killing the body to killing the soul also; He declares that while man only possesses the former power, God possesses the latter also; and He warns us that it will be exercised upon those who refuse to accept eternal life as a free gift from Him.

Why then, it may be asked, is the word destroy 'substituted for the word 'kill'? Undoubtedly to increase the force of the threatening. It is the same thing, but expressed by a stronger word—in fact, the strongest word that could be used.

The Christian Advocate says:— The real question is what is meant by the word " destruction." The word may mean either one of two things. It may mean the dissolution of existence. When we say a house was actually destroyed, we intend to say that although the materials may still remain, they have been so separated from each other, as by the action of a hurricane, that the house, as a house, no longer exists. But by an easy and immediate transition the word may mean utter ruin, the loss not of existence, but of all which makes existence delightful. Mr. Minton, wrongly assuming that death means dissolution, fixes the word destruction to the former meaning alone. We, perceiving that death does not mean dissolution, accept it in the latter meaning. The word itself is not a safe word to distinguish one system of belief from the other, because both use it, although they explain it differently.

'Now we freely admit that in some passages of Scripture the word " destruction " may possibly bear either meaning; but there are also a large number of passages, and this Mr. Minton has unfortunately overlooked, in which it cannot possibly bear the first meaning, and can only bear the second. We therefore plead, that the word should be interpreted in that meaning of an utter ruin, which it may consistently bear in every case, and not in that meaning of dissolution, which it can only bear in a few cases."

Consistently bear' the meaning of utter ruin in every case!' And only bear' its primary fundamental meaning 'in a few cases!' Let us see. The word in question is *apollumi*, for which Liddell and Scott's *Lexicon* gives as the first meaning, To destroy utterly, kill, slay, murder, demolish, lay waste; then very frequently in all relations, to destroy, ruin, spoil, waste, squander.' The derivation of the word makes the whole matter quite intelligible. It is literally to loose asunder or dissolve. When the constituent parts of any compound thing are separated from one another, it is destroyed—it ceases to exist as such; if the separation is partial, the destruction is partial; if entire, or if carried so far that the thing, as distinguished from its component parts, can no longer be said to exist, the destruction is complete.

When a man dies, dissolution' takes place, not necessarily dissolution of the component parts of his body, but dissolution of the component parts of the man, soul and body; and therefore as a man he is destroyed. One of his component parts may still retain its consciousness, but as a man he does not exist. His body may not be destroyed by death; its component parts may be held together by artificial means, so that it can be properly called a dead body. But its life is destroyed. Mr. Garbett says, The word is applied to the body, where it is distinctly asserted that the body survives after destruction: Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.' Distinctly asserted that the body will survive after destruction! Where? The text asserts that it will revive; but that is a totally different thing. It is a contradiction in terms to speak of a body surviving death. Yet this confusion has occurred again and again in the controversy. Thou turns man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.' 'How could they return if they had ceased to be?' asks Mr. Garbett. Why, by being raised up from the destruction. As men, they had 'ceased to be; 'but by resurrection they would again become men. Destruction, however complete, is not necessarily irremediable. I may completely destroy a house built of cards, and then build it up again as complete as ever. And God could, if He pleased, bring men back into existence, even after He had wholly destroyed them body and soul; but there is not the slightest intimation that He will.

The distinction between partial and complete destruction explains those other passages, about which there has been so much mystification. 'O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself'; partially as yet, but in such a way as, without help,' would ultimately lead to

entire destruction. But there is no necessity to pursue this farther. Let us return to the point from which we digressed, and endeavor to ascertain the usage of the word *apollumi* in the New Testament.

We must of course begin by excluding all those passages in which the destruction wrought by sin is referred to, inasmuch as those are just the disputed passages; the whole question being, What is the nature of the destruction which impenitent sinners bring upon themselves? Exclusive of these then, and counting parallel passages in the gospels only once, the word occurs in some form just thirty-six times in the New Testament. Of those, it means in no less than thirty cases, either the loss of life, generally by violence, or the putting an end to that which is said to be destroyed, or to perish, by which term the passive form of the word is frequently rendered. Here they are:— For Herod will seek the young child's life to destroy it' (Matt. 2. 13).

Lord, save us, we perish' (8. 25).

The bottles perish' (9. 17). When a leather bottle has burst, it is no longer a bottle, but a piece of leather.

He that finds his life shall lose (destroy) it, and he that loses (destroyed) his life for my sake, shall find it' (Matt. 10. 39; 16. 25; Mark 8. 35; Luke 17. 33; John 12. 25). These sayings were not all spoken at one time; but they are so similar, that I have put them together as one. Of course I do not here adduce the loss of life hereafter, which is just the point in debate, but the loss of the present bodily life, about which there can be no question.

Then the Pharisees went out and held a council against Him, how they might destroy Him' (12. 14).

He will miserably destroy those wicked men' (xxi. 41).

He sent forth His armies and destroyed those murderers' (xxii. 7).

All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword' (xxvi. 52).

And destroy Jesus' (xxvii. 20).

Ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire and into the waters to destroy him' (Mark 9. 32).

The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them' (Luke 9. 56). In answer to His disciples' suggestion, that fire should be called down from heaven to consume' the inhospitable Samaritans.

Which perished between the altar and the temple' (xi. 51). 'It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem' (12i. 33).

And I perish with hunger' (xv. 17).

The flood came, and destroyed them all' (xvii. 21).

There shall not a hair of your head perish' (xxi. 18).

The meat that perished' (John vi. 27).

The thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy' (x. 10). To kill persons, and to destroy property.

That the whole nation perish not' (xi. 50).

That is, cease to exist as a nation: 'The Romans shall come, and take away both our place and nation.' He also perished' (Acts v. 37).

I will destroy the wisdom of the wise' (1 Cor. 1. 19). Bring it to an end.

And were destroyed of serpents' (x. 9).

Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ, are perished' (xv. 18). If there be no resurrection, there is an end of their lives.

Cast down, but not destroyed' (2 Cor. iv. 9).

They shall perish, but Thou remains' (Heb. 1. 11). The 'earth' and heaven,' as at present constituted, will come to an end; but Christ will not.

The grace of the fashion of it perished' (Jas. 1. 11).

Gold that perished' (1 Pet. 1. 7).

Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished' (1 Pet. 3. 3).

Afterwards destroyed them that believed not' (Jude 1.5).

And perished in the gainsaying of Core' (Jude 1.11).

In some of the above passages the destruction spoken of was in the way of punishment for sin; but as it consisted, without dispute, in the loss of life, those texts are properly included in the list.

There remain just six passages, unconnected with the question at issue, in which some form of the word *apollumi* occurs. And in every one of those cases it is used in the purely idiomatic sense of losing, as it is correctly translated.

He shall in no wise lose his reward' (Matt. 10. 42).

What man of you having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them' (Luke 15. 4).

Or what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece' (15. 8).

Was lost and is found' (15. 24).

Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost '(John 6. 12).

That ye lose not those things which ye have wrought' (2 John 1.8).

It appears, therefore, that the word *apollumi* is never once applied to life, except in the sense of taking it away; and that if, when it is applied to the separate component parts of man's being, his body and his soul, we are to interpret it as merely meaning the infliction of pain upon them—'utter ruin,' as Mr. Garbet calls it, by the withdrawal of all that makes existence delightful,' or being swallowed up by eternal punishment,' as you call it,—meaning, thereby, an eternal process of punishing—we shall be using it in a sense in which it is never once used in any other connection by Christ or His apostles. And when we remember that this violence is to be done to the word in a passage where the destruction of man's soul and body by God are pointedly contrasted with man's own power to 'kill the body,' and his want of power to 'kill the soul,' it would really seem as if the force of demonstration could no farther go.

But it can.

We have brought forward,' says Mr. Constable in his masterly pamphlet,* a variety of phrases from the New Testament. We have now to consider the mighty bearing on their meaning of the fact, that this New Testament is written in the Greek tongue.' The argument which he has most ably worked out, is briefly this:—At the commencement of the Christian era, the question of man's natural immortality had long occupied the very first place of interest and importance in every school of philosophy throughout the world. The word *apollumi* was one of the principal terms employed in the controversy. Both sides employed it, and always in the same sense, that of destroying, or putting an end to. Plato contended that the human soul could not be destroyed, perish, or die, under any possible circumstances; his opponents maintained that it could. The word, therefore, was familiar to many of those whom our Lord and His apostles addressed in connection with the nature and destiny of man's soul. Is it conceivable, that they would have applied the very same word to the very same thing in a totally different sense? Would they not necessarily be understood as giving their decision on the great question that divided the educated mind of the world? And was not that decision evidently this,—that the truth lay between the two contending parties,—that what Plato said could happen to none, and his opponents said would happen to all, would really happen, though not at death, to the wicked alone—they would be destroyed, soul as well as body, and perish for ever.

Even this is not all. We have yet to consider that collection of texts which forms the fourth quotation in the foregoing list; -both because there is one point in all of them that requires to be cleared up, and because the last of them definitely shuts out the * The Nature and Duration of Future Punishment.' evasion by which the threatened loss of life is perverted into the loss of all that makes existence delightful.' On comparing the 28th and the 39th verses of Matthew 10. in the original, there appears to be a contradiction

between them. The word rendered 'soul' (psuche) in ver. 28, is the same as that rendered 'life' in ver. 29. So that, while denying to man the power of killing the psuche, our Lord speaks of it as actually being done. No one will pretend to doubt, that the word 'Jose' in ver. 39—the same that is rendered 'destroy' in ver. 28—refers there to the loss of life by violence. The same principle of reward would, of course, apply to the sacrifice of all that makes life delightful, but any possible sacrifices are here summed up in the greatest of all sacrifices, that of life. The person does not destroy it directly by his own act, but he allows it to be destroyed by others, rather than be unfaithful to his Master. How then can it be said, that man is not able to kill the psuche? 1 To understand this, we must remember that the soul is spoken of in Scripture under two different aspects.

First, as a distinct component part of man's being. Under this aspect it is sometimes distinguished from the spirit, and sometimes, from their close connection and similarity of nature, is used to include it. It is spiritual, not psuchical, death, under which man is now lying; but when he is at last destroyed 'body and psuche,' the psuche is admittedly meant to describe the whole immaterial part of his being; and that man is 'not able to kill.'

Secondly, it is used to represent simply the life of the body; 'The blood is the psuche.' The reason of which is given in Genesis 2. 7,— 'And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul;' that is, an animated being. Man's body was lifeless, until the soul was united with it, and then it became alive. Without the soul it cannot continue to live; and therefore the word soul is used to indicate the life of the body; as in Matthew 2. 20, 'For they are dead which sought the young child's psuche.' There being, then, an absolute necessity for regarding the psuche from two different points of view in ver. 28 and in ver. 39, unless we make our Lord directly to contradict Himself, and there being this simple scriptural way of accounting for the difference,—is there any reason for understanding the apollumi (destroy, or lose) at all differently in the two verses? Substantially, not the least. Except that when God is said to destroy the sinner's life He performs the act of destruction Himself, while in the case of him who loses his life, the act is performed by another, there is every reason for interpreting apollumi throughout, as the violent taking away of life. The contrast in both cases renders it impossible to put any other construction upon it. If the word had never been used in that sense elsewhere in the New Testament, instead of being nearly always so used, the contrast in these two sayings would imperatively demand that sense, and no other, to be put upon it here.

It is an encouraging sign of the manner in which the truth is gradually making its way, that one of my most candid and thoughtful opponents is compelled to admit that the final destruction of the wicked will involve the death of their bodies, though he maintains that their souls will still survive in hopeless misery. Nothing is required but steady perseverance and patient tracking of the argument through all its windings, to bring it to bay, and show that the popular theory has not an inch of ground to stand upon. The saying in ver. 39 would certainly of itself prove nothing more than that the body will be destroyed in the final judgment; but ver. 28 has already rendered such a view impossible,—body and soul are both to be destroyed. And the only question is, why in ver. 39 our Lord has expressed it in a way that seems to point only to a second destruction of bodily life.

It might appear at first sight, that He was led, by the comparison before Him, to mention one part only of the destruction which will come upon those who save their lives now by unfaithfulness to their Master. But I believe the true answer to be a far deeper and more instructive one. Does it not throw light upon the question, whether the fact of man's soul surviving the death of his body results from the natural conditions of his being, as in the case of a body surviving the loss of a hand or foot, or whether it results from the interference of Divine power, as a special provision required by the long process of human redemption; in other words, whether the soul, separated from the body, is naturally immortal, or not. I firmly believe the latter alternative, and that on no other ground can we meet the very powerful arguments that are brought against any conscious existence whatever of the disembodied soul, especially those derived from the marked prominence given in Scripture to the resurrection, and its all but ignoring of the intermediate state, in contrast to the prominence almost universally given in the Church to the believer's entrance into bliss, nay, even into 'glory,' at his death. The arguments are so strong on both sides that I am very much disposed to believe that the truth lies more between the two extreme views than either side would be willing to acknowledge. But however that I have no doubt, from the general tone of Scripture, that man's soul was not created to live alone, and that death, in the natural course of things, would be the death of his whole being. Of this the passage before us affords strong confirmation: 'He that saves his life shall lose it,'—his life; but with this difference, that the immaterial part of man's being survives, in some condition of which we know very little, the death which results from violence or natural decay; but it will not survive, in any form whatever, the death which is inflicted by God in the final judgment: both body and soul will be destroyed in hell.

One more text remains to be considered. In John 12. 25, our Lord repeats nearly the same formula, but with an addition that bars any possible misunderstanding, and gives the final coup de grace to the popular theory: 'He that loveth his life (psuche) shall lose it, but he that hated his life (psuche) in this world shall keep it, unto life (zoe) eternal.' Psuche is man's natural life, or soul; zoe is life, of any kind, in the abstract. Now, the words 'unto eternal life' in this verse, can only mean one of two things, both of which are fatal to your view. Zoe may mean only conscious life; in which case our Lord declares that the believer having been restored to full life, as a man consisting of body and soul in living union, he will never again be deprived of it; and the contrast of course could only be that the unbeliever will be deprived of it: what the one keeps the other loses. But zoe may also mean the highest condition of life to which man

can attain; in which case our Lord here expresses what in the parallel passages is only implied, that the result of the believer 'saving," finding,' or 'keeping 'his psuche will be the enjoyment of the highest kind of zoe forever. On this view of it, by far the most favourable for you, the fatal point is the distinction which it makes, and which your theory so strangely ignores, between psuche and roe. Your theory is, that everyone must save, and forever keep, his psuche, and that what the wicked lose will be merely zoe, in the sense of the highest happiness—which, as I before observed, they do not possess. You hold that all will be raised from the dead, to live forever, body and soul; the difference being that the righteous will keep their psuche unto everlasting zoe, while the wicked will keep their psuche unto everlasting death. But this is not what Christ says. He makes the difference to be, that the one will keep, while the other will lose, his psuche. In order to heighten the promise to the believer, He assures him, that he will not only live for ever, but attain to the highest condition of life. It would have been waste of words to say anything about the loss of zoe to the unbeliever, when He was threatening him with the loss of his entire psuche, the loss of 'himself.' Of course he cannot enjoy any zoe after his body and soul have been destroyed, and he has lost his entire life. But neither can he suffer any pain or sorrow. How can he feel anything without either a body or a soul? There will be nothing of him left. He will have 'perished and come to a fearful end,' and that 'end is destruction.' It would take too long to apply the same sifting process to the Old Testament, which I am satisfied would lead to the same result. But I cannot forbear quoting one passage, from its remarkable resemblance to those we have just been considering.

