

LIFE OR DEATH

THE DESTINY OF THE

SOUL

IN

THE FUTURE STATE.

BY

EDWARD FALCONER LITTON, M.A.,

BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

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"Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider."—LORD BACON.



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If all mankind, minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind. Were an opinion a personal possession of no value except to the owner ; if to be obstructed in the enjoyment of it were simply a private injury, it would make some difference whether the injury was inflicted only on a few persons or on many. But the peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is, that it is robbing the human race ; posterity as well as the existing generation ; those who dissent from the opinion, still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth : if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error.—JOHN STUART MILL.

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LIFE OR DEATH

THE DESTINY OF THE SOUL IN THE FUTURE STATE.

CHAPTER I.

THE SUBJECT STATED—ITS INTEREST AND IMPORTANCE.

THE Immortality of the Soul is almost universally accepted as a truth. It is alleged that God has so created the soul that its ceasing to exist is an *impossibility*; that under no circumstances can it be destroyed, even by Divine power, without violating the first law of its creation—without a departure from God's original design. As a necessary consequence, it is accordingly asserted that the unredeemed soul must for ever continue to exist through the countless ages of eternity, suffering the most exquisite torment; and it is said that the Word of God—of Him who announces himself to be "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin"—establishes the doctrine so plainly, that no Christian man with the Bible in his hand can refuse to yield his ready assent. There are others, admittedly in the minority, but not on that account the less likely to be correct, who believe that God in creating the soul, conferred upon it no such immortality as an essential law of its being,

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and that without any violation of His original purpose in creation, the destiny of the unredeemed, after the final judgment, will be eternal death : and that such may be established as Divine truth, the same Holy Scriptures are appealed to as abundantly sufficient to prove.

Those who maintain the former, or as it may be termed the doctrine of Eternal Existence, to distinguish it from the latter, which may be designated the doctrine of Eternal Death, assert that God irrevocably designed and created the soul of man immortal ; that the soul now possesses, and ever must possess, an undying existence ; that immortality is the essential characteristic of all souls, and that such as shall not exist in a state of happiness after the Final Judgment—alas ! that they should be the majority of the human race—must for ever exist in a state of wretchedness and woe ; that the redeemed will enter into the joy of their Lord, while the unredeemed must depart into everlasting burnings, and ever suffer the gnawings of the undying worm.

Does God in his Word thus declare His purpose towards the Lost ? If He does ; man must stand silent in the presence of his Creator—“Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” If He does not ; let us “sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever,” and “make known his faithfulness to all generations.”

To deny that many will enjoy an eternal life of happiness in a future state, according to the will and pleasure of the Divine Creator of the universe—the great God and our Saviour—would be in fact to take away the hope of every Christian, and to make shipwreck of the Gospel of Christ ; but to assert that *every soul* born into the world from the time when God resting from his labor, declared that all He had created was “very good,” until the last trumpet shall sound and call to judgment, *must needs* continue immortal under all circumstances and in all events, so that its destruction at any time cannot be contemplated as a *possibility*, is a very different statement indeed—a statement

which it is believed a calm and impartial examination of Scripture will prove erroneous.

It is difficult to understand the disinclination which is entertained by so many persons, to consider the grounds upon which the doctrine of Eternal existence rests. Men seem afraid, lest, by calling in question an opinion so generally entertained, they should strike a blow against divine truth itself; and accordingly prefer to suffer the accumulated dust of Pagan philosophy and Middle-age priestcraft to rest undisturbed on the sacred edifice of truth, than tolerate a process which they idly deem would endanger its security. If such a result could indeed justly be anticipated, the disinclination to investigate the subject might be far from unwise; but if the process should eventuate in restoring the temple of truth, and so display God's scheme in the creation, fall, and redemption of man, as one of ineffable beauty and goodness; what shall be said of such morbid delicacy? While presumptuous speculation should be avoided on the one hand, let none shrink from candid and humble investigation on the other. That such an investigation will exhibit the infinite grace of God, and the infinite love of the Divine purpose as regards mankind, is the only excuse offered in calling the serious attention of inquirers to a subject, which next to personal salvation, must be esteemed of the deepest interest and importance.

At the very outset, it is right to disclaim any desire to have the question discussed or decided according to sentimental notions of what God *ought* to determine. It is admitted that the conclusion must be arrived at directly from the Word of God, interpreted by that moral sense and judgment to which it appeals; for if the doctrine of the Eternal existence of the soul in torment is plainly intimated in the pages of the Bible as the teaching of the Divine Spirit, the obligation to accept it is imperative, apart from any objection man may suggest regarding its consistency with the Divine attributes.

Such objections are inadmissible when God's will is once recognized as plainly revealed; but, on the other hand, if the language of Scripture should prove capable of a different interpretation—if any doubt should exist as to what God's intentions are in truth and fact; no hesitation should exist to introduce such considerations into the inquiry, in order that a just conclusion may be arrived at, and the claims of opposite opinions be distinguished.

The effort should also be made to put aside, as much as possible, any prejudice which may exist in the mind. An unbiassed judgment must be applied to the consideration of the subject. This may be no easy matter, for the undercurrent of early education and the ready acceptance of opinions long familiar, which the mind has never been led to question, naturally exert an influence upon the judgment. This influence must be resisted and guarded against, and every candid inquirer after truth will endeavour to attain this end.

Many persons, however, assert that it is unwise to discuss the subject; because, as they say, even if the doctrine of Eternal existence be erroneous, it is a safe error—an error on the right side. Such persons regard the doctrine as one of great utility, as it enables ministers of religion to work with effect upon the fears of mankind, and operates to deter the thoughtless from committing sin. They are careless, therefore, to discuss its truthfulness; and would adopt the sentiments, if not the language of Watts, in one of his essays, where he says, "This dreadful subject awakens men to a far more piercing sight and a more keen sensation of their own guilt and danger. It possesses their spirit with a more lively sense of their misery. It fills them with a holy dread of divine punishment, and excites the powerful passion of fear to make them fly from the wrath to come, and betake themselves to the grace of God revealed in the Gospel."

But surely a preliminary question must be answered before any weight can be given to such specious observations. Is

the doctrine *true* to which so much value is attributed? The doctrine may commend itself to man's wisdom for the purpose stated; but unless it be established by Scripture, is it honest to yield a tacit consent or an implied approval on the grounds suggested? Who will seriously justify such a course of conduct? Suppose the doctrine of Eternal existence to be erroneous: surely to acquiesce in an error cannot produce good, cannot conduce to God's glory, or promote man's true morality! Surely, no one can justify to his conscience the adoption of what is untrue as an article of faith, in order that good may perhaps follow. Surely it cannot be that men are so wise and far-sighted as to discover a mode of winning souls to Christ, which God, in his infinite wisdom, has not either authorized or revealed. Who will venture, on his own responsibility, to hide from the knowledge of others, any portion of divine truth, on the plea of expediency, founded on his frail judgment? Who will venture to conclude that the knowledge of a divine truth can tend to produce immorality, or cause the violation of laws and commands equally divine?

Experience proves that worldly-minded men, who might justly be expected to be influenced by the fear of eternal torment in a future state, negative by their life and conduct any belief in its certainty or reality; while no Christian man will assign, as the ground of his obedience to the commands of Christ, the terror which such a belief is calculated, and, doubtless, ought to inspire. To win souls to Christ, the doctrine of Eternal existence is inoperative; while those who have learned of Him are subject to an influence of a far different kind.

It has been well and truly remarked, that "the terrors of the Lord are great, but they do not exercise supreme sway in a human heart, and lead all its affections whithersoever they will. His anger is not a ruling, leading, drawing power. It is mighty, but not to save. It is a force that casts the wicked into hell; but not a force that can win any

son of man near in willing obedience. It is not a force in that direction. The stream of the Mississippi is a great power: it floats loaded ships or fallen forests downward with great velocity to the sea; but it cannot impel one tiny boat upward to the fertile regions near its source. This is done by another and an opposite power; a breath from heaven in the sail will carry the vessel up against the stream. So with the manifested terror of the Lord against all unrighteousness of men; its power is great—greater than we can know—who knoweth the power of mine anger?—but it does not lead any one any way in the path of righteousness.”*

It is dishonest, then, to entertain any considerations founded on the alleged value of the doctrine of “Eternal existence” in influencing the lives of ungodly men, until the preliminary question as regards its Scriptural authority is first determined. When once the truth is ascertained, duty becomes plain. The truth must be adhered to through evil report and good report, and the result must be left to Him who is of infinite wisdom to direct, and of infinite power to work out His own purposes.

The Danish philosopher, Oersted, remarks “Should we not feel inwardly ashamed if we caught ourselves in the endeavour to desire a different truth than that which actually exists? And what folly it would be, if we allowed ourselves to be determined in our opinions by our desires. Our wishes and desires could not make it true! No; let us honour truth: it is indissolubly united with virtue. The whole truth brings its own consolation with it.”

If the doctrine of “Eternal existence” be in fact true, let it be openly proclaimed. Let not the feeling of horror which it is calculated to inspire be a hindrance to its fearless enunciation. But if it be unsupported by Scripture, let the truth be declared with equal boldness and equal fearlessness. Let no unauthorised means be adopted of pressing the Gospel

* Arnot's *Roots and Fruits of the Christian Life*, p. 425.

on the acceptance of mankind : let no false pretence be had recourse to for the conversion of sinners. What better example can be followed than that of the Apostles ; and the record of their missionary labours will be searched in vain for an instance, in which the Eternal existence of the Lost in torment is urged as the inducement why salvation should be embraced. The love of Christ was the constraining motive. They did not, when opportunities offered, and they were not a few, present to the minds of those addressed " piercing sights " of eternal torment ; and it cannot be believed that those who were divinely commissioned to make known the Gospel omitted any wise and authorised means of awakening the consciences of men. While all have authority to proclaim God as the God of Love, none should exhibit Him as a Deity who has determined an endless existence in torment for the majority of the human race, unless expressly authorised to do so by Scripture. Let it never be forgotten that He who spoke as " never man spake," has announced ; that narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and few enter upon the one, while many traverse the other.

The attention, then, of all who are prepared to examine the subject apart from the bias of prejudice, and are satisfied to have their judgments formed by the teaching of God's Word *alone*, is invited to a consideration of the following pages. The conclusion arrived at appears so plainly warranted by Scripture, so completely in harmony with the entire scheme of the creation, fall, and redemption of man,—so entirely consistent with the attributes which the Deity *must* possess, and so calculated to elevate the conscience and awaken gratitude and love to the Giver of every good gift, that none should hesitate to accept it with thankfulness.

It is not denied that very many persons, of whose Christian earnestness and sincerity there can be no doubt, hold the popular dogma as an article of faith. But while this fact

creates the necessity of entering more fully into the discussion than would otherwise be required, it is assuredly maintained that there is no monopoly in the matter of Divine truth, and that the humble inquirer, as well as the wise and learned, may look for instruction from the Divine Spirit. May He vouchsafe his guidance in the inquiry, and, so far as the truth is presented, apply it with power to the heart and understanding of the reader.

Before intimating the course of inquiry about to be adopted, it may be convenient to state concisely that which is alleged to be the truth regarding the purposes of the Divine Being in the creation of man, and the final destiny of the soul.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. The earth without form and void, after passing through a long course of preparation during many succeeding ages, was at last rendered suitable to receive a higher order of being than had theretofore been created. God said, Let us create man; and he formed Adam out of the dust of the earth, whereby he became linked to mortality; and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, whereby he became possessed of a soul. In respect of the former, man was created having an origin common with that of all other animals—of the earth, earthy. In the latter respect, he was distinguished from all other animal existence in that he possessed an entity created after God's image—not of the Divine nature—fitted for the blessing of immortality, capable of possessing eternal life.

To man, thus created, having a soul adapted for an eternal existence by reason of its moral nature, but dependant for continuance upon the life-sustaining power of God and dwelling in an animal and mortal frame, God announced a certain penalty in connection with a command. He communicated to Adam, that in the day he should eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; dying, he should die. Satan, taking occasion of the command, tempted man: lust, when it had conceived, brought forth sin; and sin, when it

was finished, brought forth death;—death not of the animal existence, which, being earthy, was already subject to dissolution in common with animal organisms previously created; but death of that entity with which he alone of the animal creation was endowed. Adam having violated God's command, the penalty announced must of necessity follow: and dying, he died. That which truly constituted Adam's self, and distinguished him from the rest of creation, died: his soul became alien to God and obedient unto death. Thus, that which had been created capable of an eternal existence, lost the right to enjoy it; and then it was that God removed man from the garden, lest he should eat of the tree of life, and *live for ever*.

Adam then stood in the position of a being—mortal as to his animal existence, having been created from the dust;—mortal as to his soul, in consequence of disobedience. The Soul, dead in trespasses and sin, nevertheless yearned after the possession of eternal life and a restoration to God's favour. Then, was announced that portion of God's plan existing in the bosom of the Father long ere the world was formed, but till then unrevealed; that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head; and so man was taught to look forward to the distant future, when, in the fulness of time the Messiah should come, and as the Author of eternal salvation, purchase for and confer upon his people, an eternal inheritance. Christ came, and by his sacrifice satisfied the broken law and offended justice of God.

Eternal life, or immortality, having been thus purchased by so great a price, a sacrifice valuable beyond conception, God confers, through Christ, that immortality on all who believe; for to such his Gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

Mankind thus comprises two classes—the redeemed and the unredeemed: those who are God's people and those who are not his people: and they, as regard their future hope and destiny, stand respectively in different positions.

The former receive the promised gift of life eternal : the latter remain under the curse and penalty of sin ; obnoxious to death ; mortal as to their animal life and likewise as to their souls ; who shall receive at the final Judgment the wages of sin, and be punished with “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.”

Such is believed to be God’s purpose as set forth and declared in his revealed Word—a purpose, which is conformable with Reason and in harmony with Natural religion.

CHAPTER II.

NATURAL RELIGION—UNCERTAINTY OF ITS TEACHING REGARDING THE SOUL—THE SOUL'S IMMORTALITY NOT TO BE LEARNED THEREFROM—REVELATION THE ONLY SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE IN REGARD TO THE SOUL'S CONTINUED EXISTENCE IN A FUTURE STATE.

THE natural immortality of the soul is alleged to be established *both* by Revelation and by Natural religion. Either, then, of two courses may be followed in conducting the inquiry. The Bible, as the recognised revelation of God's will, may be first taken; and pointing out what it, in fact, teaches with respect to the final destiny of the Lost—that is to say, their everlasting destruction, it may be shown that there is nothing taught with certainty by Natural religion which does not harmonise with the conclusion; or, Natural religion may be regarded in the first instance, and, having shown its utter inadequacy to prove the dogma of the essential immortality of the soul, the mind will be left free to apply itself to the inspired Word; and thus an unprejudiced conclusion may be arrived at, unaffected by any supposed necessity to maintain the popular opinion for the sake of what Natural religion is erroneously said to establish.

The latter course is the one preferred, simply because an unbiassed and impartial consideration is thereby better secured; for so long as men are impressed with the belief that Natural religion is amply sufficient to establish the essential immortality of the soul, it is idle to expect that Revelation will be investigated with any other view than to confirm what is antecedently accepted as proved. The result is that the Scriptures are referred to merely for the purpose

of vindicating a foregone conclusion, and not for the purpose of eliciting truth.

To avoid, then, this error, it is desirable to point out how uncertain is the teaching of Natural religion regarding the soul; and that its essential immortality is far from being established. In fact, it is necessary to clear away those erroneous opinions said to be established by the light of Reason and Nature; but which, in reality, have been for the most part derived from Pagan philosophy—a philosophy which has in no small degree influenced the interpretation of Scripture.

No one thinks of denying that the revealed Word of God is the proper standard by which the worth of every opinion concerning Divine things must be tested; yet, in reality, few submit their judgment to its simple guidance. Opinions are adopted simply because they have been generally accepted as true, and Scripture is thereupon introduced—not with a view to ascertain their correctness, but to establish them in their integrity; and thus conclusions are arrived at, on the alleged authority of Scripture alone, which are, in fact, the products of what is human, as well as what is divine.

Perhaps on no subject so much as the particular one under discussion has this erroneous course of interpretation prevailed. Archbishop Whately well remarks: “Human reason is considered as sufficiently strong to *discover* the doctrine of a future state, because when the doctrine has been *proposed* to our belief by revelation, it perceives probabilities in favour of it: and the same with many other doctrines also. And thus it is, that a system of what is called Natural religion is dressed up, as it were, with the spoils of revelation; and is made such as men when fairly left to themselves, and actually guided by the light of nature alone, never did attain to. And then, this Natural religion is made by some the standard by which they interpret the declarations of Scripture; which is, in fact, correcting an original from an incorrect and imperfect transcript.”*

* Essays on Some of the Peculiarities of the Christian Religion. Essay I., p. 52, First Series.

Natural religion has in this way got the credit of establishing the essential immortality of the soul, and, accordingly, Revelation has been made to dovetail with an already adopted article of faith. The result has been the popular belief, that lost souls must for ever exist in unmitigated misery. The erroneous course of reasoning referred to, lies at the root of, and in fact, forms the basis upon which the doctrine of Eternal existence rests ; and it cannot be too much pressed upon the attention, that although the *probability of a future state* may be learned from Natural religion, yet apart from Revelation nothing can be known of the *duration* or circumstances of the soul's existence when this present life has terminated.

It may be questioned whether human reason can establish with certainty, that man possesses an entity capable of existence independently of the body. There is certainly no experience that such an entity does or can exist when separated from the body : on the contrary, even admitting the soul's existence in man as distinct from animal life, it is yet so united with animal life, that the termination of the latter appears, so far as experience is concerned, to terminate the former. At all events temporal death removes it from the sphere of knowledge.

It is admitted, however, though not on the ground of what may be learned from Natural religion, that man does possess a distinct entity, which, in popular language, is designated the soul—an entity which it is not necessary further to describe than to state, that it is of a spiritual or immaterial nature ; and one, which, when regarded distinctively, must be admitted to be free from the laws and accidents of the material world.

Admitting, then, the existence of this entity as distinct from but yet in union with animal life ; can human reason, apart from revelation, conclude with certainty anything regarding its continued existence, when once physical death has taken place, beyond the mere fact that its destruction is not of *necessity* involved, and therefore that it may con-

tinue to exist? What may be the case with one soul may undoubtedly be the case with all souls; but, on the other hand, what may be the case with one soul need not of necessity be the case with all souls; and admitting the fact of a Future state to be sufficiently established by Natural religion from the acknowledged existence of a Deity—the Creator and moral Governor of the Universe, it still remains undetermined; first, whether His moral government requires the continued existence of *all* souls; and, secondly, whether that existence must, in the case of *all*, be prolonged throughout Eternity. Those who believe in the natural immortality of the soul, assert that *all* souls must of necessity exist after physical death; and that *that* existence must in the case of *all* have an eternal duration. But it is manifest that the fact itself is not concluded by the present existence of an entity in man distinct from animal life, nor by the additional consideration, that there shall be a Future state.

The fact depends altogether upon the inquiry; did God when he created man confer upon him a soul essentially immortal? If He did, it must of necessity continue for ever *self-existent* by virtue of its being so created. If He did not, the duration of that existence, in joy or in misery, must depend upon His will; and that Will, if to be known at all, can be learned alone from Revelation, and from no other source.

If the essential immortality of the soul was assuredly established by Natural religion or human reason, Revelation would properly be had recourse to, for the simple purpose of ascertaining the *circumstances* of its future being—the condition of happiness or misery in which it must pass its eternal existence: and this is the very course adopted by those who maintain that the natural immortality of the soul has been already concluded, when they deal with Revelation. But if Natural religion fails to establish the popular dogma in its integrity, and alone teaches that there

may be in man an entity distinct from animal life, and that there may be a Future state; it remains to inquire whether *all* souls must continue to exist hereafter, and whether that existence is eternal in the case of all.

For an answer to these inquiries recourse must be had to Revelation, not merely to ascertain the *condition* of the soul's future being, but the fact whether *all* souls must continue to exist for ever.

The first step, therefore, in the argument, is to point out that Natural religion fails to establish the soul's essential immortality, and affords but limited and uncertain information in regard to its existence after death; and further, that the final destruction of lost souls *may* be the punishment determined by God, consistently with every truth that can be discovered from Natural religion by the efforts of human reason.

If the above conclusion can be established, no small advance will have been made towards securing a candid inquiry as to what the Word of God in fact teaches. No necessity will then exist to explain the language of Scripture in regard to the future punishment of the Lost, otherwise than is required by the terms of Scripture itself, interpreted in harmony with its general spirit, the Divine excellencies, and the moral consciousness of mankind. The object will be; not to establish a dogma, but to discover truth.

The question then is, what may be known concerning the soul, its nature and being, apart from Revelation? Now, it must be acknowledged that Natural religion affords no knowledge whatever regarding the *duration* of the soul's existence hereafter, and very little, indeed, of its nature or its circumstances as a distinct entity. This should not be a matter of surprise, for Natural religion was never intended to convey such knowledge. The very fact that God has given an express revelation, which concerns the destiny of the soul as well as its condition in a future state, is amply sufficient to account for the limited information to be had from

Natural religion. While Revelation is a republication of Natural religion, it is at the same time far more than a republication. Revelation not only confirms all that might have been known from human reason ; but further, it affords certain knowledge regarding that upon which Nature is silent.

For example, the circumstances under which the soul shall receive the gift of eternal life, or immortality, consistently with the righteous judgment of God which condemns the soul that sinneth to eternal death, are facts upon which Natural religion affords no information ; for unless the Gospel revelation be true there exists but little, if any, ground to hope for a future life.*

Revelation announces that "life and immortality" have been brought "to light through the Gospel." The statement is made in reference to the soul, the proper subject of the Future state. In other words, the soul's life and the soul's immortality have been brought to light by the Gospel. This plainly intimates that apart from the Way of Life enunciated in the Gospel, death was the manifest and normal destiny of the soul ; that life and immortality, so far as regarded both the condition of its bestowment and the circumstances of its enjoyment, was enveloped in obscurity. For, if the truth in relation to the immortality of the soul—not the truth of the immortality of the soul—had been revealed with certainty by the light of Reason and Nature, there could have been no need of the Gospel to bring that truth to light ; and thus it may be correctly asserted that the true doctrine of the soul's immortality, that is, the bestowment of Eternal life upon the soul as a gift, hereafter to be enjoyed, was not, and could not have been learned by mere human reason.

No doubt, speculations concerning the nature of the soul and its probable existence in a Future state, were not wanting ;

* "If the Gospel be untrue I have no hope of a future life."—*Faith in God and Modern Atheism*. By Dr. Buchanan. Vol. i., p. 395.—1855.

but what was the sum and substance, of the boasted philosophy of the Ancients? Their conclusions may be expressed in few words; emanation of the soul *from* God; and re-absorption of the soul *in* God. Such was the grand result arrived at by the effort of human reason and man's philosophy! And what is the manifest conclusion? Plainly; universal annihilation as the end, *for all*, for when distinct existence and personality is lost by the merging of the soul in the Divine Being, the soul can no longer be said to exist. Universal annihilation destroys the entire fabric of the Christian religion; and is still further removed from the truth than its correlative error, Universal immortality.

Reason and experience, the only sources of knowledge, failed to attain that truth which was reserved for Revelation to make known; and although the existence of a Future state was guessed at, all else was but speculation. The boundaries between truth and error were unascertained, and just in proportion as men sought to particularise upon the nature of the soul, and the duration of its future being; the subject became mystified, and error abounded.

It is asserted, then, that Reason applied to nature as presented to man's experience, does not determine the duration of the soul's existence after death—in other words, does not establish its natural immortality. And it is further asserted, that although Reason is sufficient to establish the existence of God, as the Creator of the universe, and although the fact that He must exercise a moral government in the affairs of men, leads to the inference that there *may* be a future state; neither the one nor the other warrants the conclusion that the Soul must of necessity exist throughout eternity.

And first, to examine Experience as one of the sources of knowledge; and the Analogies, which it is said reason may legitimately draw from Nature, in favour of the soul's essential immortality.

The existence of mind, or of the soul, as a distinct entity

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independent of the body is unknown to man's experience. Experience is confined to that condition in which the soul is mysteriously united with animal life in the person of man. Experience is at an end when man's animal life has terminated. The existence of the soul as an entity distinct from animal life, is not at all so evident as is generally supposed.* And though created mind *may* exist independently of matter, there is nothing in the fact of its being immaterial to render it necessary that it must, therefore, be immortal. It is otherwise in the case of the Divine mind, which is not a created existence.

So far then, as experience is concerned, temporal or physical death is the termination of man's existence. It cannot be concluded from experience, that any part of man's being—even admitting that he may possess a distinct entity in union with the animal body and animal life—exists after death. It is the presence of "life," recognizable by its effect upon the body, which, so long as it continues in union with it, confers upon mere matter, the title and dignity of, Man. When the union ceases at death, whether by separation of the united parts, or by the destruction of all or any or either of them (and experience does not intimate which, in fact, takes place), man returns to the dust out of which he was formed. Who can, apart from Revelation, at such a moment affirm that the soul still continues to exist? For aught man can tell from experience, the union of the body with animal life is as necessary to the soul's existence, as the union of the body with animal life is to the existence of animal life. Butler, in his "Analogy," admits that, according to nature, "We know not what death is in itself;" and again—"The truth is, reason does not at all show us in what state death naturally leaves us."†

* "Mind in the sense of spirit or of an entity existing and acting in this world independently of matter is absolutely unknown."—*Combe, on the Relation between Science and Religion*, page 51.

† Butler's Analogy, Part I., Chapter I.

If it be objected, that death merely affects the animal life as distinct from that part of the complex being of man which is designated the soul; the answer is—leaving out of view what may be learned from Revelation and judging by Experience *alone*, there are no grounds to suppose that death does not terminate at once and for ever man's existence. Reason may suggest a presumption in favour of a future state; but experience offers none. So far as the effect of temporal death is manifested, the conclusion must be, that the animal frame is sustained by the presence of "life" in union with it, and the body is dissolved when the "life" is extinguished: for the belief that the body becoming infirm and gradually sinking into decay, itself severs the tie, and leaves the vital power—or let it be the soul—intact and free from the ruin involved; can only be arrived at through the medium of Revelation, which teaches that there shall be a Future state. So that experience would justify the conclusion, that temporal death is more directly concerned with the vital power which animates the body, than with the body which clothes the vital power. The body remains for some time at all events after death takes place, which is more than can be known from experience of that which animates it. Thus, judging alone from experience, death is the extinction of life, in whatever respect regarded, either as animal life or a spiritual entity, and not merely the dissolution of the tie which unites each to the other, or both to the animal body.

But it is said, that Analogies derived from the course of nature, are sufficient to establish that man possesses an entity which must survive temporal death. A little consideration will show that this is too hasty a conclusion. Analogy as a mode of reasoning is always specious, but very frequently most fallacious; and even when properly used, may suggest but a bare presumption in one state of circumstances, while in a different state of facts the *vis consequentiæ* may approximate to absolute necessity.