'When the wicked man turned away from his wickedness that he bath committed and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.' Now, what intelligent unprejudiced person, hearing these words for the first time, could ever imagine them to mean that the soul, and body too, of every wicked man will remain to all eternity as exquisitely alive, as that of the righteous, to all sensations, perceptions, and emotions, and that what he will gain by turning from his wickedness really is, that his life will prove a blessing to him rather than a curse? And yet to suppose that the words mean just what they say, is 'wild speculation,' a 'strange theory,' and a 'heresy that eats as doth a canker.' It is really unnecessary to discuss all those numerous metaphors by which Scripture illustrates the destruction of the wicked. Figures of speech, parables, and visions must of course be interpreted by the plain declarations and general tenor of God's word. Still I have no hesitation in saying, that they one and all afford the strongest possible confirmation of the view here advocated, and that they are totally irreconcilable with the idea of eternal life in misery. As I said before,— .

Every expression that human language can supply, and every metaphor that the material world can yield, to impress upon us that the wicked will wholly cease to exist, are piled one upon another, almost continuously, from Genesis to Revelation. They are said to perish—to pass away—to fade—to wither—to be destroyed—consumed—devoured—burnt up—ground to powder—cut down—plucked up by the roots—broken to shivers—put away like dross—besides other similar expressions. What dependence can be placed upon the teaching of Scripture, if all this means that they will live for ever, with all their powers and faculties of body and mind in full exercise, though at enmity with God, and consequently in a state of unmitigated suffering?'

Some of these expressions are applied, no doubt, to the death of refer to the process of destruction being more or less prolonged and severe. Of all these details we know absolutely nothing, nor can I see that the figures employed throw any light upon it. It is very strange, however, that you should represent me here as arguing that the destruction will take place 'at once,' when, through a very pardonable misunderstanding of an incautious expression of mine, you elsewhere represent me as holding that it will be prolonged through thousands of thousands of years.' It is with reference to that expression, that J. M. C.' endeavors to show my inconsistency by adding to what I say about the chaff' the words of course it would not exist for a moment.' The length of time required to burn up chaff is clearly not the point our Lord means to press, but the fact of its being burnt up.'

And how do you try to meet that fact? Why simply by saying that Mr. M. forgets what is said about the wheat in contrast to the chaff. You are quite right. I did forget it—until my eye fell upon your words. I felt so strongly the impossibility of such a figure as the burning up of chaff, representing anything that went on 'unceasingly' in the case of never ending beings' that I said, 'We really can do nothing, but ask anyone who still feels a doubt, to try the experiment.' But you have reminded me that we can do something more. We can ask him to consider the contrast between the wheat that is to be gathered into His garner,' and the chaff that is to be burnt up. What is the contrast? Why simply that the one is preserved in existence, and the other is put out of existence. Your words, of glory,' introduce an idea which is not in the figure at all. We know, of course, that wheat is laid up in a garner for future use; but that is not expressed in the figure. The Baptist mentions nothing more than its being preserved in the garner. So that your reply just comes to this: Mr. M. forgets that, for a right understanding of the figure, something must be added to the first part, which is not contained in it, and the second part must be held to mean the very reverse of that which it naturally represents; preserving the wheat in a garner must represent the glorifying of the righteous, and putting an end to the existence of the chaff must represent the continuance of the wicked in endless existence, but with the deprivation of what they never possessed, all that could make existence delightful.' Is this the remarkable concentration of logical scriptural truth,' which your reviewer considers to be characteristic of your book? I should think so; for it is decidedly the most vigorous effort you make to do away with the force of the numerous passages that follow. The rest of your replies are mostly references to the parable in Matt. 25, and to the Apocalyptic vision, which you assume to bear a certain meaning, and which, you appear to think, have only just to be quoted in order to annihilate every argument that can be brought on the

other side from the whole Bible. The entire Scriptures must manifestly be understood' in accordance with your interpretation of those two passages, and so of course there is an end of the matter. *Cadit quaestio.*

Well, this is my case. Now let us test the comparative strength of yours.

It rests mainly on four passages. And in this, as in some other points, it presents a curious analogy to the doctrine of transubstantiation; which also claims just four proof texts. I give them in parallel columns.

'These shall go away into everlasting punishment.'
Some to shame and everlasting contempt.'
Where their worm dies not, and their fire is not quenched.'
And shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.'

This is my body.'

'Is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

'Not discerning the Lord's body.'

Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.'

Now which of these two is at first sight, the stronger line of proof? What can appear more conclusive than either of them? Can anything be more manifest' than these plain declarations' to one who humbly submits 'to their teaching, who only asks, How reads thou?' and does not 'proudly lift himself up,' to explain them away by asking What thinks thou? 'Yet just what you say of one, I say of the other also: that when examined they utterly break down. I maintain that the one set of texts affords no more solid ground for believing in the doctrine of eternal evil, than the other does for believing in the doctrine of transubstantiation. Pray do not suspect me of instituting this comparison with the slightest desire to irritate. I do it solely in the hope of arresting the attention of those who will not give the question a moment's thought, because the language of Scripture appears, from their stand-point, too clear to admit of any possible doubt. Would not the same feeling justify a Romanist in refusing to hear a word against transubstantiation? Does These shall go away into everlasting punishment,' sound one whit more positive and precise than This is my body'?

In examining your proofs, I shall not assume that my point has been already proved, and therefore that these other texts must be interpreted so as to harmonize with it. If there should remain any doubt after the investigation is completed, it will of course be necessary to compare the opposing arguments, in order to ascertain how the various testimonies of Scripture may best be reconciled, and what is its verdict as a whole. But at first it is only fair to take your case, as I have taken my own, on its own merits. At the same time it is worth notice, as illustrating the ruling predominance of life and death in this question, that in all these four passages the punishment of the wicked is either asserted or implied to be death, the loss of life, whatever may be the nature of that life. But the righteous into life eternal.' Some to everlasting life." It is better for thee to enter life halt or maimed.' 'This is the second death.' So that it becomes somewhat difficult for one in my position not to take advantage too soon of the firm ground, which he believes himself to have already attained. Still I will endeavor to ascertain what light these texts threw on life and death, rather than what light my view of life and death throws upon them.

Before, however, taking them in detail, one cannot but be struck with their general character.

The first is an expression taken out of a most difficult parable, and which occurs nowhere else in the whole Bible. The moral of the parable is plain enough. But in that aspect it has no bearing whatever on the question. It is only in its prophetic aspect that we are now concerned with it; and in that aspect it is beset with difficulties. Whether it refers to something that will take place at the beginning, or at the end, of the millennium; whether the sheep and goats represent nations' or individuals, and in either case what nations or individuals,—whether Jew and Gentile, Christian and Heathen, true and false professors in the Church; and lastly who are Christ's brethren,' apparently distinguished from both the sheep and the goats; all these questions are hotly disputed. And yet it is out of such a parable as this, that an expression is selected to be unquestionably the main pillar of so stupendous an edifice as the theory of endless misery, and to be the name by which it is universally known. The future doom of the wicked is spoken of in almost every part of the Bible. It seems very unlikely therefore that, amongst the multiplicity of expressions used with regard to it, there should be only one, and that in a parable, and a most difficult parable, which naturally and precisely indicates what that doom is to be. Yet what is the title for the popular doctrine to which its advocates most tenaciously cling? Death and destruction are constantly recurring terms, and are admitted to set forth the final punishment of the wicked; but they are never used as the distinguishing name of the common doctrine, though eternal death,' a phrase which does not occur in Scripture, is sometimes employed, to wrest the word death 'out of the hands of their opponents. Eternal punishment'—this is the stereotyped name of the doctrine.

The next passage is another prophetic statement, also embarrassed with a very serious difficulty. The time when the foretold resurrection is to occur seems fixed by the context to be at the beginning of the millennium. But in Rev. 20., after an account of the

resurrection of the righteous, we read—' But the rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished.' Various explanations, more or less probable, have been offered; but after all, the solution remains very doubtful. Yet this is the second pillar of the theory 'you have framed.' The third consists of two metaphors in combination. I shall hope to show that both of them are directly against you. But if they were ever so strongly in your favor, it seems highly improbable that such a tremendous doctrine as that of endless torment should have to rest so much of its weight on two similitudes.

And what shall we say of the last? It is taken out of a scenic vision, presented to the mind of the apostle John when he was in the Spirit; its figurative character being sufficiently shown by the fact, that an angel appears as standing in the sun, and calling all the fowls of heaven to a great supper. I am not saying, observe, that such visions can teach us nothing, and must be excluded from all consideration, upon this or any other subject. But I say that when a doctrine, of which if true the whole Bible speaks from first to last, has to depend so largely for proof upon the interpretation of such a vision as this, we cannot but suspect that it is really without foundation.

Suppose we agreed to waive everything, on either side, of a purely figurative character, whether parables, metaphors, or visions, together with passages admitted to be of doubtful meaning on other ground than that connected with the question at issue between us, and to abide by the plain prose statements that form the staple of Scripture testimony on the subject,—where would you be? Simply nowhere. You would be out of court. You know perfectly well, that without those four passages quoted above, the popular doctrine could not exist for an hour. And what can be more improbable, than that such a doctrine, if true, should rest almost entirely upon such a foundation? But let us see what, after all, it really amounts to.

To take the first. Suppose I held a portrait in my hand, and presenting it to a Romanist said, This is myself: 'would he understand me to mean that it was my veritable living self? 'Of course not,' he would reply, if asked the question. And there is the first crack in his supposed infallible proof of transubstantiation from This is my body: he admits that the word is' does not necessarily mean all that he has supposed. Whether it does mean that or not in our Lord's declaration, still remains to be proved. But the question is opened; and when that has once been done, the rest is easy. Well, I present to you Gen. 49. 26, Unto the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills; 'and Exod. 40. 15, For their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations;' and I ask, whether you really believe that Aaron's priesthood will continue throughout the generations of his children to all eternity, and that the mountain ranges of this earth will continue substantially as they are to all eternity? Of course not, you reply; the Aaronic priesthood is already 'abolished,' although his generations are still going on, and we are told that one day the elements shall melt with fervent heat, that the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. And there is at once the first crack in your infallible proof. Everlasting' does not necessarily mean endless. Why are you so sure that it does so in the passage before us? Your answer is ready: because the same word, though rendered differently in our translation, is in the same verse applied to the life of the righteous, which we know to be endless. This is, without doubt, the Sebastopol of your position. Thousands of persons, who are wholly unable to follow anything like an argument, can feel the full force of this fact. When they once know that the word is the same in each clause of the sentence, they are perfectly confident that it must bear the same meaning in each.

A list of texts in which the word eternal' is applied to things that certainly are endless, whether it always refers to their endlessness or not, has gone the round of the pamphlets and magazines, and is evidently regarded as quite decisive. It is somewhat naively headed, The following texts are selected from amongst many others.' No doubt they are—most carefully selected, to the rigid exclusion of any single text, in which eternal' is applied to things of confessedly limited duration. What must be the weakness of a cause that has to be defended by such a maneuver as that! But we are told, that if the word eternal 'does not prove the life of the wicked to be endless, neither can it prove the life of the righteous to be so. Of course not. How could anything be proved to be endless, merely by the use of a word which is applied to the hills' and to Jewish ordinances? The believer's hope of endless life rests on no such precarious basis. Mr. Barlow truly says, that if every passage in which the word occurs were struck out of the Bible, the immortal life of the righteous would shine forth brilliantly from its pages with luster all but undimmed.' The righteous are to rise incorruptible, their bodies being fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body; they are to receive a kingdom which cannot be moved, an inheritance that fades not away; they can die no more; they are to be ever (always) with the Lord; their life is hid with Christ in God, and while Christ lives they shall live also; for their mortality has put on immortality, corruption has put on incorruption, and death is swallowed up in victory. Is any such language used of the future life of the wicked? No. Yet it is said, that the two doctrines 'must stand or fall together,'—that if the endless life of the wicked cannot be proved, neither can the endless life of the righteous. What an argument!

But why are you so sure that it means endless in either case? That eternal life' means endless life elsewhere cannot prove it. We know that the expression is used in at least two different senses, namely as a present possession, and as an object of hope. God hath given unto us eternal life;' Ye have eternal life;' yet, 'The end everlasting life;" In the world to come everlasting life.' Why may there not be some third aspect, in which eternal life' can be presented, differing from, however closely connected with, the other two?

Now here it becomes necessary to ascertain the precise meaning of the word *aionios* rendered eternal' or everlasting.' And happily, there is no difficulty either in its etymology or in its usage. It is simply the adjective of the word *aion*, an age or period. It means

therefore, belonging to, or lasting throughout some age or period. What that period is, in any specified instance, can only be known from the nature of the case, from the context, or from collateral evidence. Sometimes it is left quite indefinite, as in the everlasting hills.' Sometimes it is unmistakably precise, as in everlasting consolation and good hope;' where the assurance is, that the consolation provided will never fail us, but will last throughout the whole period of our earthly life, that is as long as we require it. So also St. Paul says, I will eat no flesh while the world stands,' literally to the age,' elsewhere translated 'for ever.' The aion there is the period of his own life, and, if the saying was to be rendered idiomatically, it should have been translated as long as I live.' The question therefore stands thus. Is there any aion, except an endless one, to which the eternal life 'in Matt. 25. 46. can refer? And if so, is there any reason to believe, that it does refer to such aion there?

Turn to Luke 20. 35, They which shall be counted worthy to obtain that world (aion) and the resurrection from the dead.' You and I believe that the age there spoken of is the millennial age, and that the resurrection spoken of is the first resurrection,' or the resurrection of the just,' the words being literally the resurrection, that from out of the dead '—not merely from death, but from amongst those who are dead. Then why might not the obtaining of the blessedness connected with that age, by resurrection in the case of the dead or by 'change 'in the case of the living, be called aional life,' which we render 'eternal life,' deriving our word 'eternal 'from the Latin cetas, or age? And would there not be a peculiar propriety in this, if, at the same time that those who are counted worthy enter into the life of that age, the members of the visible Church, then living on the earth, who are counted unworthy, incur distraction from the presence of the Lord 'and are 'gathered in bundles to be burned '?

Is there any reason then to suppose, that it is this preliminary judgment upon the living at Christ's coining, rather than the final consummation, which is represented in the parable before us? I think• very strong reason.

1. The question asked by the disciples was, 'What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world (aion)? 'Their question was confined to what would happen at the close of this dispensation. It is not likely that the Lord's answer extended to events a thousand years afterwards. It did not do so in the direct part of His reply (Ch. 24.), it did not do so in either of the two parables immediately following, and there is no sign that it does so in the third parable.

2. The period seems precisely fixed by the words, 'When the Son of man shall (have) come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory.' 3. A further presumption is afforded by the absence of any reference to resurrection. It is quite true that there will be a resurrection at that time: but as it will be of the saints alone, the symmetry of the parable would have been injured by its introduction, and the judgment is represented in reference only to the living. On the other hand, if it refers to the final judgment, its silence about 'the dead small and great,' who will have to stand before God, is absolutely unaccountable.

Whether, therefore, the persons judged be 'nations 'or individuals, there seems every reason to conclude, that the aional life' into which the 'blessed 'then enter, is the life of the millennial kingdom, and consequently that the aional punishment' suffered by the 'cursed 'is exclusion from that kingdom. These latter are punished with aional destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when he shall come to be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe; 'that is, their destruction will be aional or age-long in its effect; just as the fire which consumed Sodom and Gomorrah, is called aional fire,' because of its lasting effect. Whether the aional fire,' into which the wicked depart (Matt. 25. 41), is to be understood exclusively in the same sense, or whether it includes the punishment to be endured by them in the invisible world throughout that age before the day of judgment, may be open to question.