Analogy "is the resemblance of ratios or relation."* Until the resemblance of the ratios is established, analogy cannot exist at all. As the resemblance increases, the force of analogy is proportionably strengthened, until, when identity in the ratios is established; analogy is determined, and becomes logical necessity. Through every shade of resemblance, then, the force of analogy as an argument, varies. For example, the existence of the soul in a separate state, may be illustrated by the fact that in catalepsy life exists while the physical functions of the body are suspended: it does not, however, follow that because the vital power continues to exist under the circumstances referred to, the soul, therefore, must or even may, continue to exist when death intervenes, for the two conditions, that of death and catalepsy, have no proper resemblance.

It is necessary, therefore, when dealing with analogies, not to mistake their proper force and application: they should be regarded with special caution when the parallelism between the natural circumstances or events from which they are derived, and the spiritual conditions to which they are applied, has not, in the first instance, been clearly established. The latter—the spiritual conditions—belong to the peculiar sphere of Revelation of which nothing is known from "the course of nature." The laws of organic or inorganic existence, with the exact peculiarities of which man is more or less ignorant, cannot afford a safe ground whence analogies may be drawn in connection with results which belong to the Divine intention, in regard of spiritual

* "Analogy is the resemblance of ratios (or relation)."—*Whately's Logic*, B. III., § 10.

"Analogy is not identity: a sagacious guide in its own legitimate field, it is utterly blind and senseless in the precincts that lie beyond. It is nicely correct in its *generals*, perversely erroneous in its *particulars*; and no sooner does it quit its proper province—the general for the particular—than there start up around it a multitude of solid objections, sternly to challenge it as a trespasser on grounds not its own."
—*Hugh Miller's Essays*, p. 370.

existence, and which cannot be known except so far as it has pleased Him to reveal them.

Now it is true, that in sound sleep, in a swoon, or in catalepsy, life continues while the physical functions are in a manner suspended; and, therefore, it *may* be true that life may exist after death has altogether removed the body; and it *may* be, that temporal death does not cause the destruction of the soul in man. This is possible, because, in reality, nothing is known of the effect of death upon living agents, and the absence of knowledge is sufficient to prevent a denial that it is possible. But the same absence of knowledge prevents the assertion that living agents survive death, and any assertion that they must survive, is plainly unwarranted. No analogy can with propriety be said to exist between the independence of the mind and the body in the case of sleep, &c., and the independence of the soul and the body in the case of death, *until* a proper "resemblance" between sleep as it affects the body, and death as it affects the body, has been, in the first instance, placed beyond dispute. Admitting that the living powers continue to exist in the case of sleep, &c., how can it be concluded that the soul most probably continues to exist, according to analogy, in the case of death; unless it is proved that the results of sleep and the results of death, bear a resemblance?

But it is undoubted that the results of each are diverse; and what, then, becomes of the presumption?

In sleep, in a trance, and in catalepsy, life not only continues to exist, but the body remains unchanged. In the case of sleep, the physical and mental functions are restored and strengthened; in the case of catalepsy, the laws of corruption are suspended; but in the case of death, corruption of the body immediately sets in. In fact, the illustration affords no analogy, and proves absolutely nothing. It affords no ground to conclude either, on the one hand, the existence, or, on the other, the non-existence of the soul after death. The most that can be said is, that the existence of the soul

in a state of separation from the body, is possible—a conclusion which is far from being denied.

It is urged by Butler, that “it does not appear that the relation of this gross body to the reflecting being is in any degree necessary to thinking, or to our intellectual enjoyments or sufferings.” This statement, however, assuredly is not borne out by fact. All are conscious that thought and reflection, intellectual enjoyments and sufferings, are more or less dependent upon the healthy action of the bodily functions. This is the result of practical experience; and though there may be instances of mortal diseases which “do not at all affect our present intellectual powers,” yet such instances are extremely rare, and are far from proving the correctness of the assertion, that thought and reflection are independent of the “gross body.”

Combe, in his *Essay on The Relation between Science and Religion*, explains how the fact may be sufficiently accounted for, where it is found to exist. He remarks, “It is often said of persons dying at an advanced age, that their mental faculties remained entire to the last. The real meaning of this phrase is, that the patients were not deranged; that is to say, that in so far as they were capable of manifesting the mind, their faculties acted normally. But it is a complete mistake to suppose that their minds were then as capable of performing investigation, of vivid emotion, and of energetic action as in the maturity of life. Sometimes cerebral excitement from disease renders the mind particularly brilliant, however weak the body at large may be. The fact of the mental powers being the last to fade is explained by the circumstance that the brain and the nervous system suffer the least diminution of size in the general decay of the corporeal frame.”*

Again, it is alleged that there is in every case a probability that all things will continue as they are found to exist, “in all respects except those in which we have some reason

* *The Relation between Science and Religion*, p. 32. By George Combe. 1857.

to think they will be altered ;” and hence it is argued that the essential immortality of the soul may be inferred. There is always, no doubt, a presumption in favour of the continued existence of that which actually exists, in the absence of anything which “ affords some reason to think it will be altered.”

The argument is thus put by Butler : “ What we are to go upon is, that we shall continue living persons till we foresee some accident, or event, which will endanger our capacities of perception and of action, or be likely to destroy us ; which death does in nowise appear to be.” While Butler here attempts to solve one difficulty, he raises one far greater which shall be presently noticed ; but the error of the above statement lies in the assumption, that death in nowise *appears* to endanger the capacities of perception and action. This is manifestly untrue ; for whatever, in point of fact, may be the result of death, it certainly *appears* to destroy the capacity of perception, and accordingly the presumption in favour of the continued existence of the perceptive faculties falls to the ground.

But suppose the reasoning to be valid, to what must it ultimately lead ? In judging of the weight and value of an argument, the results which are arrived at when it is followed to its legitimate conclusion, ought not to be disregarded. The observation made by Butler is just as applicable, and of the like force, when applied to establish the *past* eternal existence of the Soul, as it can be to prove the Soul’s *future* immortality ; and thus, by the very same process of reasoning, upon the strength of which the future eternal existence of the Soul is sought to be concluded, it becomes necessary to believe that the Soul has been co-eternal with, and uncreated by Him, for whom, and by whom, all things were made. By adopting such a line of argument as sufficient to justify the alleged probability of the Soul’s future eternal existence, the strongest weapon is placed in the hands of the Pantheist. Such a person might reply with unanswerable force—“ As we now exist, we must for ever

have existed, unless we are aware of some accident or event which gave us the capacity of perception and action, which our birth no more appears to have done, than that our death appears to destroy it."

The argument is double edged—it cuts both ways, and piercing the hand of him who uses it, is worse than useless.

But further still, the reasoning is as applicable to matter, as to spiritual existence; and thus the conclusion may be pressed, that the Material Universe has existed from all past eternity, and the very first principles of religious truth may be overturned.

Speculations similar to the above, largely influenced the philosophy of Greece and Rome. Among ancient Philosophers whose names are "household words," and who occupy the highest regard in the opinion of mankind, similar reasoning led to the conclusion that the Soul was an emanation from the Divine Being, and would finally be absorbed after a series of transmigrations into the Divine nature. La Place may be referred to among moderns, as affording an example of that infidelity which must follow from the course of reasoning spoken of. He could see no reason to suppose that the solar system shall ever cease to revolve around its centre, nor could he recognize any reason why it had not also continued as at present, from all past eternity; and accordingly he concluded, that as it ever had existed, so also it never had been created.

From such opinions, the transition is easy and immediate to the belief that the universe of Matter and Mind, is God himself. The arguments of Butler are powerful indeed, to establish the possibility of a Future state; but so far as he would have his reader recognise the essential immortality of the Soul in a Future state, they are perfectly inadequate, and most unsatisfactory.* Butler falls into the error of endea-

* Butler remarks in a note: "I say *kind* of presumption or probability; for I do not mean to affirm, that there is the same degree of conviction that

vouring to prove too much, and not content with affording unanswerable grounds for the probability of the former, he impliedly urges the latter with arguments which are wholly inconclusive for the purpose. No objection can be urged to his inquiry—"What the several changes which we have undergone, and those which we know we may undergo without being destroyed, *suggest*, as to the effect which death *may*, or *may not*, have upon us; and whether it is not from thence probable, that we may survive the change, and exist in a future state of life and perception." It is different, however, when the domain of probability is abandoned, and when the essential immortality of the Soul is asserted to be capable of proof from mere human reason, or any analogy existing between Revealed Religion and the constitution and course of Nature. For though the probability of a future life may be inferred, the duration of that life is altogether undetermined; and thus the real question at issue—the necessary immortality of the soul—remains unconcluded. It is alone, when the admitted probability, that the living powers may survive the change which takes place at death, and exist in a future state of perception, is changed into a positive assertion, that *all* souls must for ever exist in that state; that it becomes necessary to interfere, and to deny that

our living powers will continue after death, as there is that our substances will."

It is, perhaps, an injustice to Butler to represent him as undertaking to prove either the existence of a Future state, or the Immortality of the soul. Persons commonly attribute to his work what Butler himself never aimed at. He merely undertook to show that a *presumption* exists in favour of a Future state. In the Introduction, by Bishop Halifax, occurs the following passage:—"If the result of examination be, that there appears upon the whole any, the lowest presumption on one side, and none on the other, or a greater presumption on one side, though in the lowest degree greater, this determines the question, even in matters of speculation; and in matters of practice, will lay us under an absolute and formal obligation in point of prudence and of interest, to act upon that presumption, or low probability, though it be so low as to leave the mind in very great doubt which is the truth."

such an assertion is warranted, by any analogy, or by the simple teaching of Nature or human Reason.

It may be observed also, that every analogy and argument relied on to establish the natural immortality of the Soul in man, applies equally to the brute creation. Man, of course, can argue from his own perceptions, feelings, and sensations, with greater certainty, so far as regards himself, than he can, as regards the inferior order of animals. In this respect, the weight of argument may be greater when man is the subject of the inquiry ; but, with the brute creation, perception, sensibility, and reason, exist as well as in man himself, though, doubtless, of an inferior kind, or in an inferior degree. The several analogies applicable to the one, will however, apply in principle equally to the other ; and there is no reason, so far as the " course of nature " is concerned, for drawing a different conclusion.

In fact, admitting a difference of quality and kind in the living powers and organization which each possess, there can be no difficulty in applying Butler's arguments to support the necessary existence of a Future state for the inferior animals. Man, no doubt, occupies the highest place in the scale of animal creation ; but the living powers, and various faculties of perception which he possesses, differ in no respect from the like qualities in the brute creation, except so far, and to such an extent, as may be accounted for by a different functional organization, or nervous sensibility. The difference between man and the higher classes of inferior animals, is not greater than the difference which exists between such higher classes and those lower down in the scale of animal life. Can, then, a like eternal existence in a Future state be consistently denied to the brute creation, which is claimed for man, on grounds equally applicable to both ; or, is the difference in degree and quality of the perceptive faculties, enough to justify the denial ? The grounds of inference in man's case are, no doubt, stronger, but if sufficient in his case, are they alto-

gether insufficient in the case of animals inferior to man ; possessing, as they do, affections and passions, and displaying sense and reason ? The living power is alike in each ; the vital spark will fly as readily from the one as the other, and once temporal death has resulted, the physical remains of each differ, but in form and size ; and, after a short interval, dissolve into the same elements, obedient to the same law of corruption.

Butler remarks that there is no difficulty in the suggestion that brutes possess a natural immortality ; because, as he says—“ Since we know not what latent powers and capacities they may be endued with. There was once, prior to experience, as great presumption against human creatures, as there is against the brute creatures arriving at that degree of understanding which we have in mature age ; for we can trace up our own existence to the same original with theirs.” And he proceeds to observe—“ We find it to be a general law of nature, that creatures endued with capacities of virtue and religion, should be placed in a condition of being in which they are altogether without the use of them for a considerable length of their duration, as in infancy and childhood ; and great part of the human species go out of the present world before they come to the exercise of these capacities in any degree at all.”

The latter observations plainly amount to an admission that the “ Analogy ” applies with equal force to the immortality of brutes as to the immortality of man ;* and none can fail to be convinced, that Natural religion is applied too often to prove that which it cannot but fail to establish without proving too

* *Vide* Whately's Essays—Essay I., Sec. 6, where the following passage occurs :—“ It should not be forgotten, among other considerations, that none of those who contend for the natural immortality of the soul, on the ground of its distinct nature from the body—its incapability of decomposition, &c.—have been able to extricate themselves from one difficulty, viz., that all their arguments apply, with exactly the same force, to prove an immortality not only of brutes, but even of plants ; though in such a conclusion as this they were never willing to acquiesce.”

much ; and that, because nothing is found in Natural religion to contradict the future existence of the Soul, it is unwisely and without sufficient warrant called in aid of a positive proposition of which nothing can be affirmatively learned, except so far alone as Revelation affords information. The writer of an article in the *Natural History Review*,* when commenting on the law of cycles in species, properly remarks in relation to Butler's reasoning :—" It carries us in imagination to the eternity *a parte post* as surely as to that *a parte ante*. This is the flaw which invalidates all Bishop Butler's reasoning respecting the Future life. His law of continuance applies to brutes and plants as well as men, and proves their eternal past existence as certainly as their eternal future life."† After all, it is Revelation, which, placing the immortality of the soul upon its true basis—that is, by exhibiting eternal life as a gift to be conferred on those who shall be redeemed—sets forth that truth which satisfies the Analogies suggested, and corrects the errors which follow from a consideration of Nature alone, upon a subject within the peculiar sphere of Revelation.