With regard to the subjects of this final judgment, I feel persuaded, notwithstanding the difficulty connected with the word 'nations,' that it must refer to individuals. To repeat what I have said in 'The Glory of Christ,' 2nd edit. p. 150 The interpretation given in Sermon 6. of Matt. 25. 46 is defective, from not taking the parable and its context sufficiently into account. Like the two preceding parables, it describes, but under another aspect, the separation that will be made, at our Lord's coming, between believers and unbelievers in the visible Church. All three set forth the importance of being ready to meet the Lord when He comes. The first shows the necessity of possessing the Spirit of God in our hearts. The second shows the necessity of devoting ourselves to Christ's service. The third shows what is the essence of that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord, namely, love. The terms in which the consequences of being accepted or rejected are described, rise in strength and dignity according to the different aspects under which our Lord presents Himself in. the three parables. The Bridegroom merely refuses to acknowledge the careless virgins and to open the door for them, while those who are ready go in with Him to the marriage supper. The Master promises His faithful servants places of still higher trust, with immediate participation in His own rejoicing, while He orders the unfaithful servant to be bound hand and foot and cast into the darkness without, where he will bitterly lament his folly. The King raises His loyal subjects to a throne, while He drives away those who have been rebels at heart into " everlasting fire." But in each case the rewards and the punishments are only different aspects of the same things, namely, admission to, or exclusion from, the millennial kingdom. The first parable suggests only the inauguration of it by the marriage feast; the second adds the element of continued and increased usefulness and honor; which the third raises to the height of reigning with Christ.' Post-Millennialists, however, will altogether deny this whole system of

interpretation, and will maintain that, as it must refer to the final judgment, and there will then be no aion left, except the eternal one, the word 'eternal' must necessarily mean endless. And suppose it does, how much nearer would the passage be to proving the doctrine of endless misery? Not one atom. In order to make it prove that, they would have to prove that the word 'eternal' cannot be applied to anything which is accomplished once for all, but the effects of which are eternal; that for anything to be eternal, it must be in eternal process of accomplishment. This is your assumption throughout. Others have asserted it more confidently. But what then are we to make of 'eternal judgment'?

Will God be eternally judging the wicked, as well as eternally punishing them? Will not the judgment take place once for all? In what sense can it be called eternal, except that its effects are eternal—that is, if the word be used in its most extended meaning—in other words, that it will be final and irreversible? And what are we to make of the 'eternal redemption,' which Christ is spoken of as 'having wrought out for us'? It is distinctly declared to have been accomplished once for all: it will not be a continuous process lasting through eternity. It is called eternal, because its effects will be eternal. And why should not punishment be called eternal on the same principle? If eternal judgment is not eternal judging, nor eternal redemption eternal redeeming, why should eternal punishment be eternal punishing.

No, it is replied, the act of punishing will not continue forever it is done once for all, when the wicked are cast into hell; but the effect of that act could not be said to continue after the persons on whom it was performed had ceased to exist. One is really ashamed to have to answer such a quibble. Why the cessation of their existence is the effect of it; and as long as they remain out of existence, the effect of their punishment remains. If the effect did not continue they would come back again into existence. Take any given man, who is 'destroyed body and soul in hell.' At any future moment throughout eternity, that man, if he had accepted life in Christ, would have been in the highest state of blessedness that his nature was capable of, with the certain prospect of continuing so forever. What is he? Nothing! Is there no difference between those two states—nothingness and the highest blessedness? Is the effect of a punishment, which deprived him of the one by reducing him to the other, absolutely nothing? Did the effect of the punishment last only during the time that he was alive to be conscious of it, that is, while the process of destruction, whether longer or shorter, was going on? Surely common sense is enough to answer the question.

'Everlasting non-existence,' says J. M. C., is absurd; for how can we say of nothing that it is everlasting? 'If he were talking about non-existence, and were asked what he was talking about, could he reply—nothing? If not, then non-existence is something. Or, to put it in another way, we maintain that the effect of destruction will be the loss of everlasting life. Does he really consider that to be nothing? If so, how highly he must value everlasting life!

But we have direct scriptural authority besides. St. Jude says that Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.' Here not only is the fire called eternal, because of its lasting effect, though it has long since ceased to burn; but the cities are said to be still suffering the vengeance, though they have long since ceased to exist. An attempt has been made to apply St. Jude's words to the punishment, which the souls of the Sodomites are now undergoing in Hades. But who would ever have imagined such a thing, except from the necessities of controversy? How are they set forth (literally—lie before us) for an example'? They are not set forth at all. They are not lying before us. They have been taken away, and we know nothing about them, except that they will hereafter be reunited to their bodies, and appear before God for judgment. It is objected, and quite seriously—I am not inventing it—that it was not their cities which committed the sins for which they were punished. But neither was it their souls. The cities' are spoken of in the usual complex meaning, with reference either to the inhabitants, or to their dwellings, or to both. The city of London returns four members to parliament. But if the city of London were burnt down, the inhabitants might or might not perish with it. When, for the sin of its inhabitants, God made an example of Sodom and Gomorrah, most of the inhabitants perished in the overthrow. As cities they were destroyed; as cities they no longer exist; yet as cities they are said to be still suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. That the souls of their inhabitants are still living somewhere else, has nothing whatever to do with the matter. Whether regarded, therefore, from the pre-millennial, or from the post-millennial point of view, this first grand proof of your theory wholly fails. It is not inconsistent with the doctrine of eternal misery, but it affords no proof of it whatever.

In confirmation of the above, may be quoted a passage from the apocryphal Book of Wisdom—not as inspired authority, but as showing that St. Jude only uses what was amongst the Jews a recognized mode of speech. In chapter a. 6, 7, we read, 'When the ungodly perished, she delivered the righteous man, who fled from the fire which fell down upon the five cities, of whose wickedness even to this day the waste land that smoked is a testimony.' Whatever date may be assigned to this Book of Wisdom, it is quite as certain that, when it was written, the land was not smoking, as that when St. Jude wrote, the fire was not burning. The fire is called eternal, because it was the means of inflicting upon the guilty cities the eternal punishment of irremediable destruction. And the land is said to be still smoking, because there was left a permanent memorial of the smoke that once ascended from it as the smoke of a furnace.' Another instance of the way in which actions are spoken of as still continuing, because of their effects continuing, is furnished by 1 Kings 9. 13: 'And he called them the land of Cabul unto this day.'

Your second attempted proof, however, is a more disastrous failure still. For it not only breaks down most completely, but also pierces the hand that leaned upon it. It is absolutely inconsistent with your theory, while strikingly consistent with mine. You and I believe in the plenary inspiration of Scripture. Then I ask you whether, in your conscience, you believe it to be accidental, that in Daniel 12. 2, the word 'everlasting' is attached to contempt' and not to 'shame'? According to your view, would it not have been more natural to say, 'some to everlasting shame and contempt,' than 'some to shame and everlasting contempt'? Can any reason be assigned for the present arrangement, except that the contempt will be everlasting in some sense, in which the shame will not be so? And is not this precisely the 'strange theory' and 'wild speculation' that you denounce as 'infidelity'? Shame is subjective: contempt is objective. We feel shame for ourselves, contempt for others. I believe that the shame which the wicked will feel must necessarily terminate with their destruction; but that the contempt felt for them by all holy creatures—especially on account of their ingratitude to Him who died for them, and their folly in choosing the momentary pleasures of sin rather than to sit on Christ's throne—will be as eternal as the remembrance of them. If the memory of the just is blessed' after they have passed away from this earthly scene, will not the memory of the unjust be accursed, even after they have passed out of existence? It is quite open to doubt, whether the remembrance of every individual sinner will be preserved for ever; it may be enough that their guilt, and the destruction incurred by it, collectively, should never be forgotten. But however this may be, I maintain that the 'everlasting contempt' to which they will awake, by no means necessitates their remaining eternally conscious of it; and that the 'everlasting' being pointedly attached to contempt,' and not to shame,' affords a very strong presumption that they will not do so.

In this view I am confirmed by observing that in Isaiah 66. 24, the very same word, in the original, is used with precisely the same reference to the abhorrence in which the memory of certain heinous offenders will be held on a future day, after their destruction from off the face of the earth: 'And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses 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 (contempt, as in Daniel 12. 2) unto all flesh.' It is no use endeavoring to escape this by any reference to what their souls may be suffering in Hades at the same time. The prophet says not one word about that. It is their carcasses that are the objects of abhorrence, that is, the memory of the guilt which they incurred while in the body, and the bodily destruction which came upon them in judgment.

Their carcasses could feel no shame; yet their carcasses are an abhorring' or contempt.

If this second text, however, raises a strong inference against your theory, the third is as fatal to it as it would be possible for any metaphorical language to be. It is a point blank contradiction of the very doctrine that you adduce it to establish. It would be difficult to conceive of any two images that our Lord could have put together, more hopelessly irreconcilable with the idea of never-ending misery, than the 'worm' and the 'fire.' I felt, when pointing out the analogy between- your texts and those in favor of transubstantiation, that this must be excepted from what was said of their prime fade conclusiveness. What more striking instance can be found of the strong hold which an impression once established retains upon the mind, than the fact of these two figures being generally supposed to represent endless life in misery. It is quite intelligible that the English words 'eternal punishment' should do so; and even that, to persons who do not stop to reflect, the words 'shame and everlasting contempt' should wear the same aspect. But the more I think of it, the more perplexed I feel to understand why it does not instantly strike every mind, that a human body being eaten by a worm, and consumed by fire, represents its being put an end to, and not its being kept in eternal existence. We can only judge what is meant by a figure from what we know would actually happen in the supposed case. Now, not one whit the less certainly than we know, as is used against the Romanist, that a human body cannot be in two places at once, do we know that a human body, exposed continuously to the ravages of a worm, will in time be all eaten away, so that nothing but a skeleton is left; and that a human body exposed continuously to the action of fire, will in time be burnt to ashes, bones and all, so that nothing whatever is left, except the unconscious atoms into which it has been dissolved. How can this possibly represent never-ending existence?

It is contended that the worm not dying, and the fire not being quenched, implies the continuance in being of that on which they prey. To which it may be asked, in reply, how it would have been possible for our Lord more pointedly to exclude such a supposition, than by insisting on those very facts? If the worm could die, or the fire be quenched, before they had done their work upon the body, it might possibly be rescued, or left half consumed. But if neither the ravages of the worm, nor the burning of the fire, can be checked, then nothing can save the body which is exposed to them from complete extinction of being.

If it be asked, What becomes of the worm and the fire, after the body is consumed? it is enough to reply, that we have nothing whatever to do with that. The action of the drama, if we may use the expression, closes with the consumption of the human body. The worm does not die, nor is the fire quenched, until that is accomplished. What becomes of them then it is idle to inquire. And I will venture to say, that no one would ever imagine the idea of an eternal worm to be contained in this passage, if they did not bring to it the assumption that it is an eternal being who is preyed upon by it. Without that assumption the image is as plain and simple as possible. With it, you have the monstrous incongruity of an eternal worm, and a human body which is being eternally devoured by it, but yet remains forever as whole and entire as if the worm had never touched it. You must really forgive me for asking whether this supposition is much less extravagant than the Romanists' belief, that millions of persons may be eating Christ's literal body at one and the same moment on earth, and yet that very body be all the time in heaven as whole and entire as if no one were eating it at all.

It is no reply to say that the punishment represented is not merely that of the body but of the soul also, or even as some would now say, of the soul only. For the figure used to represent it is the consumption of a body by a worm and by fire; and that figure does represent destruction, but does not represent eternal existence.

The word their,' which some lay stress upon, has no bearing whatever upon the question. 'Their worm' may mean nothing more than the worm which preys upon them; but it may also be meant to indicate the necessary moral connection between spiritual death, when beyond recovery, and utter destruction. Figuratively speaking, the carcass breeds its own worms, which, if allowed free scope, will in time eat it all away. Spiritual death could not be said to produce the conscience, any more than it can be said to produce the instrument of destruction, whatever that may be. In either case, the figure can only mean that it necessarily brings about the result; whether that result be eternal remorse or eternal destruction.

A much stronger argument, to my mind, could be drawn, though I have no recollection of ever seeing it urged, from the worm,' being spoken of instead of the 'worms,' which, as the image is undoubtedly taken from the corruption of a dead body, we should more naturally expect to find. But in the first place, a reference to Hebrew usage renders it very doubtful indeed whether to a Jew this would require any explanation at all. They seem to have used the singular as naturally as the plural form. Neither was there any worm therein' (Exod. 16. 24) I said to the worm, Thou art my mother' (Job 17. 14). 'The worm shall sweetly feed on him' (Job 24. 20). "He worm is spread under thee, and worms cover thee' (Isa. 14. 11). And the worm shall eat them like wool' (Isa. 51. 8). And in the next place, supposing that anything is intended by it, a reference to Isaiah lxvi. 24, will afford proof that it need not refer to conscience, and a strong presumption that it does not. Carcasses cannot have consciences; yet we read that their worm shall not die; 'and I have already shown—or, to spare you the necessity of correcting me, I think I have shown—that there is no reference in the prophecy to what the souls of those transgressors might be suffering in Hades.

If therefore our Lord had any special reason for using the singular, rather than the plural, I should be disposed to think it was to indicate that the instrument will be single, though represented under the twofold figure of a devouring worm and a consuming fire. I can remember no image of it that is not single—unless it be the stripes.' And that very plurality, as well as their varying number, strongly incline me to believe, that they represent some retributive suffering, which all the impenitent will undergo, according to the degree of their guilt, before their final destruction; and that the destruction, which is the end of all alike who have not life in Christ, will be the result of someone exercise of Divine power, though not necessarily instantaneous in its effect, the nature of which we are perhaps wholly unable to comprehend.

And this leads me to consider more closely the words unquenchable fire,' on which you and others lay so very much stress. I have already pointed out the unconscious fallacy by which you persuade yourselves that unquenchable fire' means endless fire. You bring to the passage the postulate of endless existence in the case of those exposed to the fire, and so transfer the idea of endlessness to the fire which consumes them. You then make use of the supposed endlessness of the fire to prove the endlessness of those subjected to it. If you saw the words unquenchable fire' in any other connection, you would never reason thus. If you were told, of a great fire which had broken out in some town, that nothing could quench it, you would not for a moment understand the speaker to have any idea of eternity in his mind. You would naturally understand him to mean, that the fire could not be stayed in its progress by any external means that were employed for the purpose. You would naturally conclude, that when it had consumed all within its reach, it would die out of itself. If you afterwards visited the place, in company with your informant, and found not a spark of fire left, you would not turn round upon him and say, How could you tell me that nothing was able to quench this fire, when I see that it has been quenched? Then why should you suppose our Lord to have meant that the fire, which He said was unquenchable,'* and is not quenched,' will burn on forever? Why, just because you assume that its fuel will last forever—the very thing that you adduce the passage to prove. There is nothing whatever in the passage itself to suggest the idea of eternity. On the contrary there is everything to exclude it; because in the natural fact, which constitutes the basis of the figure, we know perfectly well, that any number of human bodies exposed to the continuous action of a fierce fire would sooner or later be entirely consumed, and that then, unless some other fuel were supplied to it, of which our Lord gives no hint, the fire would certainly die out. Again and again throughout your book the necessity of your position compels you to slip in the assumption of indefeasible immortality. Nowhere in Scripture is there any indication of annihilation of being; it is always treated in the sense of continuing to be.' I reply, that here is a most distinct indication of what you call annihilation of being.' Impossible, you say, or how could the fire continue burning after its fuel was all consumed? It will not do so, I answer when it has done its work, it will die out. That cannot be, you say, for its fuel is always spoken of in the sense of continuing to be.' On p. 99 you argue that the eternity of being in man is confirmed . . . by their eternal endurance of punishment; 'and on p. 118, that whatever the weight of punishment, it must be as eternal as the being who suffers it.' And so it goes round.

This violation of all common sense, if you will forgive the expression, in making unquenchable to mean endless, is the less excusable because of its being equally opposed to the usage of sacred, profane, and ecclesiastical writers. In Jeremiah 17. 27, we read, 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 'which you

will hardly contend to mean, that Jerusalem will continue in flames to all eternity. Homer, as you know, speaks of an unquenchable fire' breaking out amongst the Trojan ships,—which certainly is not burning now. And Eusebius tells us, that Cronion and Julian were scourged, and afterwards consumed with unquenchable fire; 'also that Epimachus and Alexander, who had continued for a time in prison, enduring innumerable sufferings from the scrapers and scourgers, were afterwards destroyed with unquenchable fire,'* which has unquestionably long since died out.

But now let us consider the emblem of fire in itself. It is the ever-recurring emblem in Scripture to depict the doom of the ungodly. In this application, fire predominates in the figurative, as decidedly as death does in the unfigurative, language of holy writ. And the difference between your view of it and mine is that you regard it, in such cases, as an instrument of torture, I regard it as an instrument of destruction. First, let me ask you, which of these is in itself the more natural and obvious view? Unquestionably the latter; and for this reason 'Fire,' to borrow Mr. Constable's words, destroys whatever it injures, 'if its action be not interfered with. It is the most destructive agent known, and consequently there is no more natural or forcible emblem to represent a destroying power. To destroy, fire has only to be let loose and work its will. But to torture, it has to be restrained; it must be only partially applied, and carefully watched, otherwise it will cease to torture, and go on to destroy. Next, let me ask you, in which of these two senses does Scripture more frequently speak of fire, when the future punishment of the wicked is not the subject referred to? In other words, taking those passages only about which there could be no dispute, what impression would become associated with fire in the mind of one familiar with his Bible If you have any doubt as to this, a glance at the Concordance would, probably astonish you. I have not time for a complete analysis of the passages, and a partial one would of course be unreliable. But read and judge for yourself. One more question, however, I must press, namely, What impression is conveyed by those passages which do speak of fire in connection with the doom of the ungodly—not to those who assume that they must live forever, but to those who examine the passages simply to ascertain' whether they will do so or not? What do we commonly understand by anything being burnt up, consumed, devoured, or destroyed by fire? Do we understand anything less than that it is put an end to? There may be doubt, in any given case, whether the injury is sufficient to justify the use of such terms; and they may be often used in-correctly. But they are only used on the supposition that the thing spoken of has been put an end to; if it is partially consumed or destroyed, then part of it has been put an end to; if wholly consumed or destroyed, then there is nothing of it left,—of it, as distinguished from what formerly composed it.

The key text, I apprehend, to these passages is Hebrews 12. 29; 'For our God is a consuming fire.' To all who oppose Him, He is in His nature, and will at length prove Himself to be, a consuming fire. Whatever be the instrument employed, it is God Himself, in the exercise of His own omnipotent power, who will ultimately consume all evildoers. Now, what is meant by a consuming fire? P Why a fire which makes an end of whatever it seizes upon. According to your view, God is only a scorching fire, which damages, injures, tortures, but does not consume. One of my critics is polite enough to call this argument 'clap trap;' by which, I venture to submit, he shows his incapacity to perceive a manifest and, in this instance, vital difference. It is quite true that the same fire may either scorch or consume. But it would be called a scorching or a consuming fire with reference to its effect on that which was exposed to it. It is only fair, however, to let you speak for yourself. Here is your explanation of the passage in question.

Further Mr. M. alludes to the passage (Heb. 10. 27), " There remained . . a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (p. 56), and dwells upon the word " devour," which he alleges, when coupled with the words "fiery indignation" must mean utter destruction. But surely this must be interpreted with reference to the explanation in Revelation, to which we have before referred, and there is nothing in the word " devour" which is not fully answered by the being swallowed up in the Lake of Fire. The passage in Isaiah (33. 14), distinctly interprets the expression, " Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire P Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"

The following reference to passages—" Our God is a sown: mina fire " (Heb. 12. 29), " The grass withered " (1 Pet. 1. 24), " The world passes away " (1 John 2. 17), which Mr. M. quotes, it is needless to dwell upon. The expressions " consume," " wither," "passes away," must be read in connection with the passages above quoted. If we would understand after what manner God consumes, we are told by an " unquenchable fire," not annihilating, but continuously punishing. If we seek to know how all flesh withered, we read, man passes under the first death, and will be judged unto the second death; and although this world passes away in the fires of judgment, there shall be a new heaven, and a new earth. So studied, these passages have no bearing whatever on the question, and cannot be in any manner held to support his views.' Now, without referring again to the very characteristic principle of interpretation involved in taking a highly figurative apocalyptic vision as the explanation' of plain language in previous apostolic epistles,—and asserting that such language is 'distinctly interpreted' by a passage which has no reference to future punishment at all,—let us see what the 'explanation' really comes to. It lies in a nutshell; namely, the substitution of 'swallowed up' for 'devoured.' In other words, you explain one figure by putting another in its place. The two things are wholly different; and in this case just express the difference between your view and mine. A thing may be 'swallowed' whole and entire, that is without being destroyed; but if it be devoured, or eaten up, as the word is literally, it must be destroyed. Swallowing indicates only a change of position, or of outward circumstances,—precisely what you understand future punishment to be. Devouring, or eating up, indicates a change, and that a destructive one, in the thing itself,—precisely what I understand future punishment to be. And just what is expressed figuratively by a fire devouring, is expressed literally by a fire consuming. Whatever it devours or consumes, it puts an end to. If, therefore, the lake of fire means what

you assume it to mean, it does not explain, but contradict, these two statements in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as well as a multitude of other similar expressions: it shows that the inspired writers used inappropriate language. God consumes, we are told, by an unquenchable fire.' Quite true; but when you add, not annihilating but continuously punishing,' you simply deny that He does consume. You hold that the flames will enwrap, or swallow up, their victims, who will there remain with all their powers and faculties in the fullest exercise, perpetually scorched, but never consumed.

And this is meekly sitting at the feet of Jesus; "humbly taking and resting on God's own revelation; bowing our heads in reverence; abiding under the plain declaration of God's word; and simply ascertaining what the Scriptures reveal"! If I have 'become a fool' in thus reminding you of your own words, pray forgive me the wrong, for you have compelled me.

And now we come to the last great pillar of your system, in which you seem to place more confidence than on almost any other—the Apocalyptic vision. But here a difficulty presents itself. You have not given us the remotest hint of your reasons for believing that those visions support your view. You seem to think that the mere quotation of bits of sentences, or even the barest reference to them, is abundantly sufficient to prove your point. Yet you were answering a book which professed, at least, to show that the visions in question prove nothing of the kind. It is true, you begin by saying, that from the impatience of the reading public, you cannot attempt an enlarged study' of the subject, and must be content with 'brief notes;' but brief as are all your notes on the arguments adduced against you, this one has not elicited any note whatever, long or short. Surely I have better reason than you had, to plead that 'it would be more convenient,' if, when professing to show the unsoundness of certain reasoning, you 'condescended' to give your readers some idea of what the reasoning on either side was, instead of assuming the reasons on one side to be so palpably futile, and those on the other so manifestly incontrovertible, that neither of them required even to be stated. However, as you have quoted the texts, we at least know where to look; and I must endeavor to supply your lack of service by putting your case as strongly as it appears to my own mind capable of being put. It is not easy to act counsel for both sides; but I will do my best.

First, however, let me state more fully than I did before, the grounds on which these visions appear to me to confirm what I believe to be the uniform teaching of Scripture on the destruction of evil doers, and the termination of evil.

In the first place, the judgments which St. John sees, as taking place at the beginning and the end of the millennium, naturally represent this. They are threefold. A city is burnt to the ground so completely that it is 'found no more at all' (chap.

Certain persons or things are cast into a lake of fire; and the remnant' are 'slain with the sword.' Now there can be no doubt as to the first and the last: they represent destruction, and not endless pain. The sword, though 'proceeding out of the mouth' of the Avenger, is one of judgment and not of mercy (chap. 2. 16); and is to be explained by reference to those numerous passages of Scripture, in which God's acts are ascribed to His words,—'He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and they were created.' The remnant' are seen by John as put to death. It is nothing to say that their souls might survive; their souls do not come into the vision; that which is slain, the living body, loses for the time all sentient existence—it can neither feel nor act. The only question that can be raised, is concerning the lake of fire. What is represented by any given thing being cast into that, depends entirely upon the nature of the thing itself. Quite true, you will say; and therefore, man being immortal—but stop! That is the very point we are investigating; we are not inquiring what would be the meaning of these visions, on the be almost as incongruous as the idea of a wild beast being able to live in a lake of fire forever. And the reason why most people associate such an idea with the rich man in our Lord's parable, is that they suppose him to be in Gehenna, instead of in Hades. When he is cast into Gehenna, he will be destroyed soul and body,—whatever may be the real means of destruction. While in Hades he is subjected to the torturing, not the destroying, fire of remorse and fear. The difference between this and the Apocalyptic Lake of fire is so great as to deprive the objection of any appreciable weight.

In Matthew 13, however, our Lord uses language, twice repeated (verse. 42, 50), which at first sight appears to present more difficulty. And shall cast them into a furnace of fire, there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.' But here again the whole weight of the argument on your side rests on the assumption that the persons cast into this furnace of fire are necessarily immortal and cannot be destroyed. If they can be destroyed, the natural inference is that they will, and that the wailing lasts only during the process of destruction, whether it be long or short. And that this is what our Lord means, is evident from both the parables, which these words are spoken to explain. The tares are burned up, and destroyed; they are not like the burning bush, continuously blazing, but never consumed. And what becomes of the bad fish, that are cast away? Why they go to corruption, and perish. If the wicked, who are cast into the furnace of fire at Christ's coming, do not perish in it, but continue to live on in horrible agony, then our Lord's statement does not explain, but directly contradicts, His own parables. And it would be no less opposed to other representations which He made of the destruction to come upon His enemies at His appearing. Witness Lake 17. 26, 27: As it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.' No doubt there was wailing and gnashing of teeth' while the destruction was in progress; but the purpose of the flood was to destroy and not to torture them.

Perhaps I ought to refer here to two passages in the Old Testament, which, though they have nothing whatever to do with future punishment, yet are often quoted in this controversy. Indeed you adduce one of them yourself, and lay considerable stress upon it, namely, Isaiah 33. 14. Bishop Lowth's translation of the verse is this: Who among us can abide this consuming fire? Who among us can abide these continued burnings? 'And a glance at the context, both before and after, will convince anyone, that it refers exclusively to temporal judgments, which were being inflicted and threatened. The people say, Who can endure this? And the answer is given in the following verses; Walk righteously, and you will have no cause to fear; your bread shall be given you and your water shall not fail. It is present earthly prosperity and adversity that are contrasted,— not heaven and hell. Yet you say that by this passage some of the plainest language that could have been used by our Lord and His apostles is 'distinctly interpreted'—to mean the reverse of what it says.

The other passage is Isaiah 30. 33: For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood, the breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it.' Here again there is no reference to future punishment. It is a prediction of the total destruction of the Assyrian king and his army, in figurative language taken from the fires that were kept burning in the valley of Tophet outside the walls of Jerusalem to consume the refuse of the city. Our Lord, no doubt, uses the same figure to describe the future destruction of the wicked; but here it is used as an image of temporal destruction.

And now we have to consider the fact, which is by far your strongest point, that concerning some of these things, not all, it is said that they 'shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever,' the smoke of their torment ascended for ever and ever' (chap. 14. 10, 11.; 19. 3.; 20. 10.)

I at once admit my inability to explain this in any way that is quite satisfactory to my own mind. But I do not admit that the view which it seems to oppose must therefore be radically wrong. I firmly believe in the main outline of Mr. Elliot's apocalyptic scheme. But there are many objections to it that I cannot answer. This proves that my understanding of the book is defective, but not that I am wholly at fault. The evidence on the whole appears so strong that I cannot doubt as to the substantial correctness of Mr. Elliot's view: as to the difficulties, I wait for further light. So here, I have not the shadow of a doubt as to the general bearing of these visions on the end of evil. But this single point does not seem to harmonize with my view. That the threatened destruction will involve torment, more or less prolonged, there can be no doubt, and that its effect will be eternal is an essential part of my view. But I cannot account for the way in which 'torment' is spoken of, as if it would continue forever.

Nor will it help me to argue, as the Universalist does, and most unanswerably, that for ever and ever' (to the ages of ages) does not necessarily indicate an endless period. For a lengthened continuance of life in the lake of fire would seem almost as violently opposed to the requirements of the figure as an eternal continuance in it. A wild beast could no more live in such a condition for a day than for an age. This inclines me to think, that the ages of ages' indicate, not the period of suffering to the condemned, but the eternal destruction that comes upon them. In other words, I am inclined to believe that the phrase is meant to produce upon the mind the impression of eternity.

What then, you will ask again, do I understand by torment?' I understand by it—destruction. And to all objections that torment and destruction are two different things, I reply, that the Spirit of God Himself has most pointedly applied the word torment to destruction in one of those very passages.

Read the account in chap. 18 of Babylon's destruction. The inhabitants perish in one day' by death and mourning and famine; 'and then the city itself is utterly burned with fire.' Now in the long description of the burning which follows, there is not a word of any living persons or things being left in the city to be suffering torture from the fire that consumes it. The city is of course destroyed for the sin of its inhabitants; but their destruction is distinguished in ver. 8 from its destruction. Yet they who gaze upon that burning mass, stand far off for the fear of her torment.' What can the word mean there but destruction? Yes, you will reply, but that was a destruction that went on forever; for in chap. 19. 3, we read, And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.' Here are your own words upon that text:— This is manifestly the manner of destruction—a perfect paralysis staying all action—a continuous punishment destroying all comfort and all hope—to be endlessly endured. But there is nothing in the use of the term to warrant annihilation of being.'

Did it ever occur to you to inquire whose smoke rose up for ever and ever? Why it is the smoke of a city which has been so completely destroyed by fire, that a mighty angel took up a stone, like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.' Surely this is something more than paralysis. Surely this is not continuous punishment.' If it be manifestly the manner of destruction,' there is surely something in it very strongly to warrant annihilation of being.'

What then is the meaning of her smoke rising up for ever and ever? What but that her guilt and her destruction will never be forgotten; that she will be pre-eminently an object of everlasting contempt '? Such destruction I believe to be the torment' of all impenitent sinners, and such an eternal memory of sin and its destruction to be the smoke of that torment ascending for ever and ever.

But, it is urged, that the wild beast and false prophet who were cast into the lake of fire before the millennium, are spoken of at its close, as if still there. This, however, is a mistake; the word 'are' not being in the original. When a word has to be supplied, it should be supplied from what has preceded, and not made to assert an independent fact. The devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet '—what? Surely—were cast. To supply 'are' is just to beg the question, and assert a fact which is not stated in the record. The words which follow, and (they—the verb being plural) shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever,' merely contain a declaration, that the destruction of the beast and the false prophet and the dragon would be final and irremediable; none of them would ever appear again. The two former are included in this subsequent declaration, because nothing of the kind had been said when they were first cast into the lake of fire.

And now, having endeavored to defend my own position in respect to these visions, let me remind you that it was wholly unnecessary for me to do so. I can prove my point without them; and it does not follow, because I may be unable to give any satisfactory explanation of my own, that therefore I am obliged to accept yours. But to you it is essential. For every other prop you rested on has so completely broken down, that unless you can prove your case from this, it is hopelessly gone. The onus probandi lies wholly on you. Let my success' in affecting' to prove the destruction of evil from these visions be ever so you have still to show that they prove its eternal perpetuity. And what is your proof? Simply this. Torment is spoken of as continuing forever: torment can be felt only by a sentient creature therefore there will be sentient creatures in torment forever. To the best of my belief this is the strongest, and at the same time the safest, form in which your argument can be put. It offers the fewest points of attack. To the best of my belief, also, it stands absolutely alone, uncorroborated by any other single word contained in, or any single idea suggested by, any of the visions from first to last. And I am confirmed in this belief by observing that you do not make the slightest attempt to adduce any. It stands alone in solitary dignity, with the advantage of apparently great strength and precision, but with the disadvantage, that if it falls the whole fabric falls with it.