There cannot be a greater mistake than to regard either matter or spirit as possessing *in itself* a subsistence apart from God ; as if, having once been created, they must thenceforth exist independently of the Deity, except so far as His power or will may influence the accidents and conditions of each. And thus, in regard to the soul, when once its natural immortality, or what is the same, its independent existence, is affirmed ; it follows that it can alone remain for the Deity to determine the nature and character of its

* *Natural History Review*, Vol. V., p. 57.

† " Butler was justified, then, in standing upon the old ways, and requiring of the Sceptics to give their reasons to prove that the soul was necessarily mortal. If he had held to this, his first chapter would have been unassailable. Unfortunately, he went further ; and, what is strange for so cautious a thinker, attempted to improve his victory by proving that the soul was necessarily immortal."—*The Irish Churchman's Magazine*, Vol. I., p. 67.

existence through eternity. The conclusion must follow if the premise be conceded ; but nothing can be more erroneous. No *created* existence can possess in itself an absolutely independent existence ; and unless the Soul is an emanation from God, and consequently uncreated, it cannot possess in itself natural immortality, although God may sustain it in everlasting life by the exercise of His power and will. Matter, having been *created*, stands in precisely the same position. Each must cease to exist, the instant God withdraws that continuous sustaining providence which is necessary to maintain existence during successive moments of time. God does not simply create by his power, but he sustains by his providence ; and the instant His care is withdrawn, existence must at the same moment terminate.

It has been well remarked, "God constantly acts and constantly makes laws ; were it possible for this to cease, the world would immediately cease ; He incessantly creates the entire infinite manifold existence, and this lives in Him."* In God, man lives and moves and has his being.

Now, the ordinary doctrine of the Natural immortality of the soul is in direct opposition to this truth. It is no answer to say that the doctrine held is a simple enunciation, that God at the period of the Soul's creation, willed that it should be immortal under all circumstances. This is but the same proposition put in another form ; for as God cannot be deemed ignorant of results, or be capable of changing his mind, to assert that at the first He conferred upon the Soul an eternal existence, is to allege He created it to continue for ever, independent, *quoad* its existence, altogether of Himself. If it was said that God conferred a conditional immortality—that is, that Man should live so long as he obeyed the Divine command, and walked in fellowship with God—no objection could be urged ; but to allege that the Soul has been so created that the Deity cannot dispose

* *Relation of Natural Science to various Religious Subjects.* By Hans Christian Oersted.

of it in such manner as He pleases—even to the extent of annihilation—without a change of His original design, is to assert what *cannot* be true. It is impossible to admit that the Divine Being would abrogate his sovereignty and absolute power ; or, consistently with preserving his character of an Almighty Being, reduce himself to a position in which, however he might modify and control, he could never destroy or terminate that which owed its existence to His creative will.

Man not only enjoys his present life by God's bounty, but man's spiritual entity or soul subsists in Him : and if it be a truth that Christ *only* hath immortality, it seems almost idle to assert that the Soul can possess *in or of itself* an independent immortality, as the ordinary opinion of necessity affirms. It is but too true, " that men are desirous that God should arrange these things according to their own notions, which notions are held to be so perfect in themselves that they think the power and wisdom of God is denied, if that which is attributed to Him is doubted."

It has been thus shown, that though Nature and Reason suggest grounds whence the Soul's existence in a Future state may be presumed, they altogether fail to establish the Soul's *eternal* existence in that State ; and that, so far as probability is concerned, the essential immortality of the Soul is unlikely to be true, if the Deity has preserved to himself a complete and absolute sovereignty over the Soul, as well as everything else He has created.

It is conceived, however, that the argument may be carried further. God exists not only absolute in power, but in those moral qualities and attributes which, though infinitely superior, must be similar in kind to the like qualities possessed by man himself ; and, regarding the Deity as a Being infinite in moral perfections, as well as the sovereign Creator of all things, claiming man's intelligent worship, and displaying in Nature much of His wisdom and goodness, it is lawful—nay, it is a duty—to dwell upon the considerations suggested thereby, and apply the in-

ferences resulting therefrom, to the subject under discussion.

Admitting God's existence and moral government; the propriety, and, consequently, the probability of a Future state may be reasonably inferred. It is but reasonable to conclude that man may have an existence after this life has terminated, either by virtue of an entity distinct from animal life, and which may be unaffected by temporal death; or by the continuation of the living power in man under circumstances and in a manner now unknown. The mind is thus led to speculate, apart from Revelation, as to the probable destiny of that Future life in the hands of a Deity possessing those perfections which reason asserts God must possess;—whether the possession of such attributes by God—the infinitely Great and Good—does not demand the extinction of the Wicked, rather than their eternal existence in torment: for there can be no *necessity* for the latter in order that the Deity may preserve his moral attributes, or maintain a moral government in the affairs of men.

Moral government necessitates a due distribution of rewards and punishments. This is undeniable; but it is further said, that inasmuch as retribution is not always awarded by God in the present condition of man's being, there must be a Future state, in which rewards and punishments shall be meted out to each, as the justice of the case requires. This statement, even if wholly true, would fail to establish any necessity for the eternal existence of the Wicked in torment, and can, in nowise, prove the essential immortality of the soul; unless it be also shown that no punishment could be imposed upon the Lost, adequate to the case, which did not involve an eternal existence in suffering. The important fact must not be overlooked, that mankind, without exception, in relation to the spotless purity and perfect righteousness of God, are altogether impure and unholy. Whatever opinion may be held by man, of the rela-

tive guilt of divers sins, the absolute perfection of God admits of none in his sight—"He who offends in one point is guilty of all." The distinction drawn by man between divers sins is the necessary result of finite minds; it must follow, therefore, that punishment at God's hands is the well-deserved recompense of *all* mankind, "for that all have sinned;" and it is a mistake to suppose, and in this consists the fallacy, that rewards, *as well as* punishment in a Future state, are set forth by Natural religion. There never has existed, from Adam downwards, nor can there ever exist, one single individual of the human race who could demand from God a reward in the next world as the recompense of merit in this. Natural religion, and God's perfections, would require the universal condemnation of mankind. There can exist no recompense of reward where all stand guilty in the Divine presence. Reason or nature can supply no sufficient atonement for sin: that such has been in fact provided, is alone taught by Revelation; but leaving Revelation as a source of knowledge aside, if the soul be naturally immortal, the eternal existence of all, without regard to relative guilt, must be passed in unmitigated misery. Reason and Natural religion, however, refuse to accept this conclusion; for the fact that God claims man's affectionate regard, affords the assurance that justice is not the only attribute of the Divine nature,—that the Deity must be merciful as well as just; and for this reason, and on this account, a presumption arises as forcible as any Natural religion can lay claim to, that God will assuredly either limit the duration of the soul's existence in torment, according to the dictates of infinite mercy and benevolence, or will not impose a penalty which exceeds the desert of the least guilty. In the former case this could alone be done, provided the Deity reserved to himself absolute power over the soul's being, so as to render its extinction possible, without a change in his first purpose when he created it, and, consequently, the soul could not be naturally immortal;

in the latter case, the punishment could not be eternal existence in torment.

It may be said, however, that though the duration of existence in punishment is unlimited, the degree of suffering may be regulated by the moral guilt of each. But it is as much in accordance with reason to hold that the soul's existence shall terminate after a period of punishment commensurate with its guilt. Nay, is it not far more in accordance with reason that such should be the case, when it is considered that the faintest suffering prolonged for ever, without question would represent an amount of wretchedness, wholly inconceivable at the hands of a Being possessing ineffable love; and that it is impossible, without doing violence to the voice of God speaking in man, to acknowledge that for the sin and profligacy of a life time, an eternal existence in pain is the just recompense of reward?

If, however, the conclusion be accepted which Natural religion warrants and justifies—that the Soul depends continuously for existence upon God's sustaining will, and that it must cease to exist the moment the Divine power is withdrawn; the issue may safely be left in the hands of the Judge of all the earth to do right, with the firm assurance that as no necessity exists why the Soul must live for ever, the destiny of the Lost will be one which shall harmonise with reason and conform with Divine mercy as well as with Divine justice. This is the true and simple conclusion to be derived from Natural religion;—one which creates no difficulty; is open to no objection; and which harmonises with what Revelation, in express terms, sets forth, when it announces that the Wicked shall be “*punished with everlasting destruction.*”

No one will venture to deny that God can destroy the Soul if it should please him so to do; yet, practically, it is denied that He can do so, when it is asserted that the Soul is essentially immortal. For, if the Deity created the Soul subject to a

law of undying existence, He with whom is no "variableness neither shadow of turning," cannot terminate that which He himself created ever to exist. All things have been formed according to certain intentions present in the Divine mind at the time they were created; they must subsist within the limits of the laws so determined; and thus it becomes an impossibility that God can destroy the Soul if created essentially immortal, as alleged. It is, however, a mere assumption to allege that the nature of the Soul is such as to necessitate its perpetual existence, or that God created it subject to any such law. On the contrary, so far from such being the case, there is a reasonable presumption in favour of the opposite opinion; for it has been shown that the former is inconsistent with the preservation by God to himself of complete sovereignty, and freedom of action in regard to the soul; that derived or created existence must be dependent for continuance in life upon the will of its Creator; and that serious objections may be urged against the results which must otherwise follow, when such results are considered in connection with the attributes of God, regarded according to the obligations of Natural religion.

Feeling bound, then, to reject every assertion of the kind, it is submitted that the Soul was created free of any law either of mortality or immortality; and that God reserved to himself the *power*, as he possesses the *right*, to determine its future and final destiny. It is not alleged that God created the soul naturally mortal—for that would imply that by the law of its being it must of necessity die; but it is asserted that he did not create it naturally immortal—for that would imply that the Soul can never die, but must ever live independently of God, so far as existence is concerned.

The Soul is of immaterial substance; but immateriality does not necessitate immortality: and it is affirmed that it will either live for ever, having received through Christ the gift of eternal life; or, on the other hand, be subjected to death as the punishment of transgression, when that

which alone maintains its existence—God's sustaining power—shall be withdrawn, according to his sovereign will.

The truth contended for is, therefore, not that the Soul was created naturally immortal,—that is, possessing immortality by virtue of its creation;—or naturally mortal,—that is, subject to decay and death, as matter appears to have been;—neither the one nor the other, but that the Soul was created, so that subsisting on the will of God, He can appoint according to his unrestricted pleasure, eternal life or eternal death as its future destiny. And does not this hypothesis of the absolute freeness of God's disposing power over the Soul, although it may disturb existing notions, harmonise the teaching of Natural religion with that of Revelation! In a subsequent chapter this will be fully established; but thus far, may it not be perceived how the infliction of the punishment of eternal death is consistent at the same time with God's justice and with God's mercy? The ordinary opinion condemns to a punishment alike in duration, all the Lost without distinction; while the truth contended for, meeting the case of a guilty world, leaves the Deity free to determine and limit the duration of suffering in each case, according to his infinite power, wisdom, and love.

It is man's right as well as privilege, to reason concerning God's intentions from the moral excellencies he *must* possess. This is the basis of Natural religion; for it has been well remarked, "Our whole nature leads us to ascribe all moral perfection to God, and to deny all imperfection of Him. And this will for ever be a practical proof of His moral character, to such as will consider what a practical proof is, because it is the voice of God speaking in us."* It is accordingly concluded that the opinion suggested concerning the destiny of the Soul, is more consistent with Divine truth, than that dogma which asserts that the Deity

* Bishop Halifax in his Introduction to Butler's Analogy.

is bound of necessity to condemn the Lost to an *eternal* existence in misery, by reason of their *immortality*.

If the reader should be thus led to *entertain* the views contended for ; he may turn to the Gospel of Jesus Christ—the glad tidings of “Good news”—and there recognise the announcement of God’s justice measured out to the unredeemed, visiting them with the “wages of sin,” in perfect harmony with the free gift of life eternal conferred of grace upon the soul which possesses no life *in itself*. In this way a beautiful consistency is established between Natural religion and Revelation: Natural religion setting forth universal condemnation to death as the desert of universal sin,—for all mankind are involved in guilt. The Gospel exhibiting eternal life conferred, as the gift of God, through Jesus Christ, upon those “who are born not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Man can never place his Creator in the position of a debtor, or claim from justice, eternal life ; nor is life eternal conferred as a compensation for the merits, the ills, or the misfortunes of this present transitory state. The glory of salvation, in the case of those who pass from death unto life is all God’s. Salvation has been purchased by the blood of Christ, and is communicated by the Divine Spirit ; man had no part in its accomplishment, nor can he have any in its attainment. The best of men will be lost, without Christ ; and the worst of men will be saved, possessing Christ. God, because he saves the few, will not, on that or any other account, award to the many, a different punishment than He would have done, had Christ not died “to save his people from their sins.”

If the discussion of the subject was here allowed to close, resting upon mere human Reason and Natural religion ; there could be little hesitation as to the opinion to be embraced. It is said, however, that the revealed word of God leaves no option in the matter, but conclusively announces an eternal existence in torment for the Lost. If this is indeed the case, the foregoing opinions are of necessity erroneous. The correctness of the assertion must however be inquired

into ; and the investigation held, whether that very Revelation which is appealed to, does not, when properly interpreted, justify the conclusion which has been insisted on ; or, at all events, whether it does not leave the question in such a position, that it is legitimate to call in aid the considerations already entertained with the view to arrive at a correct judgment. And is not the conclusion contended for calculated to enlist sympathy in its favour, and secure, at all events, a careful consideration ? It is indeed difficult to understand whence arises the great desire which exists in the minds of so many Christian persons to insist with such anxiety and zeal on *that* interpretation of Scripture, which involves the endless existence in torment of the vast majority of the Human race, as if the very being of God and their hope of eternal life were at stake, when the interpretation they claim to be true is at all questioned. Is it not enough for such persons that God has given to *them* a good hope ; and if *they* are monuments of God's grace, may they not at all events allow their fellow-sinners to be as "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction," without insisting that they *must* be eternally tormented. If the question is one at all open to controversy, is it not more in accordance with that Love which is the brightest jewel in the diadem of God, and the highest of all Christian virtues ; to allow that the final destruction of the Wicked is, or may be, a part of God's plan in regard to the future destiny of mankind.

That such a result *may* be a matter of uncertainty so far as Natural religion is concerned, although the probabilities are vastly in favour of its reality, has been shown ; and there is quite enough upon the pages of Revelation, as will presently be pointed out, to raise at all events a serious and reasonable belief that the common opinion is unfounded.

Let, then, care be taken not to dishonour God by attributing to Him, an intention to inflict on any of his creatures, never-ending woe ; unless he has in his revealed Word indisputably announced that such is required by eternal Justice and is determined by his sovereign Will.

CHAPTER III.

OPINION, THAT THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL HAS RECEIVED THE UNIVERSAL ASSENT OF MANKIND, ERRONEOUS. PURPORT OF PAGAN PHILOSOPHY ON THE SUBJECT OF THE SOUL'S NATURE AND A FUTURE STATE—ITS BEARING ON THE GENERAL SUBJECT. SOURCE AND ORIGIN OF THE OPINIONS ENTERTAINED BY THE ANCIENTS.

In the preceding chapter it has been shown that though the *probability* of a Future state may be inferred, apart from any revelation; yet Natural religion is inadequate to establish the Soul's essential immortality. It has been further shown that not only is this so; but that, consistently with the reality of a Future state, reason raises the presumption and suggests the probability, that the Deity, in the case of the Lost, will place a limit upon the endurance of wretchedness by the destruction of the Soul itself, rather than permit the torment to be eternal: and this inference is pressed home by the consideration that Natural religion rests altogether upon the fact, that the Deity must possess those attributes which awaken a response in the moral consciousness of man, and without which God could not claim the intelligent worship of a moral being.

Such, then, are the necessary conclusions, when Reason and Natural religion are appealed to in the *absence* of Revelation. It is, of course, reserved for further inquiry, how far Revelation affects the above results:—whether it confirms or contradicts them. At present, it is enough to say, that there must be *à priori*, a presumption in favour of *that* opinion which leaves the issue of the Soul's life, or the Soul's death in the hands of the divine Creator of all

things—a presumption in favour of the final destruction of the Lost, rather than a perpetual existence in torment. The grounds upon which the presumption rests are unassailable; because there is not a single argument in favour of the generally-accepted opinion, which is not abundantly satisfied by admitting that the Soul *may* exist—and in the case of the redeemed *will* exist, for ever; while, at the same time, the Lost *may* be punished with everlasting destruction. In like manner, none of the objections which may be urged against the common opinion on the ground of Natural religion and the moral sense of mankind, are applicable; for they cease to have any force, the moment the essential immortality of the Soul is abandoned, as an hypothesis. The arguments, said to establish the soul's absolute and essential immortality, are not sufficient to justify the assertion that the death of any particular soul is an impossibility. It may be added, that the analogies commonly relied on, when followed out to their legitimate results, prove the fruitful source of difficulty and error.

Now, the universal testimony of mankind will be found entirely in accordance with the foregoing conclusions; for though it is a common assertion that the immortality of the Soul has been always recognized and has received the general assent of mankind, at all periods of the world's history; it will be found on investigation that the opinions entertained by the Ancients merely establish, that a belief in a Future state existed;—a belief very different indeed from that of the immortality of the Soul. So far from the Soul being regarded as immortal, it was almost universally believed, that the Soul either merged in the Divine Intelligence—the source of life and motion which pervaded the Universe—an opinion equivalent to Annihilation; or that after a certain period of existence, it was finally destroyed.

The assertion, then, that the immortality of the Soul has received the universal assent of mankind, so far as the

statement is made with the view to raise a presumption or afford an argument in favour of the popular opinion, is quite unwarranted. It is true that in a certain sense, the Soul may have been regarded as immortal ; but in a sense very different, indeed, from that which is now commonly accepted,—a sense so different as to deprive the observation of any value in the present discussion. In fact, an investigation into the opinions which have prevailed with mankind at large—excluding, of course, those who have been brought under the influence of the popular doctrine—will show that the conceptions which have been entertained in regard to the Soul, bear a closer resemblance to the views urged in these pages, than they do to those generally accepted.

The object, then, of the present chapter, is to point out that the religious conceptions of the Ancients did not involve the essential immortality of the Soul ; but, on the contrary, that they tend to support the belief contended for—namely, that while the Soul *may* enjoy immortality, there is no necessity that it *must* ; and that in the case of the Wicked, its final destruction is possible, if not probable.

The Fall of man, and consequent loss of God's favour, and forfeiture of that immortality which the soul would have enjoyed, together with the earnest expectation of the creature to be restored to the possession of eternal life—a desire which was justified by the promise that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head ; are events quite sufficient to account for the various developments of religious thought which have prevailed in regard to a Future state and the nature of the Soul, when allowance is made for the errors and ignorance which resulted in consequence of man's transgression. The belief in a Future state was, or might have been, acquired by the aid of Reason alone ; but the indwelling desire in man to possess immortality, must be referred, not to the light of Reason or of Nature, but to that intimation of God's mercy which at the first was communicated to Adam. The promise of

restoration to God's favour and eternal life, left an impression long after the occasion and the promise were obscured and forgotten ; and this impression, brought into union with the acknowledgment of a Future state, suggested those speculations which have been mistaken for an innate consciousness that the soul, in fact, *possesses* that which it but longs to enjoy.

The error, then, has been in taking the general desire to possess immortality, and the reasonableness of the existence of a Future state, as evidence of a general belief that man possessed an immortal entity, which must retain throughout eternity its being and preserve its personal identity.

The early development and progress of religious error from the time when truth was first departed from, and during the infancy of the human race, cannot be ascertained with certainty. Authentic history does not afford the materials necessary for the investigation, when pursued beyond a comparatively recent date. Successive ages had passed away, long before even the mythical period of history commenced. During the interval, error must have made rapid strides ; and the departure from truth have become greater and greater. The corruption of man's nature consequent upon the Fall, and the loss of that fellowship with God which was at first enjoyed, must be allowed its full effect in developing the opinions which are known to have subsequently prevailed in regard to the Divine nature and God's dealings with, and purposes towards, mankind. But just as every branch of the human family, however diverse, has sprung from the one original, although it may be now impossible to point out each connecting link ; so, too, the conceptions of the mind in regard to divine things, however erroneous, owe their origin to truths which had been once made known to the parent of the human race when he enjoyed communion with God before the Fall—to impressions derived directly from the Deity himself, so permanent that they may be at all times traced in every form of

religion, however corrupt, and yet of such a nature, and so affected by external circumstances, that they became fainter and fainter, and were finally obliterated by the persistency of error. The departure from truth was early ; the descent into superstition was rapid and continuous : new wants, new desires, and new vices, developed new forms of worship, and new objects of adoration and regard.

Notwithstanding the general corruption and ignorance which prevailed, it is therefore but reasonable to expect that, in the various systems of Pagan philosophy and superstition, germs of truth should have existed, and that rays of light may be recognised. It is reasonable, also, that a resemblance should be found to pervade the conceptions of nations perfectly distant and races widely separated ; not indeed in the *details* of worship, which were as varied as the races themselves, but in the *deeper thoughts* which form the groundwork of all religion. It is not to be expected that the *truth* should have been known—indeed the fact of a new revelation being published establishes the reverse, but the views and opinions which admittedly existed, afford evidence of realities which account for, though they do not justify, the errors of Pagan mythology.

Thus, then, opinions which have attained in some measure the universal assent of mankind, may be regarded with profit ;—not because they possess any value in themselves, but for the sake of the truths which originally suggested them. For example : It is plain that among all races of men the existence of a divine or supernatural Power has been recognised ; and yet it cannot be said that God was believed in, or the Divine nature understood ; for this would imply that the conceptions entertained of the Deity were correct. In like manner, the reality of a Future state was, in some sense, allowed. The deification and worship of men, illustrious for their actions, or the benefits they conferred upon their fellow-men,

could only exist where it was believed that life in a Future state was prolonged after death; and so with other opinions, many of which are not a little remarkable. In fact, truths taught by divine Revelation appear—not, indeed, to have been anticipated, but to have had, as it were, a response in the conceptions of mankind—conceptions most erroneous, it is true; but which, nevertheless, can be accounted for by regarding them as faint impressions of truths once communicated to, and received by man.

The following truths, and the corresponding conceptions, may be regarded side by side. They are as different as possible, and yet present a strange resemblance when thus viewed in relation.

REVEALED TRUTHS.

I. The existence of a personal Deity; the Creator and Governor of the world, and of all spiritual being.

II. The existence of the Soul as an entity in man, created by God.

III. The reality of a Future state.

IV. The consummation of all things connected with the present dispensation, by the destruction of this world; and the creation of a new heaven, and a new earth.

ERRONEOUS CONCEPTIONS.

I. The existence of an abstract power, or principle, which animates, and forms the soul of all existence.

II. The Soul: a part of, or an emanation from, the Divine Intelligence.

III. The existence of the Soul during a period of purgation, and its final absorption in the source and fountain of being.

IV. The periodical destruction of all things, with successive creations of nature and emanations of souls, after the like fashion of what now exists.

There can be no question as to the necessity which existed

for a new Revelation or republication of Divine truth, to restore to purity, the early impressions which had been subjected to the influence of a degenerate nature.

The inquiry suggested divides itself into two branches. What was the general nature and purport of the religious system, and philosophy of Paganism, in regard to, God, the Soul, and a Future state? and this being ascertained, to what are the opinions which prevailed to be referred, and how shall they be accounted for?

It may be stated generally, in answer to the former, that the existence of a Future state was, for the most part, acknowledged; that is, that death did not terminate the existence of the Soul. But, on the other hand, it was almost universally believed, that the Soul ceased to preserve its identity, and that sooner or later it merged in the source from whence it had originally emanated, and of which it had formed a part. The earlier this consummation was attained the better; for the intervening period was occupied, in the elimination of the evil which had been contracted during its sojourn upon earth.

It is manifest that no system of religion which adopted tenets such as the above, could have included that, of the immortality of the Soul in the sense commonly entertained: on the contrary, the opinions referred to, are equivalent to annihilation. The drop of rain which falls into the ocean no longer retains its distinct and separate character, but is lost in the vast deep; and so too, the Soul, which deriving its origin by emanation, when sufficiently purified, was absorbed in the Fountain of soul, practically ceased to exist. It is further to be remarked, that these conceptions, such as they were, were not entertained by the general mass of the people, but were confined to the few. The mysteries of religion, and the more philosophical aspect of what was regarded as the nature of God, and the circumstances of a Future state, were kept studiously concealed and confined to the class or order of priests; an order

which has ever attempted to monopolise truth, and has always aimed at securing for itself a special veneration and regard.

Upon the multitude were practised various impostures, and from motives easy to apprehend, the gross and material elements of that which formed the substance of ancient mythology, were maintained as sufficient to meet the wants of the people at large; and any effort to lead the mind above or beyond the external ceremonies of religion which chiefly addressed the appetites of mankind, was reprobated and discouraged.

It is beyond the limits of the present inquiry to analyse, as fully as the interesting nature of the subject would justify, the mythology and philosophy of the Ancients; but it is desirable to point out how universal was the opinion that the Soul was an emanation from the Divine Intelligence, to which it should again be reunited, and that a final destruction of all created existence should at some future time result. Little more can be attempted than to give an epitome of the opinions attributed to the more remarkable nations of antiquity, and the more distinguished philosophers upon the subject.

The Chaldeans and Babylonians believed that the Soul was of the Divine nature—an emanation from the Fountain of all intelligence. Their Magi, or priests, assumed the exclusive direction of religious rites, and claimed the power to predict future events, which they pretended to discover from a contemplation of the orbs of heaven. The sun was a particular object of regard; and under the veil of symbol, they kept carefully concealed the mysteries of religion from the intrusion of the vulgar. Their religious rites were chiefly, if not altogether, concerned with a supposed race of spiritual beings, comprising several distinct orders—gods, demons, and heroes; to whose control the affairs of men were believed to be delegated by the Supreme Being. It was believed that originally all things consisted of dark-

ness and water ; that Belus, or the Divine power, formed the world thereout, and that when the planets should in future ages meet in Cancer, the universe at large shall be utterly destroyed by fire.*

The Persians, as well as the Chaldeans, regarded the sun as an object of adoration. It was believed to be the abode of the invisible deity, whom they worshipped under the name of Mithras. Zoroaster is said to have thought, that the various orders of spiritual beings—gods, demons, and heroes—proceeded from the Deity, and were more or less perfect, as they occupied a position of greater or less distance in the course of emanation. He taught that the human soul is a particle of divine light, which will return to its source and partake of its immortality ; that matter was the last and most distant emanation, and on this account is opaque and inert, but that it also, becoming refined by degrees, will return at length to its original source. The Persians recognized, further ; two co-existing powers or principles,—the one the author of Good, worshipped under the name of Oromasdes ; the other, the author of Evil, under the title of Arimanius.