Now, waiving the question which a Universalist would raise, as to the 'ages of ages,' your argument manifestly depends upon the assumption that the 'torment' spoken of in these visions represents torment in the future realities which are therein predicted. But how can you prove that? You can produce a string of texts to show the precise meaning of *basanos* (torment); and so can I produce a string of texts to show the precise meaning of *therion* (a wild beast). Does the beast in the vision represent a beast in the reality? Then why should torment in the vision represent torment in the reality? Do the things seen in the Spirit by St. John, generally represent something of the same kind as themselves, or something different from themselves? Try your principle on another feature of this same scene. What an array of texts could be brought to fix the precise meaning of the words *angel,* and *stand,* and *sun* '! Could there be the least doubt about it? Then do you really believe that an angel will stand in the sun, as St. John says? or, that any person or thing whatever will stand in the sun? No; you believe that every word of it represents something wholly different from itself, though you may possibly feel quite at a loss to know what that will be. Suppose I were to deal with that incident as you deal with the other, and say, 'Of course, the angel is not to be taken literally, it represents something else; but whatever it may be, the thing represented will certainly stand in the sun,'—what would you reply? You would reply, that such a mode of interpretation was arbitrary and unreasonable—that if the angel represents something else, so may the standing in the sun. And just so I reply to you,—If the wild beast represents something else, so may the being tormented for ever and ever. Why should you assume that it does not?

The only reply you can make is, that a Universalist might use the same argument against my view. How can you prove, he might ask, that the destruction of a wild beast represents the destruction of anything at all? I cannot prove it. The whole scene may only foretell the termination of certain systems or principles of evil. But as other Scriptures prove to my mind that this will be brought about partly by the destruction of their adherents, I have no doubt but that such destruction is included in the prophetic picture. If you could prove from other Scriptures that certain human beings will live forever in torment, I should readily admit the extreme probability of that being represented here by the torment for ever and ever. But that proof you are unable to bring. Every single attempt that you have made has utterly broken down; you have been obliged throughout to assume that these visions prove your point, in order to make the plainest declarations mean the very reverse of what they appear to say; and now, when at last we ask you to show that these visions do prove your point, not a single word do we get in reply. And no wonder for to the best of my belief there is not a word to be said. If there is, the blame must rest upon you for having adopted the extremely 'inconvenient' course of assuming that nothing could be said on one side, and that nothing need be said on the other, and so leaving me to plead both sides.

That I may have overlooked something which might yet be urged is, of course, quite possible, though after all that I have read on your side of the question hardly probable; but if I have not done so, then you must pardon me for saying—Adam, est.

And I say this emphatically here, in order to guard against the supposition that the issue at all depends upon the few remarks that have yet to be made. Your inability to prove that the words in question do describe the endless sufferings of certain human beings is quite sufficient. But in conclusion, let me briefly sum up the arguments against their being supposed to do so.

1. The word 'torment' is applied to the burning of the city Babylon, when its inhabitants had already perished.

2. Its smoke is said to rise up for ever and ever after it has been so completely destroyed that it cannot be found.'

3. While the beast and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire, all their adherents are slain with the sword'; which, on your principle of interpretation, would show that some of the wicked will be punished with eternal torment, others with death. If the beast and false prophet are persons, who are their adherents? And why do they incur so different a doom? Does not this rather suggest that the beast and false prophet may represent phases of evil, which will be brought to an end, accompanied by the destruction of their leaders and abettors? And if so, may not their eternal torment' represent the abhorrence in which the memory of them will forever be held?

4. The torment is said to take place in the presence of the Lamb' (14. 10). But in 2 Thessalonians 1. 9, those who are found in opposition to Christ at His coming, are punished with everlasting destruction from (away from) the presence of the Lord.' They are gathered out of His kingdom,' and cast into outer darkness,' away from the manifested presence of Christ during the millennial age.

5. Death and Hades' are cast into this lake of fire; and by no possibility can they be cast there for the purpose of being tormented. In their case it can only mean that death of every kind, and especially perhaps the death of men, would cease forever. The reign of physical, as well as moral, evil would then be terminated. Sin and suffering would be things of the past. But here, you will say, nothing is said about torment, and this silence itself marks the difference. Very well. Then we proceed to the next act.

6. 'And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.' Nothing about torment! If you say that torment having been already mentioned in connection with the lake of fire, it must of course be understood where it is not mentioned; then what do you make of Death and Hades being tormented forever? Do they continue to all eternity? Now I do not pretend that this fully explains why the beast and the false prophet and the dragon are said to be tormented for ever and ever; but it is certainly very remarkable, that when we come at last to something which looks much more like a plain statement of fact, in which at all events there is very much less of the high scenically color that has characterized everything before, and which is so universal in its embrace—'Whosoever was not written in the book of life,'—the mention of torment should be dropped, and that very embodiment of destruction, a lake of fire, alone be preserved. And this is all the more significant, from the fact of its occurring in such close proximity to the destruction in the same lake of fire, of Death and Hades, where torment is entirely out of the question.

7. But does the lake of fire itself go on burning forever? Is it everlasting' or unquenchable,' in that sense? What are the very next words? And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.' What then has become of the lake of fire, that St. John saw on the first earth? Why, of course it has passed away with the earth of which it formed part. Is there any lake of fire on the new earth? Is that darkened and blackened with its 'smoke' ascending for ever and ever? You cannot shut its mouth, or cover it up under the earth; for then its smoke would cease to ascend,—and the language is as precise about that as about the torment, they are both for ever and ever.' Neither can you transfer it to some distant part of creation; for then it would not be in presence of the Lamb.' Besides, there is no hint in the record of either one or the other. To suppose such a transfer, is gratuitously to add unto these things;' while to suppose that the lake of fire remains, is to 'take from the words of the book of this prophecy.' It is nothing to say that the lake of fire is alluded to afterwards; for so is the coming of Christ. Everyone knows how difficult it is to arrange these two chapters in chronological order. But no one will deny that the passing away of the first earth takes place after the last persons or things have been cast into the lake of fire. And if so, that fire cannot blaze forever; much less those who were cast into it be agonizing there forever. You will surely not maintain that there will be 'unjust' filthy' persons, dogs, sorcerers, and whoremongers' (22. 11-15) in the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. They are not, observe, described as within the bowels of the earth, but 'without' the holy city. And the mention of them is not a chronological continuation of the preceding visions, but a declaration made to St. John by the angel which showed him these things,' followed by an utterance of the Lord Himself in announcing His speedy advent. Taken in conjunction with the other visions, it is manifestly impossible to understand the word 'still' (ver. 11) as meaning to all eternity, even if there were the slightest ground for doing so, beyond the assumption of man's necessary immortality.

What I conceive to be meant by these two sayings, is, first, that there will be found, at some undefined period, whether at the crisis when the angel is supposed to speak, or at the time' to which he refers, certain persons whose characters are fixed beyond the possibility of change; and secondly, that the ultimate consequence of this to the irreclaimably wicked will be their exclusion from the tree of life,' as well as from the blessedness of the holy city, the eternal loss of glory and honor,' combined with the loss of immortality.* With regard to the glorious assurance in 21. 4., of no more death, neither sorrow nor crying,' I will only say one word. It must be admitted that they refer directly to this earth alone. But what more do we need? What other curse is there, within our knowledge, except that which has gathered in and about this planet? The only fallen beings that we know of, beyond ourselves, have long ago been banished here. If this 'heaven and earth 'be delivered from the curse, we have no reason to suppose that any curse will be left in the universe. Sin will be put away,' as you so truly say, shut out 'from God's creation,' and with it all 'death' and sorrow' and 'crying' and 'pain;' for 'the former things will have passed away,' and God will be all in all.' Having thus completed our

investigation of the testimony of Scripture on this subject, I will not stay to ask you what, in your heart and conscience, you now think of all your hard sayings' about infidelity,—skepticism,—heresy that eats as a canker,— wild speculation,—strange theories—philosophy and vain deceit,—proudly lifting themselves up,' —and so forth; but I will take the liberty of stating the effect which this review has produced upon my own mind.

On the one hand, it has established the conviction more strongly than ever that the weight of Scripture testimony, as a whole, is absolutely overpowering against the doctrine of endless sin and misery, or even against endless misery alone.

On the other hand, my surprise at the prevalence of that doctrine has somewhat lessened, from observing the number of texts which, at first sight, look so very much like it. When strung together with certain words in italics or capitals, they must present to many minds almost an ocular demonstration of its truth. It is not what I should have expected. But neither are many other things in Scripture at all what I should have expected. The array of texts, apparently in favor of eternal evil, are not one tenth of the number that could be brought forward in favor of salvation by works pure and simple. A whole pamphlet of them might be published, which could leave no doubt upon the mind of anyone, who just took their prima facie bearing, without reference to any other passages, as to what was the doctrine of Scripture. It would seem as if this peculiar characteristic of God's word—for there is no other book in the world, in which it is exhibited to anything like the same extent—was intended to test the earnestness of our longing to know Him. And this suggests a doubt whether the readiness to 'leave' certain questions to be solved in another world, must always result, as is commonly supposed, from submissive faith, or whether it may not sometimes result from not caring enough about the matter to make us 'cry after knowledge and lift up our voice for understanding;' to make us seek it as silver and search for it as for hid treasure;' whether in fact we may not be too much imbued with the temper of the times,' and while satisfied ourselves with skimming the surface of a religious subject, try to deter others from digging any deeper, by ascribing their zeal to the pride of intellect,' and ambition to rise above what is written,' that is, above what we can see to be written.

But further, I am quite willing to acknowledge, that after all the thought that I have been able to bestow upon them, there are one or two expressions in connection with this subject which I cannot fully and satisfactorily explain; as there are in connection with every single truth, without exception, that I believe on the authority of Scripture. The chief difficulty, I am persuaded, arises from our ignorance of the course of future events. A few hints are given us as to some of its leading features; but in attempting to map out the program we are beset by insuperable difficulties. Is it any wonder then that we should not be able to explain everything that touches on the various stages and aspects of the judgment to come? My own principal difficulty relates to the question, whether the judgment upon Christ's enemies who are found alive on the earth at His coming, is or is not final. Are they included amongst the dead, small and great, who at last stand before the throne of God? I see no absolute proof of it. And they are sometimes spoken of as being judged and condemned at the advent, in a way that makes it hard to understand how they can be ever judged and condemned again. If they are not, the consideration of many texts that come up in this controversy will be greatly simplified, and common ground established as regards it for pre-millennialists and post-millennialists. I have argued on the common supposition, that the premillennial judgment is only preliminary. If that supposition be groundless, the arguments based upon it must of course be given up. But I think it has been shown that there is abundance of ground left to sustain the position which I have sought to establish.

Amongst all the twisting and turnings that the controversy may take, the great line of Scripture testimony on the matter of life and death can be traced from first to last. One end of it is securely fastened to the opening revelation in Genesis concerning the creation and fall of man, and the other end is firmly bound to the throne of the Eternal in the closing scenes of apocalyptic vision. In tracing its course we occasionally come upon knots which we cannot untie and dare not cut, but in which we can see enough to make us quite sure that they conceal no break in the continuity, and that it is the same thread which enters it at one side and comes out at the other. Not unfrequently also the blundering of our own ignorance or haste gives the line a jerk which threatens to snap it; but this only compels us to relax the strain a little and exercise more care and patience. The substance of the thread is so unmistakably the same throughout, that no change of shade and color can excite a doubt as to its identity. In every kind of language, with every tone of voice, under every form of imagery-, does the Bible proclaim—LIFE OR DEATH—LIFE OR DEATH—LIFE OR DEATH.

With this conviction, you may easily suppose that I am not much alarmed by what you say on the moral aspect of the question.

Reviewing the wanderings of Mr. B., as well as those of Mr. M., this solemn conviction is forced upon us: either theory tends to work utter demoralization. If, as Mr. B. asserts, the wicked in the lake of fire will have "their whole being pervaded by an awful and stupendous consolation," or, as Mr. M. asserts, lose all consciousness (cease to be), after a limited period of suffering, the sinner will say, "What care I for the Judgment? I shall be comfortable in the lake of fire or lose my suffering by unconsciousness. I will enjoy the pleasures you call sinful, and take my chance" I And again The solemn contrast between reward and punishment will be obliterated, and lie will live as he lists.' The inevitable tendency of these schools of thought is to disparage the sinfulness of sin.' It is a want of a discernment of the guilt of sin, which leads the mind to doubt of its eternal punishment.' Now I will not follow your example and charge you with not hesitating to accuse God' of teaching doctrine which disparages the sinfulness of sin and tends to utter demoralization. But I may be permitted to say, that I have more confidence in the weapon which God's word puts into my hands for

alarming the careless, than in that which you would substitute for it; and that I feel more sure of duly estimating the sinfulness of sin by taking God's representation of it than by taking yours. The truth appears to me so certainly revealed that it would require some very tremendous argument indeed, drawn from supposed results, to create any appreciable doubt in my mind. Is your practical argument of that character?

The school of thought,' in which you assign me a far too exalted position, simply claims to test human tradition by the unerring word of God. Its mottos are: To the law and to the testimony;" Search the Scriptures; " Prove all things.' Probably, however, it is not this principle in itself which you think so demoralizing, but the belief which it has led me to adopt in regard to future punishment. That belief you understand to be, that the wicked will have to live in the lake of fire for a period which conveys the impression of thousands of thousands of years,' and then perish forever. And you consider that this belief in prolonged suffering 'recognizes the eternity of man's being.' I have already admitted that my language in one place gave occasion for this misapprehension. But, in point of fact, I do not believe that any human being will ever live for a day in any literal lake of fire; and when, in speaking of the popular theory, I described it as teaching that the wicked will live forever in a fire which, in the course of nature, would instantly consume them, I referred to the graphic descriptions of boiling oceans of liquid fire in which the condemned were forever tossed about, that have been so often portrayed by President Edwards and other eminent theologians.

To judge, however, of what you think would tend to utter demoralization, we must of course take your own account of my belief. In the first place, then, you think that the prospect of living thousands of thousands of years in a raging fire would have no terror for the unconverted. There is no longing in the natural mind for anything that is spiritual;' and ages upon ages of the acutest bodily pain are not worth a thought. 'What care I' for such a trifle? 'I will enjoy the pleasures that you call sinful, and take my chance.' Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow '—that is, after some thousands of years of mere bodily suffering—' we die.' Any additional sin that we commit can only add a few years, or at the most centuries, to the torture; and what matters that? However long it may last, it must end sooner or later; so what care I'? What astounding ignorance of human nature has been displayed by the framers of human laws since the world began! A few years ago garroting became rife. The whole machinery of the British legislature, queen, lords, and commons, was set in motion in order to check it. And what did these sagacious people do? Why, they enacted that any one who was convicted of garroting should, in addition to the usual punishment of imprisonment, receive a few dozen lashes! They positively expected that men who got their living by a certain crime would be deterred from committing it by the bare chance—for they all knew that not one in ten was ever caught—of having to endure some sharp bodily pain for ten minutes or a quarter of an hour! And the strangest thing of all was that their expectation proved correct. A few were still willing to take their chance, but most of them thought the risk too great: and there is not the least doubt but that many who actually underwent the torture would have committed suicide rather than face it again.

It is nothing to say that people do not believe in it, or that they hope to escape it by a subsequent repentance, or that a distant punishment has less influence than a near one; for all this would equally apply to any threat of future punishment. Unless your comparison is utterly fallacious, it comes to this: that, whereas the fear of endless pain, so far as it is believed and realized, keeps the world in its present highly moral state, and deters the ungodly from living as they list,'—the fear of any pain less than endless, however severe and protracted, through how many soever ages, would have no deterrent effect at all; 'what care I? 'would be the feeling of the natural mind.' I have put it thus on your own ground, merely to show to what lengths even the most intelligent and cautious men may be driven, when they have given themselves up to a mistaken theory. For myself, I should have no more hope of keeping people moral by threatening them with long ages of suffering, than by threatening them with endless suffering; for I do not believe that either one or the other would reach their conscience. They would feel that it was not a righteous retribution, and therefore their moral instinct would prevent its having any practical effect upon them. They could not help thinking in the bottom of their heart, that there must be a mistake somewhere, and at least hoping that no such thing would ever really come upon them. Righteous retribution—that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap—is the only belief, so far as fear is concerned, that will have any real practical effect upon the life. For that purpose no details, save one—the only one that God has revealed—are at all required. Nay, I am persuaded that they weaken its force. That one we have now to consider.