Plutarch states that the principles of good and evil thus personified and regarded as divinities were subject to the soul of nature, or the Divine Being. He remarks, speaking of the doctrine of Zoroaster : “ Some maintain that neither is the world governed by blind chance without intelligence, nor is there one mind alone at the head of the universe ; but, since good and evil are blended, and nature produces nothing unmixed, we are to conceive, not that there is one storekeeper, who, after the manner of an host, dispenses adulterated liquors to his guests, but that there are in nature two opposite powers counteracting each other’s operations—the one accomplishing good designs,

* Unless where specially noticed, the statements made in the text are derived from “ The History of Philosophy, drawn up from Brucker’s *Historia Critica Philosophiæ*,” by Wm. Enfield, LL.D.

the other evil.”* Mithras was the divinity who acted as moderator between the two; and, finally, by his influence the contest between good and evil would terminate by the complete overthrow of the latter. “The fated time is approaching in which Arimanius himself shall be utterly destroyed; in which the surface of the earth shall become a perfect plain, and all men shall speak one language, and live happily together in one society. At last the evil principle shall perish, and men shall live in happiness, neither needing food, nor yielding a shadow.”

In India, to which country the opinions of Zoroaster are supposed to have extended, the followers of Brahma regarded the Deity “as light not such as is seen, like the sun on fire, but intelligence and reason,† that principle through whose agency the mysteries of knowledge are understood by the wise. He never produced evil, but light, and life, and souls, of which he is the sole Lord. The former and governor of the universe pervades it, and is invested with it, as with a garment: he is immortal, and sees all things; the stars, the moon, and the sun, are his eyes. He is beneficent, and preserves, directs, and provides for all. The human mind is of celestial origin, and has a near relation to God. When it departs from the body, it returns to its parent, who expects to receive back the souls which he has sent forth.”

The late Mr. Archer Butler writes:—“In all forms of Indian philosophy, whether orthodox or heterodox, one common object is equally professed as the present aim of human wisdom, the liberation of the soul from the evils attending the mortal state. And in all, this object is attempted by means not dissimilar, that is to say, by one modification or other of that intense *abstraction*, which, separating the soul from the bonds of flesh, is supposed capable of liberating it in this life from the unworthy restrictions of earthly existence, and of introducing it in the

* Isis et Osiris, tom. ii., p. 155.

† Λογος.

next to the full enjoyment of undisturbed repose, or even to the glories of a *total absorption* into the Divine Essence itself. In the unity of this object we may recognise, perhaps, the lingering traditions of original revelation, still upholding, in the midst of sensuality and degradation, some convictions of the primal dignity of the human nature and destiny."* It was furthermore believed, that there was in nature a periodical restitution of all things ; and that after the return of the Soul to the source from whence it sprung, it was again sent forth, and the entire course of nature, renewed.

Among the Egyptians, opinions regarding the Soul are differently represented. Pythagoras, it is believed, derived from them his doctrine of transmigration. Herodotus states that the Egyptians conceived, that when the body decays, the Soul passes into some other animal, which is then born, and that after it has made the circuit of beasts, birds, and fishes, through a period of three thousand years, it again becomes an inhabitant of a human body.† Plutarch speaks of the Amenthes of the Egyptians corresponding to the Hades of the Greeks, a subterranean region to which the souls of dead men were conveyed. ‡ The doctrine that God is the soul of the World, from which all existence has sprung, and to which all things will return, lies at the root of Egyptian philosophy, as well as of that of the other nations referred to. The course of transmigration was directed to the purification of the Soul, and in the case of the wicked was continued for a longer period than in that of the virtuous : while, to judge from the language of the Egyptian priest, introduced in Plato's *Timæus*, the belief was general, that the world would be ultimately destroyed by fire and water.

The Ethiopians acknowledged two Deities, one immortal and the other mortal—the former being the first cause of

* Lectures on the History of Ancient Philosophy. Vol. 1—256.

† Lib. 11, c. 123.

‡ Isis and Osiris.

all things—the latter the principle of evil, worshipped by the Egyptians under the name of Typhon, and by the Persians as Arimanius. The Ethiopians derived many of their opinions from the Egyptians; and the belief that all evil would have a termination, or that the Divinity, which, according to ancient fashion, personified the principle of evil, was mortal, indicates the impression which existed, that in the time to come there should be a final triumph of the supreme good over every form of moral evil.

In Europe, among the ancient races of Germany, Britain, Gaul, and Spain, the Druids occupied a position analogous to that of the Magi among the Persians, the Chaldeans in Babylonia, and the Gymnosophists of India. Tacitus, in his account of the manners of the Germans,* relates, that they conceived it unworthy of the majesty of celestial beings to confine them within walls, or to represent them under a human form,—woods and groves were their temples. The various races of Celtic origin believed in the existence of a Supreme Being, the fountain or source of all other divinities, a ruling principle or power in the universe. The ancient Runic book, entitled the Edda,† affords evidence that an Eternal Deity was recognised, who was believed to have existed prior to the creation of the external world. According to Cæsar and other writers, the soul was conceived to be of Divine origin, and to possess immortality equally with the gods; to this belief was referred the contempt of death, which prevailed among the Germans. Some assert they held the doctrine of transmigration; others, and it is alleged to be the better opinion and more in harmony with the rites of burial which are known to have been practised, that a period of purgation was essential, except in the case of those who died in battle. The soul was supposed to enter at death into a general assembly of departed spirits, and was

* *De Situ Moribus, et Populis Germaniæ*, c. ix. and xxxix.

† “Compiled from Records or Traditions, probably of Asiatic original, by Saemundus Sigfusonius, an Icelander, about the year 1114 A.D.”

subjected to a purgatorial process before it gained admission to the mansions of the happy. Those who died upon the field of battle gained an immediate entrance to the palace of Odin. They were to live in his hall—Vahalla, in the possession of every enjoyment which delighted them on earth. Others, deserving of punishment, were conveyed to Hela. In no case, however, was existence believed to be perpetual. Life was esteemed of long continuance, but not eternal; for the time was to arrive “when the gods themselves, with all the heroes who were the objects of their favour, should be overpowered by their adversaries and *finally annihilated.*” The wicked remained in punishment until the twilight of the gods arrived, when all should be consumed in the conflagration of the world, and a new dispensation should again commence. It is manifest, therefore, that while a future state after death was recognised, a belief in the soul’s immortality was not entertained; for though a life of happiness was believed to be enjoyed by the brave, yet final destruction overtook the wicked, with the gods themselves, after a certain amount of punishment had been endured.

For the sake of a modern example, reference may be made to the aborigines of New Zealand. “The prevailing idea of the abode of spirits was that they went to the Reinga, which is another name for Po or Hades; the word Reinga literally means the leaping place. It was supposed that there were several compartments in Hades, the lowest being the worst, having no light or food, and there the spirits were thought gradually to pine away, and *finally to be annihilated.*” Such is the testimony of the Rev. Richard Taylor, in his work on “New Zealand and its inhabitants,”* affording evidence of the existence of a belief among the Maori in a future state, and at the same time in the finality of the soul’s future being,—destruction overtaking those condemned to occupy the lowest place, the place of punishment, where they were believed to pine away and finally to be destroyed. The resemblance

* *Te Ika a Maui; or, New Zealand and its Inhabitants*, pp. 103-4.

between the religious impressions of the ancient Teutonic races and the modern aborigines of New Zealand, is, to say the least, not a little remarkable.

Among the ancient Etrurians, according to Seneca, their priests or augurs recognised a supreme intelligence—the guardian and governor of the universe; and yet, they described the Divine Being as, “Fate, Providence, Nature, or the Universe sustaining itself by its own energy.” They believed that after a lengthened period there should be an entire renovation of nature, when a succession of events similar in all respects to those of the present period shall again commence.* The duration of the universe was deemed to be limited to a period of twelve thousand years, six of which had passed in the formation of the world before man was created.

The several opinions thus imperfectly glanced at, are sufficient to illustrate the fact contended for, and exhibit a remarkable resemblance, in regard to the conceptions held concerning a future state, and the final destruction of the wicked and all evil. It is unnecessary to dwell on the diversities which prevailed in the details and externals of popular worship, for such were fashioned by the various outward influences which climate, taste, and civilization, brought to bear upon the popular development of religion. Institutions were variously framed, as they were believed suitable to the masses, for the sake of polity and government. But the leading conceptions, in regard to the existence of a supreme Being, the reality of a future state, and the final destruction of all created existence, are to be recognised throughout the entire, and justify the observations already made.

Now the acknowledgment of a future state *such* as that indicated, was not calculated to produce an effect upon the lives and morals of the people at large; and it may well be

* Plutarch's Sylla.

questioned whether any, except the few who devoted themselves to the contemplation and pursuit of philosophy, at all concerned themselves about the nature of the soul or its future existence. The sacerdotal order, which was more immediately concerned with the maintenance of religion, regulated external rites and ceremonies, with the sole object of preserving for itself the influence and benefits it had secured, at the expense of the people at large; and while the latter indulged their propensities under the name of service to the gods, the ministers of religion were utterly indifferent to divine things, except so far as temporal advantages might be obtained, or temporal evils averted.

The testimony of history proves that this was the case among the civilized Greeks and Romans, whatever may be urged in favour of the influence of religion upon more primitive races, who lived a purer life, and whose religious conceptions were more simple. The late Archbishop Whately urges, that the conduct exhibited by the Athenians on the occasion of the Great Plague, and the conduct of the Romans on the occasion of the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, as recorded respectively by Thucydides and the younger Pliny, conclusively establish that no belief in the reality of a future state of reward and punishment existed among the masses. The conclusion is perfectly justifiable. There may have been a general idea of a future state, while, at the same time, opinions may have been so vague and indefinite as to have failed to exercise any influence upon their conduct, and consequently cannot be alleged to have constituted a belief. There can be no doubt that on the occasions referred to, if any such opinions prevailed, they were altogether powerless to produce the results which might have been expected, and which they were adapted to secure. During the plague at Athens, death was presented in its most startling aspect, and in a form well calculated to awaken religious susceptibilities. It was a plague which, according to Thucydides, brought with it such a

perfect prostration of hope of recovery to those who were seized, that certain and immediate death forced itself upon their contemplation; "seeing death so near, they resolved to make the most of life while it lasted, by setting at nought all laws human and divine, and eagerly plunging into every species of profligacy." This was not the exception, but the rule; so much so, that to the plague is attributed that general corruption of morals which subsequently prevailed, and the general impiety which ensued. There were some who "at first had recourse to the offices of their religion with a view to appease the gods; but when they found their sacrifices and ceremonies availed nothing against the disease, and that the pious and the impious alike fell victims to it, they at once concluded that piety and impiety were altogether indifferent, and cast off all religious and moral obligation." In other words, their religious impressions were founded upon the expectations of temporal advantages, and accordingly, when disappointment resulted, they cast away their faith as idle and unfounded.

On the occasion of the eruption of Mount Vesuvius described by Pliny, a general distrust in divine assistance manifested itself. The people became altogether abandoned, and believed that the *gods themselves* were about to be involved in the catastrophe. Such facts are alone consistent with a total absence of belief in the reality of a future state in which personal identity shall be preserved, and contrast most unfavourably with the results presented during the period in which London was visited with the great Plague in 1665. The difference is to be accounted for by the fact, that in the latter instance, men were actuated by a strong conviction of the truth and reality of their religious views, while in the former case no such conviction existed.

Thus then, although the descriptions of Elysium and Tartarus, which are chiefly presented in the imaginative writings of the poets, may be taken as affording evidence

of certain vague and traditional ideas in regard to the existence of a future state, the mass of the people had no belief or faith in the reality of a state of rewards and punishments. The opinions entertained were deficient in all the essential characteristics of knowledge—truth, proof, and conviction. When the time of trial arrived, the whole system broke down; when weighed in the balance, it proved lighter than vanity. The abstruse disquisitions of ancient Philosophers concerning the nature of the soul were avowedly speculations as to what might be true, rather than declarations of what was regarded as truth. As Paley has expressed it, they were a succession of guesses regarding a truth which at the time had not been clearly revealed; nor were they ever intended for the general acceptance or instruction of the people, who were regarded as unfit to entertain such inquiries.

Poets painted the future condition of the departed spirit, as a dream-like, shadowy kind of existence. Homer represents the shade of Achilles as giving utterance to his experience of the future state, and as stating that the condition of the most wretched in this life, was preferable to the highest state of enjoyment in the next. Another poet laments that while the herbs of the garden, which appear dead, shoot up in the succeeding spring, man, on the contrary, who appears a being of so much greater dignity, when dead is doomed to live no more.*

Pericles, according to the historian Thucydides,† in like manner, when addressing the relations of those who had fallen in battle, speaks of their glorious memory, and of other sons prepared to take their places, and follow in the footsteps of their fathers; nor does he suggest any other source of consolation to sorrowing friends.

The ancient Grecian theogonies, of the fabulous period, speak of Chaos as existing eternally with God. The Divine

* Mosch. Epit. Bionis, quoted in Whately's Essay.

† Thuc., Lib. II., c. 35, et seq., ib.

energy was believed to have operated upon that matter which was supposed to have existed from eternity, and which contained the seeds of all subsequent being ; and thus, that the various forms of the external material world were produced. In like manner, animals and men were originated by the energy of emanation from the Divine Being. The schools of Philosophy which subsequently flourished can hardly be said to have discovered much of the true nature of God, or of the Soul. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, who founded their several schools or sects, were among the most illustrious inquirers ; their speculations, however, are chiefly remarkable,—not for the discovery of truth, but for the power and ability with which the gross and material characteristics of the various systems of mythology were exposed and discarded, in the effort to arrive at truth. The same observation applies to the philosophy of the Italic schools, of which Pythagoras was the founder, and which subsequently embraced the Eleatic and Epicurean sects. Socrates perhaps more than others attained a nearer approach to truth ; for his philosophy was of a more practical character, and was more especially devoted to the pursuit of virtue for its own intrinsic value.