Of the stripes' that will be inflicted hereafter, I believe we know nothing, except that they will be proportioned to the degree of guilt, as it appears to the eye of the infallible Judge. One thing we are distinctly told, namely, that God will not allow any creature to live who will not live to His glory. He endures for a time with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction; but He 'has made all things for Himself,' and that He will prove in 'the day of evil,' by depriving 'the wicked 'of the trust which they have so grievously abused. 'He gives to all men life and breath and all things,' solely to be used for His glory. If they turn them against Him, He takes them away. Life is the all-inclusive trust that is put into the possession of every responsible being. That everything else should be taken away from the violator of that trust, but the life itself remain, is what nothing less than God's own positive assurance could make us believe. His word declares that no such thing shall ever be. It tells us that whosoever will not love and serve God in the person of His only begotten Son, shall 'lose his life,'—not merely lose 'all that would have made life delightful' to him, had he possessed it, but 'lose'—all that he ever did possess—' HIMSELF.'

First, I believe that the popular doctrine is the direct occasion of much positive infidelity. Persons who do not care enough about the matter to investigate it themselves, take for granted that the Bible teaches what it is commonly said to teach. On this supposition many of them reason thus: It is impossible to conceive that God will punish with everlasting torture the sins committed by a being of limited capacities during, the brief span of threescore years and ten, perhaps even during the ten years of childhood alone. This book, therefore, cannot be a revelation from God; it stands self-condemned by the fact of its asserting such a thing. At all events, I would rather not believe it. For without it I can at least hope that all this heart-breaking misery will someday come to an end, and that there will be no more sorrow anywhere; that everyone will be as happy as the happiest people are now, nay a great deal happier. And even if there be no resurrection from the dead, and I and thousands of other miserable wretches never get anything to compensate us for all our troubles, it is something to think that those troubles will soon be over, and that by-and-by perhaps a time may come when there will be no trouble for anyone. But if I am to believe the Bible, it is true I may escape all trouble myself after this life, but I shall be bound to believe that millions of other people will be enduring to all eternity more pain and grief than has ever yet been endured by any human being that ever lived. And also bound to believe that all this will never trouble me in the least: I shall be too happy myself to think of the miseries of others. If so, I shall be very much changed from what I am now., and I doubt whether changed for the better. At all events, it would break my heart to think of it now; so I would rather just " take my chance." Horrible! you will exclaim; Blasphemy! The guilt of sin altogether lost sight of! But what has that to do with it? I am not saying how they ought to reason, but how they do reason. If you believe the doctrine of eternal evil to be true, you are quite right in proclaiming it whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. But do you think that one who believes it to be utterly false, should stand by—for fear of the frowns and reproaches of those who are so well satisfied with the doctrine that they do not wish their peace and quiet disturbed by any agitation of it—and let these men continue to lie under what he knows to be an entire misapprehension? Is he not bound to lift up his voice as a trumpet, and cry aloud to them that it is all a delusion; that the Bible teaches no such thing; that it is the happiest, blessed book in the world; that by believing it they will gain everything and lose nothing; gain glory and honor and immortality for themselves, and also an assurance that by-and-by there shall be no such thing as pain or grief throughout the universe; that those who will not seek for immortality in Christ will never obtain it, but after receiving righteous retribution for their refusal of God's mercy, proportioned to the light against which they sinned, will pass away and perish everlastingly, so that not a jarring note shall ever again mar creation's harmony? Would not you tell them this, if you believed it, and tell it them again and again in as loud, as earnest tones as you could utter? I know that you would.

This, however, I believe to be a far less evil than the effect which it produces upon those who do believe it—converted and unconverted.

As to the worldly, whom you hope to alarm by it, I doubt if there is a single doctrine that has anything like its power to lull them to sleep. And this I believe accounts for the apparently strange phenomenon, that the most utterly worldly people will often eagerly attend the ministry of those who strongly urge it. It is not the mere excitement attending such discourses, which, however, does undoubtedly possess attractions, it is far more the hope with which it inspires them that they may after all reach heaven at last. They are assured in the strongest manner that it is either popery or infidelity to doubt that every man, woman, and child passes at the moment of death into a state either of endless happiness or of endless misery.

They feel—mind, I am saying what they do feel, not what they ought to feel—that no amount of sin which they have committed, known or unknown, can possibly deserve a punishment of such inconceivable severity as eternal, hopeless, unmitigated misery; and therefore they cannot but believe that in some way or other they will find themselves in heaven at last. When the preacher reminds them of the one great, all-comprehending command, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,' they become restless, seeing that it is a reasonable command, and knowing that they have never even tried to obey it. When he pleads for Christ, urges the claims of Him who died for them, and paints the ingratitude of those who refuse to confess Him and to serve Him, they become still more uneasy; the demand seems increased, and yet the guilt of withholding it aggravated. If he is not afraid of being called 'legal,' and ventures to assure them that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap,—things done that ought not to have been done, and things left undone that ought to have been done, rise up before their minds and suggest grave doubts whether there may not be much more behind that they never thought of, or have long forgotten. When he portrays the glory and blessedness of Christ's manifested kingdom hereafter, they feel sad and sorrowful, and would be almost willing, if it could be done by a single act, to abandon the pleasures of sin and exchange places with those who know that this inheritance is theirs. When he describes the moral features of that world to come, its occupations, its companionships—human, angelic, and Divine—and asks who is training for it, whose inner and outer life is a suitable preparation for it, who is walking worthy of that high vocation, who is fighting his way to the crown; their hearts sink within them, they feel that they have never yet even begun the Christian life, and the gate looks far too strait for them to enter, the road far too narrow for them to pursue. But then comes the climax. To crown all, they are assured that if they are not received into Christ's presence when they die, and have not a place in His kingdom hereafter, they will be cast into a lake of fire, where neither body nor soul can ever die, but where they will live forever in anguish and agony such as passes our present powers of imagination to conceive. They at once take comfort and begin to breathe freely again. This is impossible; yet it is supposed to stand on the same foundation as all the rest. There must be a mistake somewhere, though where they can hardly tell. At all events, they are quite sure that if this really is the alternative, they must be safe. They can far more easily believe that some change will take place in

them before death, or in the act of death, or after death, to fit even them for a seat on Christ's throne, than that for anything which they have done, God will condemn them to a punishment too terribly proportioned, indeed, to His power of inflicting the stripes, but just as much disproportioned to their natural power of enduring them—a punishment which it is conceivable that one imaginary god might inflict upon another god whom he had vanquished; but utterly inconceivable that our God,' the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, would inflict upon the creatures which His own hand hath made, creatures of a day, crushed before the moth, whole 'nations' of whom before Him are as nothing, yea, they are counted unto Him less than nothing and vanity,' who come up and are cut down like a flower, who flee as it were a shadow, and never continue in one stay.'

But now suppose that instead of puffing men up with an overweening sense of their own importance, by telling them that they are as immortal as the Creator Himself, and that, after a brief separation of soul and body,—which instead of being death is a far more real life than this, the increased activity of the higher part of their nature more than compensating for the inactivity of the lower part,—they must necessarily live forever; suppose, instead of thus taking their immortality for granted, they were made to feel their own insignificance, and the stupendous nature of the privilege offered them in Christ, namely, glory and honor and immortality; suppose this were urged upon them as the Bible urges it, until they felt it to be the greatest of all difficulties to believe that such creatures could attain to such a position in the universe, and live as long as the Son of God lives; and then they were asked, what right they had to expect that they would ever attain unto it; how would they be likely to think and feel? Or suppose they were reminded that life was a free gift of God, that no creature has any claim to be kept in being one moment longer than the Creator sees fit, and that reason as well as revelation assures us that no creature will be allowed permanently to remain in being who will not live to God's glory, that the wages of sin is death,' and that if they live after the flesh they must die,' that their lives are already forfeited by sin, and that unless by repentance and faith they can obtain eternal life as a free gift through Christ, the sentence will sooner or later be executed upon them, and they will perish everlastingly,—what would be the answer of their conscience to this? Why, they would say, The Lord is righteous and we are wicked. They would know the righteous judgment of God, that they who do such things are worthy of death; and whether brought to repentance or not, they would be convicted of their own consciences.

And this is disparaging the sinfulness of sin'! This 'tends to utter demoralization'! I believe that if, instead of life and death being preached by a handful of men, the effect of whose preaching upon their hearers must of course be greatly weakened by the knowledge that their doctrine is generally regarded as a mere eccentricity of their own, it were rung in the ears of a thoughtless world by the combined voice of the whole Church, the effect would be prodigious. It is true we should not have so many sanctuaries crowded with excited and delighted worldlings, many a congregation would for a time be decimated, but conversions would, I am persuaded, multiply tenfold, and the Lord would add to the Church daily ninnies of such as should be saved.

Still it is not by the law, however important may be its office as preparing the way, that sinners are converted, it is by the gospel. And wherein lies the saving power of the gospel? In the revelation which it makes of God's amazing love. Whatever therefore tends to cloud the sinner's view of that love, must so far lessen its power to save and to sanctify. And what could possibly throw a darker shadow over it than to combine with its glorious message such a doctrine as that of eternal evil? That it should have been able, even with this tremendous hindrance in the way, to save such a multitude of souls, only shows what a marvelous weapon it is. And it may be that this error has been allowed to prevail so extensively in the Church, in order to magnify the power of the Cross by showing what it can effect under the most disadvantageous circumstances. But it is none the less our duty to remove, as far as we can, every stumbling-block out of the way. All the taunts that are levelled against us, about presumptuous attempts to clear the character of God, and so forth, would be just as effective against preaching the gospel. Why are we so anxious to preach it? Just because sinners are kept at a distance from God by their erroneous conceptions of Him, and the gospel alone can give them a true conception of Him. It is not for His sake but for their own that we wish them to believe in His forgiving love. And it is not for His sake but for their own that we wish them to think better of Him than to believe Him capable of acting in such a way as the doctrine of eternal torment represents, Why do you contend against any theological error? Because it presents a false view of God; and every false view of God is injurious to men. And this is our reason for seeking to clear the character of God from what we believe to be a false imputation.

On the last head, namely, its effect upon Christian character, I am almost afraid to speak. It is so easy to represent anything that can be said, as exalting oneself and libeling others. Yet a more illogical charge could scarcely be invented. May it not be true that certain conditions of life are injurious to health, and yet that some persons who are subject to those conditions far excel in health and strength some who are wholly free from them? A healthy man may be found in a sickly place, and a sickly man in a healthy place; but that does not alter the fact that one place is sickly and the other healthy. And no combination of graces in certain individual Christians can shake my belief in the disastrous effects of this doctrine upon the general tone of our Christianity. I will only at present specify one point. Unless I am greatly mistaken, the doctrine in question is largely answerable for the most conspicuous fault to be found in the character of Christians as a body, namely, a hard, intolerant censorious spirit. This is no accusation of mine. It is all but universally confessed. The inconsistency is a grief to the Church, and a stumbling-block to the world. It damages and disfigures the character of a larger number of Christians, and produces more disastrous consequences, than any other which could be named. And I believe that it results mainly from that one inconsistent doctrine, which prevails more extensively among Christians than any other single error. Their comparative failure in the exhibition of that grace by which their discipleship to Christ was to be especially known, is glaringly

inconsistent with their many other excellencies. And the doctrine to which I ascribe it is as glaringly inconsistent with the great body of blessed truth, which to so great an extent they hold in common. I can conceive of nothing more directly calculated to lead to such a result. The view which this doctrine presents of God must produce, more or less, something corresponding thereto in those who believe it. In many it lies almost dormant. But when by opposition, or otherwise, it is roused into activity, it is pretty sure to display its real nature. I say nothing of what has happened to myself. There may have been faults in my way of putting the question to excuse much of the bitterness which has been excited. But look at the case of Mr. Birks. There is a man whose genius, learning, and piety are an honor to the Church. He is a believer in the conscious endurance of endless punishment by the lost. But neither his head nor his heart will allow him to believe in the horrors with which it has been traditionally associated. He cannot believe that the infinite compassion of God in Christ, which has yearned over an impenitent sinner all his life long, is suddenly, completely, and finally withdrawn from him at the moment of death. He believes that the 'depth' of Divine pity will reach down to the lost, even in their lowest estate, and that the knowledge of it will be an incalculable relief to them. Now it might have been expected that anyone with a grain of feeling about him, who was compelled by his interpretation of Scripture to believe in endless suffering, would have welcomed such a suggestion with the deepest thankfulness, whether as regarded his view of God's character, or his anticipations of the future; and that if, after the fullest and most anxious consideration, he found himself unable to reconcile the idea with the general tenor of God's word, he would abandon it with a sigh, and feel almost tempted to envy the man who could conscientiously entertain it. But what actually happens? War to the knife is at once proclaimed. The cry of infidelity and rationalism is raised. The signal is given to fire. Bang, bang, go the guns. The Evangelical Alliance is stirred to its depths, and threatened with speedy dissolution unless Mr. Birks is expelled; and the writer who has been hailed by acclamation as the Goliath of your cause, distinctly informs all the members of its council that, unless the order is promptly obeyed, they will 'seriously compromise their character,' that they will be guilty of flagrant inconsistency of conduct,' and that 'not only will the Divine blessing be withheld from the Alliance, but that none of their members, however much their hearts may otherwise be right with God, will enjoy real peace of conscience.' Do you think that this would have occurred in connection with any other doctrine? I very much doubt it. If Mr. Birks, while holding substantially to any great doctrine of the gospel, had ventured to put it in some new light, you and others would probably have just shaken your heads, and said that novelties were dangerous, that Mr. Birks was far too clever, and that humble-minded Christians had better continue to think, or not think, as they had been taught to do from childhood..

At the same time, you must really forgive me for adding one further conviction upon this subject which, rightly or wrongly, is firmly fixed in my mind, namely, that the extreme sensitiveness shown with regard to it is partly attributable to the consciousness that it will not bear discussion. The blows that can be dealt against it are so tremendous that it is hard for the firmest believers in it to repress a doubt whether anything that is so open to attack can really be a Divine truth. It would speak little for their moral instincts if they could stand unmoved under the storm of shot and shell that anyone who is not afraid of plain speaking can easily pour upon this defenseless position. They quite believe that it can be proved from Scripture; but they know that if they attempt to discuss the morality of it they will be blown to pieces in a moment. And therefore their only safety lies in spiking the enemy's guns by denouncing any attempt to look the matter in the face and to consider what the doctrine really involves. I give them full credit for thinking that they are animated by a pure zeal for the truth, even when they throw dust into the air, and cry out, Blasphemy; but unquestionably in this case their zeal is mingled with a nervous dread of discussion. It is a sore place and cannot bear to be touched.

But nothing now can save it from being touched, and something more than touched. In these days everything is sifted to the bottom,—good, bad, and indifferent. I am not saying that the doctrine is false because it is vigorously assailed. But I believe that it is false, and that of all the notions commonly entertained in the Church, there is not one which can be more completely demonstrated to be false, whether from Scripture or from reason. I am not in the least disturbed by being told, that I am 'preparing the way for the advent of the beast and the false prophet,' as I was lately told by the editor of a well-known magazine; nor would it disturb me if I could be sure that what he means is true. When error has entwined itself around truth, the removal of the one sometimes brings down the other with it. Roman Catholics have been turned into infidels by being made to see the absurdity of transubstantiation. But we are none the less bound to endeavor to convince them of their error.