It is not proposed to follow the various doctrines of the schools, or to point out their manifest errors. Some observations may, however, be properly made in regard to the opinions of Plato, whose name stands out so prominently, as that of one foremost among others who are supposed to have taught the doctrine of the soul's immortality ; though few take the trouble to inquire into the soundness of the assertion, or reflect upon the tendency and effect of his speculations.

The writings of Plato have, beyond question, affected, in a large degree, human thought, and have even gone far to colour and modify opinions concerning the deepest mysteries of Revelation. It has been the fashion to attempt to harmonise Platonism with Christianity ; and any such attempt must be at the expense of the latter. It has been asserted that Plato anticipated, in a sense, the doctrine of the Trinity,

referring all things to three sources—God, matter, and ideas. The universe, animated by a soul which proceeded from the Deity, Plato designated the Son of God. In the Alexandrian schools, the doctrines of Plato were certainly modified to harmonise with Christian tenets, so as to justify the assertion sought to be established, that Plato had derived some of his opinions from the knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Plato taught that matter existed co-eternally with God, applying the maxim that “from nothing, nothing can proceed;” not merely as a proof of the existence of a Deity, but as equally a proof of the eternal and independent existence of matter. He recognised, besides Eternal ideas, two original self-existing and eternally existing causes of all things;—matter, out of which everything has been created, and a Spiritual being, by whom all things have been created out of matter.

Matter, Plato esteemed a substance, without form or quality, in which there was present a propensity to disorder—the cause of imperfection, and the origin of evil. The opposite principle to matter was God, the origin of Spiritual being and the fashioner of the world—of supreme intelligence, who desires to produce good as far as the nature of matter will permit. In working upon matter by his energy to form the material world, God followed certain eternal patterns, according to which variable matter was moulded into the universe as it now exists. Eternal patterns or ideas, Plato supposed to have had a subsistence, as real existences in the reason of God,—*ὁ λογισμὸς τοῦ θεοῦ*.

In regard to the soul, Plato supposed that God, when he formed the universe, separated from the soul of the world, inferior souls, equal in number to the stars, and assigned to each its proper celestial abode; and that these souls were sent down to the earth unto human bodies as into a sepulchre or prison. He did not allow that the soul was created, but asserted that it was derived by emanation from the Divine

mind through the intervention of the soul of the world, and thus removed to a distance from the Divine source, was subject to moral evil, from its connection with matter.

Plato explains the process whereby the soul became united to the body, and its future destiny, after this manner:—"In the periodical revolutions of nature, souls separated themselves from the source or fountain of soul, and descended into the lower region of the world; upon death they again pass into other animals, or ascend into superior regions, and are converted into beings of a higher order, according to their present conditions of defilement or purification."

It may, then, be well asked, did Plato teach the doctrine of the soul's essential immortality? What shall be said of reasoning such as the following:—"In nature all things terminate in their contraries; the state of sleep terminates in that of waking, and the reverse; so life ends in death and death in life. . . . All our knowledge is acquired by the reminiscences of ideas contemplated in a prior state; as the soul, therefore, must have existed before this life it is probable that it will continue to exist after it." Butler concludes,* that because man now exists he will continue to exist after death, but Plato's argument is of greater force. The reminiscences of ideas contemplated in a prior state, as the source from whence all knowledge is derived, satisfied Plato that the soul enjoyed existence, *a parte ante*, and thence he arrived at the probability of a future state. Butler, however, rejects the soul's previous existence, and rightly so, if the soul be a created entity; but in doing so, he retains the fact of present existence alone, from which to infer the soul's probable future existence, which probability is at once answered by the statement, that temporal death *appears* to be its termination, so far as experience is concerned.

Such appear to be the views of Plato, and yet he is commonly referred to as having held, and taught the

* *Vide, Ante*, Chap. II.

immortality of the soul in a sense similar to that which is now generally held! Whately remarks, "It would be ridiculous to speak of any consolation, or any moral restraint, or any other effect whatever, springing from the belief of *such* a future state as this, which consists in becoming after death the same as we were before birth. To all practical purposes it is the same thing as annihilation."* Not only is this observation well founded, but the soul must cease to be regarded as a created substance; but however this may be, or whatever may have been Plato's real opinions, his philosophy was the philosophy of the few and not of the many. He exhibits an anxiety to conceal his opinions from unphilosophic minds—an anxiety quite inconsistent with any general acquiescence in his views. He remarks:† "It is a difficult thing to discover the nature of the Creator of the universe, and being discovered, it is impossible, and would be even impious, to expose the discovery to vulgar understandings;" and again, in one of his epistles, he states—"It would be to no purpose to lay open to mankind at large the doctrines of philosophy, which are adapted only to the comprehension of a few intelligent persons, who from imperfect hints are capable of conceiving their full import." This disinclination on Plato's part to make known the results of his speculations was very generally shared in by both priests and philosophers. The Egyptian priests, it is well known, were so unwilling to communicate their mysteries to Pythagoras, that a royal mandate, and submission to a very inconvenient rite, with difficulty procured for him the information he so much coveted. Plato probably had present to his mind the fate of his master, Socrates, who had suffered death for teaching views contrary to the gross mythology which prevailed; and a regard for his personal safety may have induced Plato to adopt that cautious style of expression, so far as his own

* *A View of the Scripture Revelations concerning a Future State.* By a Country Pastor.

† In *Timæo*.

opinions were concerned, for which his writings are remarkable. He did not, like Pythagoras, demand a vow of secrecy from those who attended his lectures and became his disciples, but he veiled his actual sentiments in doubtful phraseology. Cicero, speaking of Plato's mode of treating a subject, states: "He affirms nothing, but after producing many arguments, and examining a question on every side, leaves it undetermined." And further, when discussing the dialogue of the *Phædo*, Cicero makes his imaginary antagonist to assert that he is "disposed to assent to the reasons urged in favour of a future state by Plato, yet when he lays down the book, and revolves the matter in his own thoughts, his convictions vanish."

Such evidence is very important; the more so, because rendered at a time when Plato's views were judged apart from the influence which revelation at a subsequent period exercised—an influence which is so difficult to resist, but which manifestly must be put aside, if a correct notion of what was entertained on the subject, *prior* to revelation, be aimed at. It is not surprising, then, that the late Archbishop Whately should write as follows:—"Among the heathen philosophers, Plato has been appealed to as having believed in a future state of reward and punishment, on the ground that the passages in his works in which he inculcates the doctrine are much more numerous than those in which he expresses his doubts of it. I cannot undertake to say that such is not the case; for this arithmetical mode (as it may be called) of ascertaining a writer's sentiments, by counting the passages on opposite sides, is one which has never occurred to me; nor do I think it is likely to be generally adopted. If, for instance, an author were to write ten volumes in defence of Christianity, and two or three times to express his suspicion that the whole is a tissue of fables, I believe few of his readers would feel any doubt as to his real sentiments. When a writer is at variance with himself, it is usual to judge from the nature of the

subject, and the circumstances of the case, *which* is likely to be his real persuasion, and which, the one he may think it decorous or politically expedient to profess.”* And again : “As to what Plato, and afterwards Cicero and others, said in behalf of it”—the immortality of the soul—“no reader of their own class seems to have had even any suspicion of their being in earnest.”†

According to Xenophon, Socrates believed that the existence of good men was continued after death, and that they received the reward of their virtue. Cicero states, that Socrates taught, that the soul was a divine principle, which, when it passes out of the body returns to heaven, and that this passage is most easy to those who have in this life made the greatest progress in virtue. Socrates himself testifies to the prevailing opinion, when he says, as represented by Plato—“Men in general were highly incredulous as to the soul’s future existence, expecting that at the moment of death it would be dispersed like air or smoke, and cease altogether to exist ; so that it would require no little persuasion and argument to convince them that the soul can exist after death, and can retain anything of its power or intelligence.”

Aristotle, in his “Treatise on Courage,” has the following : “Death is formidable beyond most other evils, on account of its excluding hope, since it is a complete termination, and there does not appear to be anything, either of good or of evil, beyond it.” Aristotle held that the soul was an intellectual power, transmitted into the human body from an Eternal Intelligence ; from which it is plain, that he also accepted the general doctrine of emanation from, and re-absorption of the soul in, the Divine Being. There is, at all events, no proof, that he supposed the intellectual power or soul, to continue with any individual after death.

Among the successors of Aristotle, Strato of Lampsacus

* *Scripture Revelations concerning a Future State*, p. 25, n.

† *Essays*—*Essay I.*, notes, p. 80.

indirectly excluded from his system of philosophy an acknowledgment of the existence of a Supreme Being, and taught that the soul resides in the brain, and only acts by means of the senses. Dicaearchus held that there was no such entity as the soul, and that the principle by which man perceives and acts expires with the body. Ocellus, a philosopher who lived before Plato, held that man at death suffers entire dissolution.

The Stoic school of Philosophy, founded by Zeno, taught that all human souls have immediately proceeded from, and will at last return into, the divine nature; that inferior deities, were fragments separated from the soul of the world, and would in due time return to the celestial fire, when the whole world would be consumed; after which, when a long interval of rest had intervened, the world would be renewed, every animal reproduced, and a race of men free from guilt re-people the earth. Chrysippas and Cleanthes, two of the followers of Zeno, taught, according to Plutarch, "that the heavens, the earth, the air, and the sea, are full of gods, but that none of them are immortal except Jupiter, to whom all the rest will at length return, and in whom they will lose their separate existence." Cleanthes taught that all souls would remain till the final conflagration; Chrysippas, that the souls of the wise and good would alone remain. Epictetus and Antoninus, that as soon as the soul is released from the body it returns to the soul of the world, or is lost in the universal principle of fire. Those among the Stoics who held the existence of the soul after death—for opinions were divided—conceived that it was removed into the celestial regions, where it remained, till at the final conflagration, all souls,—human and divine, shall be lost in the Deity.

Pythagoras, according to Cicero,* regarded "God as a soul pervading all nature, of which every human soul is a portion."

* *Vide* Enfield's Philosophy, Vol. I., p. 418.

The soul itself, he thought, comprised two parts—the sensitive and the rational ; that the former perishes, that the latter is immortal, because its source is immortal ; that after death the soul assumes an ethereal vehicle ; that it remains in the region of the dead till sent back into the world as the inhabitant of some other body—man, or animal, or plant—and when sufficiently purified by successive purgations at last returns to its eternal source, in which it is absorbed and loses its existence. Such also was the opinion of Empedocles. Democritus held that the soul was mortal and perished with the body. The Epicureans contended against the belief of a future state of existence. Lucretius concludes that the soul cannot possibly exist in an active and perceptive state without the body, and cannot be said, with certainty, to exist at all.*

Taking, then, a broad and general view of the subject in connection with the mythology and philosophy of the Ancients, nothing can be more manifest than that the doctrine of the soul's essential immortality, in a sense at all approaching that in which it is now held, was altogether unknown. The universal conception, was, that the soul formed a particle of the Divine nature ; and the highest anticipations which were formed, alone reached to an ultimate absorption of the soul in the first cause or source of all being. Nor can it be said that these opinions owed their origin to the efforts of philosophy, for the conceptions may be traced in the most ancient systems of religion known to the history of the world—and yet how entirely antagonistic to

* St. Paul also bears testimony to the unbelief which prevailed among the heathen generally in regard to the reality of a future state, when he writes to the Thessalonians—"That ye sorrow not even as others which have *no hope*." 1 Thess. iv. 13. "Examples of this 'no hope' are easily given from the Pagan writers. Lüneman cites:—Theocritus, 'Hope goes with life—all hopeless are the dead.' Æschylus, 'Once dead there is no resurrection more.' Catullus, 'Suns may set and may return ; we, when once our brief life wanes, have eternal night to sleep.' Lucretius, 'None ever wake again, whom the cold pause of life hath overtaken.'" Alf. G. T., n.

revealed truth? Enforced by the intelligence of civilized Greece and Italy, these grave errors obtained vast power, and retained their influence long subsequent to the publication of Gospel truth.

The Christian revelation was early assailed. With a view to enlist converts, not only were many rites and ceremonies of Paganism introduced into the church, to meet the tastes and inclinations of the people, but philosophic speculations, which had obtained a wide currency, were incorporated, to captivate the more intellectual. The Alexandrian philosophers sought to accommodate heathen mythology to Christian truth. Antoninus sought to reconcile the deeper truths of Revelation with a modified system of Platonism; and Origen adopted a like course, and followed in the same path. The latter, for example, is said to have held "that human souls were formed by God before the bodies into which they are sent as into a prison for the punishment of their sins; they pass from one body to another. The souls of the good are continually advancing in perfection, and rising to a higher state. Matter itself will be hereafter refined into a better substance, and after the great revolution of ages all things will return to their source, and God will be all in all. God's angels, and the souls of men are one and the same substance."

One conclusion may then be drawn, and it is the only one authorized; namely, that there has at all times existed a certain undefined and general impression of the reality of a future state—an impression which, however, failed to lead mankind, even the most enlightened, to a perception of the truth—an impression which was openly contended against by many, and was so lightly regarded by the mass of the people, that it exercised no influence upon their lives or conduct.