In this case, however, I have no fear of any such thing; at all events I feel perfectly confident that the good will far overbalance the evil. Nothing has ever given me such comfort under the painful sense of being able to do so little, as the call to this work in which I am now engaged. And if this letter should be the means of removing a stumbling-block out of the way of any believer or unbeliever who may be directed to read it, you will one day be thankful that you ever wrote 'God's Purpose in Judgment.' You will need pardon for the sin of having forgotten the warning to beware of judging another man's servant, which betrayed you into the further sin of becoming a false accuser of your brethren and judging unrighteous judgment. But, notwithstanding these grave errors, you wrote it to promote the cause of truth; and you will thank God that He made it conducive to that end, though in a very different way from that which you intended. If you suspect any lurking sarcasm in these words, be assured that you are entirely mistaken. I have felt it necessary to speak freely and faithfully, but my personal regard and esteem for you are not in the slightest degree diminished. The faults of your book are not yours but those of the atmosphere in which you live. Neither is its weakness yours, but that of the cause which you defend. With an earnest prayer that we may both be guided into all truth by the Spirit of truth shining upon the word of truth, I beg you to Believe me, Yours most sincerely, SAMUEL MINTON.

Neither the eternity of sin, nor the immortality of Satan, appear to have been any part of Milton's creed. In Book 2. of the *Paradise Lost*, Sin thus addresses Satan:— Before mine eyes in opposition sits Grim Death, my son and foe, who sets them on, And me. his parent, would full soon devour, For want of other prey, but that he knows His end with mine involved; and knows that I Should prove a bitter morsel and his bane, Whenever that shall be: so Fate pronounced. But thou, O Father! I forewarn thee, shim His deadly arrow; neither vainly hope To be invulnerable in those bright arms, Though tempered heavenly; for that mortal dint, Save He who reigns above, none can resist.'

CONCLUSION.

IT will have been seen from the foregoing letter, to what a large extent Mr. Baxter's arguments have to depend upon the assumption of man's indefeasible immortality. The more closely the present controversy is studied, the more clearly will it appear that this assumption is the one sole foundation of the popular doctrine. It is the postulate, without which the whole mass of alleged proof collapses and leaves not a wreck behind. It is of such vital importance distinctly to see this, that it may be well to supply a few illustrations.

The class of texts which are thought to be the most decisive are those which speak of everlasting fire,' everlasting punishment,' or everlasting destruction.' Now, waiving any question about the word everlasting,' and taking it in these cases to mean endless, we ask what proof they afford that the threatened punishment will not be destruction by fire however the fire may be understood. If the fire which destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah was called eternal fire,' because its effect has been lasting, why may not the fire which will destroy the wicked be called eternal, because its effect will be everlasting, in depriving them wholly and entirely of the everlasting life which they would otherwise have possessed? Or again; if the 'redemption' which has been wrought out for us, may be called 'eternal redemption' because its effect will be everlasting, and if the 'judgment' that is to take place may be called eternal judgment' because the effect of its decision will be everlasting, why may not the punishment of destruction be called eternal, because its effect will be everlasting—that is, because it will be final and irremediable? It is evident that the word eternal,' as applied to any act, or to anything which involves an act, does not prove that the action will continue forever. Eternal redemption is not eternal redeeming, eternal judgment is not eternal judging, eternal fire is not eternal burning; then why should eternal punishment necessarily be eternal punishing, and eternal destruction eternal destroying? The one sole answer that can be given is, that man being immortal cannot be destroyed, and that therefore the words must be understood in some sense that will harmonize with that presumed immortality. Take out that postulate, and the passage affords not a shadow of proof that the wicked will be forever conscious of pain. The words added to everlasting destruction,' namely, from (away from) the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,' only aggravate the punishment of destruction by reminding us of the loss which it will inflict upon them; not merely the loss of life, but the loss of sharing in the blessedness of Christ's manifested glory. Just as in Revelation 22. 14, 15, the condemned are represented as excluded both from the tree of life,' and from the city.'

Again, our Lord's words in Matthew 5. 26, Thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing,' and in Matthew 18. 54, 'His lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due unto him,' would never of themselves suggest the idea of eternity, unless the postulate of immortality were first imported into them. In either of the supposed cases, did the person committed to prison remain there forever? No, it would be replied; but the impression conveyed is, that he would remain there as long as he lived—that he would never come out alive. Precisely. And this is what Scripture affirms of those who are cast into hell. And it is believed that they will live there forever, only because it is taken for granted that they can never die.

Another text is John iii. 36, He that believeth on the Son bath everlasting life; he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.' We are all by nature under the wrath of God. The only way of escape is by believing on the Son. He who does not believe remains under the wrath of God, in other words, it abides on him. For how long? The natural answer would be—As long as he lives; supposing, of course, that the words exclude any further possibility of his believing. But what is there to suggest the idea of it abiding on him forever? Absolutely nothing—except the assumption that he will live forever. And the assumption in this case is all the more inexcusable, inasmuch as St. John has expressly mentioned abiding forever as a peculiar privilege of the righteous And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever' (1 John 2. 17).

We may also refer to 2 Peter 2. 17, 'Clouds carried with a tempest, to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever;' and to Jude 13, 'Wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.' Now in the former passage we see, from the word 'clouds' being in the original feminine, and the word 'whom' masculine that the two expressions are not to be joined together, but taken separately; and therefore we may conclude such to be the case in the latter quotation also. If so, the inference is obvious. Total and permanent deprivation of light is to any living thing certain death. If light were wholly withdrawn from this planet, everything upon it would die. Not a particle of life would remain, of any sort or kind. Extinction of life then would naturally be suggested by these

words; and the only way of putting any other meaning upon them is to assume that the life of man is indestructible, and that he can and will live through anything.

Some of these texts have been specified, because they had not come under notice in the foregoing letter. But it is needless to go further. The same principle will, I believe, apply to every single text that can be adduced, with the exception of that one Apocalyptic word, about which enough has already been said.

It becomes therefore of the last importance to ascertain on what this fundamental postulate itself rests. The earth appears very securely placed on the elephant's back; but unless some independent ground can be discovered for the elephant to stand upon, the appearance of stability is utterly delusive.

Now if the postulate in question rests upon anything, it must be upon some one or more of the following grounds: 1. That it is beyond the power of God to destroy a human being. 2. That He has declared His unalterable determination never to destroy one. 3. That He has made statements from which it may certainly be inferred that He never will do so. 4. That we possess information, apart from His word, from which that inference may be drawn.

1. On the first head, it would have seemed waste of time to expend a word, but for the fact that some of the arguments used in defense of indefeasible immortality necessarily involve a denial of God's power to destroy man. My ablest critic can hardly resist the temptation to treat the notion of a spirit being destroyed as one that is in itself ridiculous, because we cannot 'conceive' what becomes of it. But we might just as well ridicule the idea of a spirit being created, because we cannot conceive where or what it came from. From whatever or wherever it came, thither it can return. If it came from nothing, it can return to nothing. If it was made out of something, it can be resolved into that something. If it came out from God, it can be absorbed back into God. And if all of these propositions appear ridiculous, it only shows that we know nothing whatever about the nature of a spirit, and can form no conception of the process required either for its creation or its destruction.

2. One thing is certain; namely, that if God can destroy a spirit at all He can do it in a way that is not open to the faintest touch of raillery or ridicule.' We may therefore safely subscribe to the truth contained in the old familiar line:— 'He can create, and He destroy.' 2. Has God then declared that he will not exercise the power which He possesses for the destruction of any human being? Never. Not a pretense of any such declaration can be found, that will bear a moment's investigation. There are a few passages, which, taken out of their context, sound like it; but they refer to temporal, and not to eternal destruction. The strongest is Psalm 57. 17, For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wrath; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.' But this is spoken with reference to the Jewish nation, and any further application that we make of it must of course be kept within the limits of what can be proved from other sources. To bring forward this national promise as proof that God never will destroy any soul' which He has once made—including beasts as well as men, for they also are called in Scripture living souls'—is clearly inadmissible.

3. Is there anything to be found in God's word from which it may be inferred that He will never terminate the existence of any human being? At this point a variety of arguments are adduced, which we will briefly enumerate.

4. Man was made in the image and likeness of God. But must an image necessarily last as long as its original? Can it never be destroyed by the original, without an act of self-destruction being also involved? And in what was manmade like unto God? In His omnipotence, omniscience, or omnipresence? Then why in His immortality? Why are we told that He 'only hath immortality' so much more emphatically than we are told that He only hath omnipotence, omniscience, or omnipresence? Is it because that is the only thing in which man's natural pride could persuade him that he was equal with God? Or again, supposing that immortality—not in esse but in posse, the capacity for immortality—was part of the image of God in which man was made, why might he not lose it? Was not holiness part of the image? And did not man lose that? Then why not the power of living for ever? Yet one of the public defenders of indefeasible immortality puts it in italics, that we cannot lay too much, stress 'on the fact that man was made in the image of God!

* That he did lose it is shown as plainly as possible by his being driven out of paradise, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.' Not, of course, that once eating of it would confer immortality upon him—though even that would show that man was not naturally immortal—for then he might possibly have eaten of it before taking of the tree of knowledge, and so have put it out of God's power to fulfil the threat, 'Thou shalt surely die.' , No doubt God could have withheld him from touching it; but so also could He have left him in paradise without allowing him to touch it; and yet he was driven out 'lest' he should do so. The same reason would have existed for not placing it within his reach, lest' he should first secure eternal life, and then fall from holiness. The tree of life was the supernatural means, as every green herb for food' was the natural means, of preserving him in being. If he had remained obedient he would have had continual access to the tree of life, and so would have lived for ever. When that access was denied to him, all hope of immortality was gone. But it was offered him again—in Christ. It was offered to him, not as before, on condition of perfect obedience, but yet in a way that secured its being a blessing to him and not a curse, namely by repentance and faith.

5. God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.' But the beasts are also said to be 'living souls' (Gen. 1. 30, margin); and even inanimate things are said to have been created by Jehovah's breath, 'All the host of them by the breath of His mouth.' And if the breath of life having been breathed into his nostrils be insisted on, it will be well to remember that an inspired prophet makes a somewhat different use of that fact,—'Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of?' (Isa. 2. 22.) There is nothing here from which we may infer that God will never terminate man's existence.

6. Who knows the spirit of a man that goes upward, and the spirit of a beast that goes downward to the earth? (Eccles. 3. 21.) On this passage I will quote from *The Question of Ages*, by Dr. Morris, of Philadelphia.

It must require a considerable degree of courage—not to say temerity—even to approach this passage, when the immortality of man is affirmed. For, in the first place, the text does not affirm anything; but only asks a question, and offers a challenge of the most formidable kind. Solomon had just written some exceedingly "hard sayings," respecting which those who use the above argument may well exclaim, "Who can bear them?" We commend those sayings to the thoughtful regard of such as desire to learn and know the truth. Having written those sayings, Solomon asks, "Who knows the spirit of the sons of men is ascending? (or is that which ascends) and the spirit of the cattle is descending (or is that which descends) downward to the earth?" In both cases alike Solomon uses the participle in its emphatic form; and by means of his twofold question he appeals to the wisdom of the world, and challenges the philosophy of its most erudite sages, to show by any method of actual proof that the sons of men possess that kind of pre-eminence which they claim, but which he so roundly denies.'

Sorely no inference in favor of indefeasible immortality can be established here.

7. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it' (Eccles. 12. 7). Even if the spirit' there refers to the immaterial part of man's being, the words could only imply, at the most, that the separation of soul and body was death to the latter alone, and not to the former. It would afford no proof that God would never destroy its existence. But I beg to suggest that 'spirit' should be more properly translated breath; and that both clauses of the verse refer to natural death, in accordance with the twofold description of man's creation; his body is resolved into the dust out of which it was made, and God withdraws the breath of life which He breathed into his nostrils.

8. Adam is said to have been the son of God' and we are all said to be His offspring.' Now, waiving any question about universal fatherhood,' and granting for the sake of argument · that these expressions mean all that is supposed, how do they touch the question? Can or does no one ever put to death his own children? Have not kings executed their children for rebellion? Then who shall deny the right to the King of kings?

9. Again, the fact of resurrection is supposed to prove that all who are raised will live forever; else why should they be raised at all? Scripture tells us why—for retribution, that they may reap what they have sown, that they may receive the things done in the body. If death closed their career, it would have been all sowing and no reaping, except those partial foretastes of the harvest which in some small measure accompany the sowing. The wicked are not raised up for the purpose of being destroyed, which could have been accomplished as easily without it, but for the righteous retribution, exactly according to every man's work, which must take place before they are destroyed, in order to show, not only that the life of every responsible creature is dependent upon his obedience, but that even if he is willing to sacrifice it for the present pleasure to be gained by some act of disobedience, he will have first to reap in pain the full measure of what he has sown in sin; that, whether a place of repentance, an opportunity of saving his life, be granted him or not, moral evil must sooner or later necessarily produce its counterpart in physical evil. As to the nature and the course of future retribution, we are left in almost total ignorance; the only thing we are expressly told being that it will end in the destruction, of the finally impenitent.

10. Lastly it is urged that, except on the supposition of its being the Divine purpose to keep all men in eternal existence, there is no adequate motive left for Christ's redeeming work. One really stands aghast at such a proposition as this. No adequate motive! We must be allowed a moment to take breath before attempting an answer. The sense of utter inability to do justice to, or rather on, such an argument is actually oppressive. To restore to a whole race of beings, saving those who refuse to accept it on the proffered terms, a lost immortality, which they could never otherwise have regained; to exalt one portion of them to the highest position of honor and power amongst all created intelligence throughout the universe,—to be heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, to be the bride and body of the incarnate Son of God, to enter into His joy, to sit on His throne, to walk with Him in white, to be pillars in the temple of His God, to see God face to face, to be like Him and see Him as He is: by this kindness towards the saved world, and still more towards the glorified Church, to manifest throughout the ages to come, to worlds as yet unborn, the exceeding riches of Divine grace; to be for ever to all intelligent creatures the brightness of His Father's glory and the express image of His person, so that in His name

every knee may bow to God; to be the means of reconciling, of heading up, the universe into one harmonious whole, so that God should be all in all and continue so for ever—that every trace of evil should be swept away, and every possibility of its reappearing be barred for ever: merely to accomplish these insignificant results, even with the addition of any other results of which we can as yet perhaps form no conception,—putting together the sum total of all the actual and possible results that may flow from Christ's redeeming work to all eternity,—world supply no adequate motive for such an effort of Divine wisdom and love,—unless—unless—millions of immortal creatures are to be for ever writhing in hopeless agony, or, on the universalist's hypothesis, unless we believe that such would have been, their fate but for the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. So completely does the denial of indefeasible immortality 'take away the meaning, the power, the life, the force, from the entire gospel scheme,' that unless it be held fast 'the atonement and man's responsibility must both be given up'! It is absolutely impossible to comment. The argument must just be left to bear its own weight, as best it may.

11. And now we come to the fourth possible ground, on which the postulate can rest. Do we know anything, apart from God's word, of our own being, from which we can certainly conclude that under no circumstances whatever will He ever terminate the existence of any man, woman, or child? If anyone thinks that this question requires any answer let him study the writings of Plato and other Greek philosophers. and it will perhaps enable him the better to appreciate St. Paul's warning against philosophy and vain deceit.' Their everlasting discussions on the immortality of the soul show their own mental acuteness no less clearly than the hopelessness of the task to which they set themselves. The armament from self-consciousness, to which most weight is popularly attached, rests on the general instinctive craving for immortality, the love of life and dread of death. But does it follow that every man will attain to what he craves for? Does not every man crave for happiness? And will every man obtain it? There is undoubtedly that within us, which of itself would suggest that we are capable of immortality. But even that cannot be poured from our inner selves. And to adduce anything of that kind as proof that all men will actually live forever is simply to give up the case as hopeless. Yet the learned critic who first honored my sermons with a notice was shocked to think that a Christian in the 19th century could fall so far below the exalted position to which even a heathen philosopher like Plato had attained, in recognizing natural indefeasible immortality. The genius of those gigantic intellects had peopled their Tartarus with agonized wretches, who were for ever being tortured without hope of release, who were always under some process of destruction but never destroyed, always dying but never dead, perpetually enduring a living death, and eternally carrying about with them a dying life. To transfer this sublime conception. substantially, into the Christian system is 'simple faith.' To deny the theory of a living life and a dying life, and to frame a theory' of life and death, is one of the 'wild speculations' of rationalism 'or 'infidelity.' It appears therefore that, instead of Scripture always speaking in the sense of the wicked continuing to be,' it never speaks in that sense at all, but invariably in the opposite sense. The attempt to prove natural indefeasible immortality completely breaks down on every issue. And with it the whole mass of supposed evidence in favor of eternal evil crumbles into dust; leaving us to wonder whether the history of controversy can furnish another example of so portentous a conclusion drawn from premises so utterly fallacious. We have already shown that the language employed by our Lord and His apostles, relative to the destruction of the wicked, will bear only one construction. We now see that there is not the slightest excuse for attempting to force upon it any other construction.

The Bible, interpreted by itself, is clear and connected in its teaching upon this subject. It begins by establishing, in the very opening of man's history, the fundamental meaning of the three words which stand at the head of the three great branches of the whole question: living soul die '—and live forever.' It tells us that man and beast were both formed from the earth,' and both made into a living soul,' an animated being, so that in this respect man hath no pre-eminence over the beast.' But it tells us that in other respects his pre-eminence was infinite, namely in his capacity for knowing and loving God, and consequently in his capacity for immortality. It tells us that he was threatened with the loss of that immortality if he should abandon his position of trustful loving dependence upon his Creator. If he sinned he was to die.' As to what he would understand by that word, the only hint which is given by the record is to be found in the fact that he was immediately clothed in the skins' of animals. Not a word is said to convey the impression that their death was anything new or strange; not a word is said in the whole Bible to imply that death to them was the consequence of Adam's sin; and therefore the inference would naturally be, even if there were nothing to confirm it in. what may be clearly seen' from the things which are made,' that their dying was, from whatever cause, a pre-existing fact. Unless we invent some theory, of which the record gives not a hint, we must suppose that Adam understood the threat in the natural obvious sense, that if he fell from his high estate he too would die, like unto the beasts which perish'; but with this terrible difference against him, that while they were made to be taken and destroyed,' he was made to live forever; ° and therefore, that when he perished he would utterly perish in his own corruption' or destruction. The Bible also tells us that when Adam had marred the image of God after which he was created in righteousness and true holiness,' he was debarred from access to the tree of life, so that he might not eat of it and live forever.' By this familiar expression, of such constant occurrence afterwards, no one understands here, in the first place where it is found, its original ruling utterance,—lest he should be holy forever, lest he should be happy for ever, lest he should know God, and possess everything which makes life desirable. The tree of life was given for no such purpose: it was given that he might live forever, that he might keep possession of the life bestowed upon him, when the Creator breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and he became a living soul. The happiness of that life depended internally upon his consciousness of God's favor, and externally upon surrounding circumstances being in harmony with the nature that God had given him.

But although by parting with his holiness he had forfeited both his happiness and his immortality—though, without holiness, he could not be happy within, and God would neither allow him to be happy without, nor inflict upon him and upon creation the curse of eternal misery,—he was not allowed to go down into the pit of destruction and perish forever; for the Creator Himself found a ransom. The promise of a Redeemer was at once made to him, and the grand foundation principle on which the redemption was to be wrought out was ‘evidently set forth ‘in visible semblance before his eyes by the institution of sacrifice. In every repetition of that act was seen an image, faint indeed, but true as far as it went, of the wages of sin, namely—not endless suffering of mind and body, but—death. After the death of the sacrifice its body was consumed; representing, not any subsequent pain, for there was none, but entire destruction, so that the victim ceased to exist even in death, and no trace of it could be found. But in every repetition of that act there was also seen the transfer of penalty from the guilty to the innocent. The guilty lived, the innocent died. And further there was seen the requirement of personal faith in the efficacy of the sacrifice, inasmuch as the sinner himself was to bring the victim to be slain. By that act he expressed repentance and faith, and by repentance and faith he secured salvation from the eternal death which he had incurred by sin.

On this basis the whole Bible is grounded. It assures us that we are fallen, perishing creatures, but that by accepting the offer of eternal life in Christ we may regain our immortality, and with it obtain far more than we ever lost. It also assures us that there is no ‘salvation in any other;’ that we are ‘condemned already;’ and that if we have not the Son of God we cannot have life. It assures us that there is only one ‘way everlasting,’ the way of holiness, and that all other ways end in destruction; that ‘if we live after the flesh we shall die, but if through the Spirit we mortify the deeds of the body we shall live;’ that if we eat of the bread which Christ offers, His flesh which He has given for the life of the world, we shall live forever; but if we refuse to eat of it we have no life in us.* .

A careful examination of the passages in Scripture, which speak of eternal life as the gift of God in Christ Jesus, will show that they do not presuppose, but include, the promise of endless physical life. Eternal life is spoken of both as a present possession and as a future prospect. I am the bread of life; he that cometh unto me shall never hunger’ (John 6. 35). The believer’s spiritual hunger is at once satisfied. He possesses spiritual life. And that life is called eternal, both because it can never be lost, and because it secures ‘in the world to come everlasting life’—not spiritual life, for that he has already, but the eternal preservation of his whole being, the perpetuation of that physical life, which otherwise would then be taken away from him.’ To him that hath’ spiritual life shall be given glory and honor and immortality ‘: but from him which hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away from him’; he shall lose’—everything that is left to him—’ himself.’ This second aspect of eternal life is referred to in a subsequent part of our Lord’s discourse recorded in John vi.: Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead: this is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die’ (verse. 49, 50). If not die,’ means not remain wicked and miserable, where is the contrast to the manna? Was that given to make the Israelites holy and happy? No; it was given to sustain their physical life. This it could do only for a time. The bread which Christ gives will sustain it forever. He that believeth on me, though he were dead yet shall he live; and he that lives and believeth on me shall never die’ (John 11. 25, 26). The temporary separation of soul and body is passed over as nothing, or in Dean Alford’s language, ‘Death is regarded as being swallowed up in the glory of the resurrection.’ The connection between this present and future life is expressed by St. Paul in Romans 8. 11: ‘If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit which dwelleth in you.’ They that have lived after the flesh ‘will be restored to a fleshly life, in order that they may receive the things done in the body; but they will not be quickened’ into a new life, not raised up after the power of an endless life.’ That the eternal life of Christ’s people will be one of the highest possible kind, results necessarily from the very nature of the case, and is expressly declared in every variety of language; but the grand fundamental promise of ‘the world to come’ is—not holiness or happiness, but—’ EVERLASTING LIFE.’

And as it showed us the first origin of this present state of things, so does it show us the close. The evil of the universe appears to be concentrated within the confines of this planet, and here will it be brought to its termination. All evil, and all persistent evil-doers, will cease to exist, and God will be all in all. That which is opened out to us the most fully, as might be expected from our own special interest in it, is the glory of the elect Church. Whatever blessings may hereafter flow to the redeemed race of man from ‘the manifold wisdom of God’ in Christ, the glorified Church, that had been gathered from out of it, will occupy the highest position in the scale of creation. Who can ever rank higher than those who are to be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ? Some glimpses of that glory are afforded us, however dimly and obscurely, in the closing scenes of revelation. In the beginning of the Bible we see man in his primitive state of innocence and simplicity; at its close we see him wrought up with infinite toil, and labor, and pain, into the highest possible condition of individual and corporate development. Man’s history ‘begins in a garden and ends in a city.’ If we could really be persuaded that to believe all this is ‘infidelity,’ it would be with some curiosity, not mingled with anxiety, that we should ask—What then is Faith?

APPENDIX.

A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.’ (John 3. 27.)

ABOUT twenty years ago a Christian in Philadelphia was asked to give a course of lectures, in answer to a book that had lately appeared in favor of Universalism. After delivering the first lecture, he felt so deeply the responsibility of his position that he besought the Lord with all earnestness to show him clearly the whole truth of the matter, whatever it might be, and whatever consequences his acknowledgment of it might involve. His eyes were opened almost immediately, and he saw that he and his opponent were both wrong. He saw the glorious truth of life and immortality in Christ alone; and from that day to this he has seen it, with ever increasing clearness, to be the grand revelation which God has made to us in His word. He has rejoiced in being counted worthy to suffer shame and obloquy and persecution for the truth as it is in Jesus, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than popular applause, the smiles of party, or even the approbation of the best of men. If ever, were his own words to me, the Spirit of God alone taught any man any truth out of the word, against all his own prejudices, He taught me that.' Reader, will you try the same experiment, and ask God, not to confirm you in your present opinions, but 'to show you the whole truth of the matter, whatever it may be?' If you have sufficient distrust of your own infallibility to enable you to do this honestly, and sufficient love of truth for its own sake to make you do it earnestly, I shall have no fear of the result.

[The reader will thank me for giving him the refreshment of reading the following letter from the Rev. E. Steane, D.D., who was one of the original founders, and has been ever since an Honorary Secretary, of the Evangelical Alliance. The manifestation of such a spirit, on the part of a dissentient, helps to sustain one's faith in Christianity as a still living power on the earth, which much that passes under its name is but too well calculated to shake.]

MY DEAR MR. MINTON,—

JUST as I was leaving home I received your book ['The Glory of Christ '] which you kindly sent me, and since I have been here I have read the greater part of it. I am sure you do not require, perhaps do not expect, me to enter into the discussion of the subject of which it treats. I am now an old man, and theological controversies have lost much of the interest for me which they once possessed; and still more such thorny metaphysical questions as whether sin is an infinite evil, and whether the human soul is actually immortal. With the greater part of the wilderness behind me, which I have traversed more than threescore years and ten, and with Jordan in sight and the goodly land that lies beyond it, I think I may be permitted to take my leave of such subjects. I shall soon see them in the sunlight of that brighter and better world, which will make all that is now mysterious vanish; meanwhile I find repose in the eternal rectitude of the Divine government, whatever the event may be as to the future of that large portion of my fellow-creatures who reject the gospel or who have never known it.

But your motive in sending me your book, if I interpret it aright, lies in the Greek inscription which you have written in it (Heb. 13. 1). You want me to know that the change which has taken place in your theology has wrought no change in your brotherly affection, and you want to know if my heart remains unchanged towards you.

It makes me ashamed, and distresses me more than I can express, to find that alienations are taking place among brethren, and that some are growing intolerant. If a vital truth of the gospel were abandoned I could understand, and more than understand—I could deeply sympathize with such alienations; but in such a case as this it grieves me to the heart to see brotherly union dissolved, and brotherly love sacrificed on the altar of an unyielding and oppressive orthodoxy.

I have always thought the doctrinal basis of the Evangelical Alliance contained points which had been better far omitted, not because I deem them unscriptural, but because they necessarily, and as I think improperly, narrow the ground of brotherly union.

I have put in an earnest plea for charity in a letter I have printed and sent to all the members of the Council, a copy of which I enclose; but some, I fear, will not listen to it. Oh! how much we need to be baptized afresh into 'the love of the Spirit.' I desire to love all whom Christ loves—all who will be my associates in that great act of heavenly adoration, in which we shall cast our crowns at the feet of Jesus and cry with one heart, though with infinitely multitudinous voices, 'Worthy is the Lamb! 'You and I have been directed to different spheres of service, and not in one point only of inferior moment, but perhaps in many, neither see alike nor speak alike; but I trust we are both servants of Christ, both children of God's adoption, both sealed by the Spirit unto the day of redemption: and shall we deny to one another the communion of saints, or withhold from one another the manifestations of brotherly love? You, I know, will not do it. Your letter shows that you will not; and I should be unworthy not of your love only, but of His who redeemed us both, if I could do it.

Peace be with you, and the unction of the Holy One—the anointing which teaches all things and abideth continually.

Believe me, as aforetime, Your affectionate Brother in Christ, EDWARD STEANE.

Port of a letter from a French Evangelical Pasteur.

‘I have read with the warmest sympathy your courageous protests against that distressing, and after all groundless, doctrine of Eternal Suffering. I felt very much gratified by seeing that you have received adhesions from numerous quarters. I feel, nevertheless, bound to offer you my humble but hearty tribute of Christian wishes. My heart and mind are so full of this momentous subject, after ten years of earnest study, that I believe nothing but a volume in French will relieve me. Meantime, may the Lord, who has given you the light, maintain your strength and firmness in this good fight.’

POSTSCRIPT.

WHEN this pamphlet was just about to issue from the press, I had the advantage of hearing a very able address in defense of the popular doctrine, delivered at a clerical meeting by my beloved and honored friend the Rev. E. H. Bickersteth. He is preeminently one of those men whose opposition to what I believe to be the truth would of itself be enough to stagger me, if there were no means of ascertaining the grounds upon which it rests. The conviction would be irresistible that he must perceive something which had wholly escaped my notice. But almost every sentence that he uttered tended to reassure me. And at the close of his argument, the points of which were put together in the most effective manner possible, I felt that if it did really prove the doctrine of endless woe—if, for instance, the despairing exclamation of the Jews under repeated national calamities, Who among us can abide this consuming fire? who among us can abide these continual burnings? ‘(Bishop Lowth’s translation of Isaiah 33. 14) really proved that certain human beings will be kept alive in fire, literal or figurative, to all eternity; if shame and everlasting contempt’ necessarily involved everlasting shame,’ as Mr. B. put it; if the exposure of a human body to the unchecked ravages of a worm that cannot be killed, and to the consuming power of a fire that cannot be quenched, really represented endless life in suffering—then I must for ever abandon the attempt to extract any meaning from a single word in Holy Scripture, and must just believe what good men assure me is to be found there. If I should ever be convinced that they are right, I hope that grace will be given me to acknowledge it, and never again to express, or entertain, any opinion whatever on the meaning of any words, however clear and simple they may appear, either in the Bible or in any other book.

Meanwhile I may express my belief that every argument adduced by Mr. B. has been definitely anticipated in these pages, with two exceptions.

The first is, that the Pharisees were on his side of the question, and the Sadducees on ours, and that our Lord decided in favor of the Pharisees. But this is a pure fallacy. The Sadducees believed in no future state for either the righteous or the wicked; we believe in a future state for both. We believe that all will rise again, and be rewarded according to their works. If the Pharisees believed that both the righteous and the wicked would live forever, that they would both possess everlasting life hereafter, that the broad way and the narrow way were equally ‘the way everlasting,’ the one being the way of everlasting sin and misery, the other the way of everlasting holiness and happiness, then our Lord met them exactly as He met the Platonists, confirming what was right and correcting what was wrong in their views. The Platonist Pharisees were right in maintaining that some would live forever, but wrong in maintaining that all would do so. John the Baptist first pronounced against this error, by declaring—not that the wheat and the chaff would be stored up in two different garners, and there receive very different treatment, but—that, while the wheat was preserved in a garner, the chaff would be put an end to by being burnt up with unquenchable fire. And our Lord Himself enforced the same truth, both adding the metaphor of a devouring worm, and declaring in the most positive language that the wicked will be destroyed soul and body in hell.

The second point requiring notice in Mr. B.’s address is his attempt to weaken the force of the declaration just quoted, and our general argument from the use of the word *apollumi* (destroy), by referring to Hebrews 2. 14—‘That through death He might destroy him that had the power of the death, that is the Devil.’ But the word here is not *apollumi* at all; it is *katargeo*, which Liddell and Scott render to make useless, void, abolish.’ Satan’s power was virtually destroyed by Christ’s death, but not His person. The two words very nearly express the difference between the popular, and the scriptural, view of the doom of the ungodly. *Katargeo* expresses the former; namely, that they will be imprisoned, and restrained from committing any overt acts of rebellion against God. *Apollumi* expresses the latter; namely, that they will be destroyed, and, as the Athanasian creed expresses it, perish everlastingly.’ Mr. B. reminded us, without adducing it as proof, that the doctrine of endless woe does once find expression in the Apocrypha. What a plain indication that the Church was guided aright in excluding that book at least, the book of Judith, from the canonical Scriptures! And what a striking testimony to the inspiration of the Scriptures which we do accept, that not one expression of it should be found in them from beginning to end!