Taking the conclusion to be as stated—that some faint notion of a future state did, more or less, exist among the ancients, derived from that desire to procure and possess an

immortal existence which is almost innate in the human race, it is easy to understand how the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul came to be regarded as a divine truth, immediately upon the Christian revelation announcing the gift of eternal life hereafter, as ready to be bestowed through Jesus Christ, upon his people, through faith in His name.

Taking advantage of that desire to possess immortality, which has been referred to, and having the certainty of eternal life promised in the Gospel to *all who believe*, there were not wanting those who felt no difficulty in straining the language of Scripture, in order to possess themselves of a power, by which they might work upon the fears of mankind. They were authorised to announce God's wrath against unbelievers. Not content with this, they proceeded to particularise the nature of that wrath, with a minuteness of detail altogether unwarranted. They alleged God's wrath to be—not simply an everlasting punishment, or eternal death, in the language of revelation, but an *everlasting existence* of the soul in torment. To establish this conclusion, it became necessary to assert the natural immortality of the soul, which, once admitted, determines the controversy.

Manifest reasons existed why the doctrine, dogmatically asserted, should be jealously maintained. It was a source of power to the clergy, who, self constituted, and true to the interests and habit of their class, claimed to be the sole repositories of divine truth; while it in no small degree enabled them to procure supplies for their self-indulgence, through the fears and credulity of the ignorant.

Thus the error originated, and thus it has been ever since maintained. The recognition of the existence of a future state, with an earnest desire on the part of the human race to possess eternal life, have been improperly regarded as equivalent to a general acknowledgment by mankind of the natural immortality of all souls—a doctrine of comparatively recent date—that is, subsequent to the publication of the Gospel scheme.

Having thus ascertained the true nature and purport of the views which existed in regard to the soul and a future state, prior to the Christian revelation, and having shewn that the essential immortality of the soul was, in reality, never believed in or acknowledged until Gospel truth and ancient philosophy, were blended together to support the dogma, inquiry may now be made as to the origin of that desire to possess eternal life, which dwells in the soul.

Regarded as a fact to be recognised in the history of the human race, it is submitted that this desire is consistent with the hypothesis insisted on—namely, that Adam, at the fall, and mankind through him, forfeited that immortality which he would have enjoyed according to God's will and pleasure, though not by virtue of any inherent property in the soul itself; and that the existence of this desire also accords with what is found to be the case with reference to other truths and events which have left an impress upon the human mind. As previously remarked, neither the impression nor the desire can be regarded as affording evidence that the soul possesses by virtue of its creation a condition which necessitates its immortality; on the contrary, they merely justify the conclusion that the soul, retaining a perception of what it once might have attained, longs after that eternal existence which it will hereafter be suited to enjoy, by virtue of a new birth—an inheritance to be derived under a different title to any it can claim through Adam.

If it be true that the soul, through Adam's transgression, forfeited its claim to immortality, it is but likely, that the occurrence of so great an event would leave an impression such as is spoken of; and that this impression becoming weaker and weaker, would, according to the nature of things, develop error, both as to the cause and nature of the event, and the essential attributes of the soul itself, in the midst of which, however, the germ of truth might probably be detected. This result would be *but likely*, and in accordance with what has occurred in regard to various

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events of a similar character in the history of the world, and various truths which at the first were communicated to man in their purity. The late Hugh Miller remarks, in connection with the Noachian deluge :—“ There are events which impress the memory so strongly that they seem never to be forgotten, but live as traditions, sometimes, mayhap, very vague and much modified by the inventions of an after time, but which, in floating downwards to late ages, always bear about them a certain strong impress of their pristine reality. They are shadows that have become ill-defined, from the vast distance of the objects that cast them—like the shadows of great birds flung on a summer’s day from the blue depths of the sky to the landscape far below—but whose very presence, however diffused they may have become, testifies to the existence of the remote realities from which they are thrown, and without which they could have had no being at all.”*

Now, tradition becomes less accurate in proportion as it is removed from the event to which it owes its origin. As, then, a truth, which may have been once correctly understood, is liable, in the progress of ages, to become by degrees corrupted, until it can with difficulty be recognised, and as this is specially the case with Divine truths, which being removed from man’s natural perception, unless accompanied by a distinct revelation, always available, are peculiarly liable to misconception and mistake, it cannot be a matter of surprise to find that the opinions which in time eventuated upon the subject of the soul’s nature, and its future destiny, were not only defective, but for all practical purposes, were untrue ; and are such as, if carried out to their legitimate results, must terminate in the utmost extravagance. Again, and for the like reasons, it is to be expected that the impression should manifest itself in greater force and purity among the more early races,

* *The Testimony of the Rocks*, p. 268.

who lived a primitive and pastoral life, than among those who flourished at a later period of the world's history, when time had raised a veil to intercept the view and conceal the object,—than among nations whose civilization had progressed hand in hand with vice, and whose mythology was coloured by the degraded tastes of a fallen nature.

And this is just what the investigation proves to be the fact. Among the Scythian and Teutonic races, the opinion which prevailed regarding an existence after death, exhibited a greater proportion of truth than the mythology of civilized Greece and Rome. It may be asserted with confidence that the religious conceptions of the former, without staying to inquire into the exact amount of error involved, manifested a vitality and exercised an influence upon the conduct of those who professed it, which was altogether wanting in the case of the Greeks and Romans, who did not seriously entertain, or practically adhere to the truths of their avowed religion.

From the facts which have been noticed, it would appear that the acknowledgment of the soul's existence after death showed itself in three distinct aspects. First; that in which the soul preserved its personal identity and individuality. Second; that which presents the doctrine of transmigration, where, although individuality is preserved, personal identity is lost, so far at all events as identity is worth anything. Third; that form of belief which held that the soul was itself an emanation from the Divine Being, and upon death was again re-absorbed into the Divine nature. Now, it is not a little remarkable that the latter—the doctrine held by the most intelligent and philosophic among the ancients, is the most erroneous, and would, if true, necessitate the conclusion, that all souls shall, in effect, be annihilated; while the first, which prevailed among the earliest races with whom civilization had progressed to a comparatively small extent, is that which possesses the greatest resemblance to truth.

The opinion which preserves to the soul in a future state its personal identity, is certainly more allied to truth than that which holds, that after death it migrates through a series of plants or animals, or both ; and still more so, when contrasted with that which asserts the soul's ultimate absorption into the universe of mind. Here, then, is confirmation of the principle, that a truth which at the first may have been communicated to man in its integrity, and photographed, so to speak, upon his nature, becomes perverted in direct proportion to the time which has elapsed from the period of its communication, unless accompanied with a distinct and permanent revelation whereby it may be perpetuated in its integrity. Without such a revelation, amidst a tissue of extravagance and error, the scintilla of truth may, perhaps, be recognized ; but it is only in accordance with reason and experience, that a serious departure from truth should take place.

A few examples will illustrate what has been urged. The fact of the existence of God was a truth known in all its fullness and purity to Adam, who enjoyed in the garden of Eden direct personal converse with his Creator. The impression remained stamped upon man's consciousness, and exhibits itself in the almost intuitive perception that a Deity must exist ; and this is of necessity present in every system of religion. The knowledge of the Divine Being, continued in greater or less purity among the immediate descendants of Adam. In process of time, however, man began to acknowledge divinities of varied powers and attributes. As age succeeded age he withdrew himself further and further from God ; he became vain in his imaginations, his foolish heart was darkened, and worship became more and more corrupt. The glory of the uncorruptible God was changed into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. In Rome, under the empire, religion and vice became almost synonymous, and idol worship exhibited itself in such revolting aspects, that those who sought not

to excuse self-indulgence under the pretence of religion, rejected altogether the idea of a Divine superintending providence in the affairs of men. Philosophers repudiated the absurdities of Pantheism, and endeavoured in their schools to eliminate truth. They directed powerful but unenlightened minds to the investigation of the Divine nature, but their speculations were neither communicated to, nor acknowledged by the people at large. Thus the knowledge of the Deity revealed in its fulness to Adam, in lapse of time degenerated into the grossest superstition.

To take as another illustration, the Noachian deluge:—The impression of this great catastrophe may be recognised in the traditions of the most widely separated races. Traces of the impression are found among the Indians of Western America, the inhabitants of Peru, among the Chinese and the Hindoos. It is found among the aborigines of the Southern Pacific Archipelago, and in fact exhibits itself in the traditions of every race which possesses a mythology. The Scandinavian had his legend; the Greeks, their Deucalion and Pyrrha; the Egyptians, their Osiris—all concur in pointing out some great event, which, in remote antiquity, befel the human race, and involved it in ruin and destruction. Do the fables or myths referred to, afford satisfactory grounds upon which to form an intelligent belief in regard to the circumstances, nature, and end of that great catastrophe? Certainly not; but they abundantly prove the reality of some such event. For the truth itself, recourse must be had to that revealed record given by God, through Moses, to mankind.

Again, in that precious promise given to man, subsequent to the Fall—that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, may be recognised the origin of a great and very prevalent error. The promise itself, communicated a great and simple, yet glorious truth; but, in accordance with the principle under illustration, the reality was lost sight of, and a fiction was substituted. The

human mind lost the substance, and caught hold of an idea suggested by the promise. The result was just what might have been expected. The woman, whose seed was to bruise the serpent's head, and not the seed itself, became the object of regard and adoration, and thus it has eventuated, that four-fifths of the human race have worshipped a God-woman, and have paid divine honours to a queen of heaven. In ancient and modern times, this worship has alike existed. Among the Egyptians the virgin and child is represented as rising from a lotus flower. The lotus of knowledge, and the great serpent, appear as emblems of Paradise. In the former may perhaps be recognised that tree of life which was placed in the garden of Eden, and which, if partaken of, would have conferred eternal life. The religion of the lotus and the virgin goddess rising from its flower, forms an important element in Hindoo worship, even at the present day. Recent events, in the peculiarities of the Indian mutiny, testified to the reverential regard paid to this flower, as a symbol in Hindoo worship.*

The adoration of the queen of heaven was a prominent form of idolatry in the east, in days of old. The prophet Jeremiah alludes to her worship as having crept into even, the cities of Judah, and the streets of Jerusalem;† and at the present time, how large a portion of professing Christendom pays divine honours to an immaculate virgin, and professes a faith, Christian in name, but Pagan in reality! The prevalence of this error, both in times gone by, and at the present day, can alone be accounted for by reference to the promise given, at the first, to Adam.

Then, again, the truth, that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, is borne testimony to by the entire human race. The universal practice of sacrifice is an acknowledgment of the deeply-rooted impression made by

* It is stated by St. Jerome that Buddas boasted of having been brought forth from the side of a virgin.

† Jeremiah, xliv. 17.

the truth communicated in the rejection of Cain's sacrifice, and the acceptance of Abel's. The practice, as in the other instances, became corrupt, and the truth itself perverted. Victims, nay human victims, were offered, not as an acknowledgment of the divine law, but to propitiate the divine wrath. In all such cases it is necessary to discriminate between the natural and poisonous growth of error—a development, consequent upon man's corrupted nature continued during a long course of ages, and the truth or event from which the development has sprung.

Now undoubtedly the temptation and fall of Adam was just one of those events which were calculated to produce a deep impression, and results such as have been mentioned; and accordingly traces of the event are to be found in ancient mythology. According to Phœnician story, the great antagonist of the gods was a gigantic serpent, which had once been their servant, but had subsequently revolted against their authority, and had become their enemy. In this myth may be recognised the existence of the great Evil Spirit, and the fact of his rebellion against God. The fable related by Bacon, in his "Wisdom of the Ancients," bears a very close resemblance to the Mosaic narrative of man's temptation, and vividly suggests the consequences of the fall to have been the loss of that immortality which Adam might, so to speak, have secured for himself—for his spiritual entity, or soul—if he had not broken God's command. Jupiter and the other gods, it is related, conferred upon man a most desirable and acceptable boon—the gift of perpetual youth. Man, however, though overjoyed at the possession of so precious a gift, foolishly placed the present he had received upon an ass. The ass, returning with the burden, was extremely thirsty, and chanced to pass by a fountain, which was guarded by a serpent, who refused to suffer the ass to drink except upon the condition, that he delivered up the burden he carried. The ass foolishly complied; and thus the perpetual renewal

of youth was, for a draught of water, transferred from mankind to serpents. It is impossible not to be struck with the resemblance which the fable bears to that narrative which represents Adam and Eve yielding to the temptation of Satan, and incurring the penalty of eternal death through a thirst for the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

The illustrations given must suffice, though they might be easily multiplied. They justify the observation that truths originally communicated to man, and events of such a character as to deeply affect his mind and memory, became in progress of time the subject of fable and the source of superstition. Is it then to be wondered at, that the truth concerning the nature and destiny of the soul should have become obscured?—that fallen man, alienated from God, should as well mistake the truth regarding the soul's being, as he did the truth regarding the nature of the Deity himself, and should require the clear light of Revelation to set him right again?

The opinions which have prevailed, as well in ancient as in modern times, concerning the existence of the soul in a future state, and its alleged natural immortality, have originated in the circumstances which attended that great catastrophe which occurred when man yielded to the temptation of Satan. Thus, that desire which has ever existed in the human soul, to possess immortality, may be accounted for; and thus, the errors and mistakes which have been noticed, have originated. What the event, and what the real nature of the truth was, may be learned from the inspired record of the Creation and Fall. It is submitted that that record plainly teaches that man was once placed in a position in which he might have secured for his spiritual entity or soul, immortality, guaranteed to him by God's immutability,—and that he failed to do so. The consciousness of what man had lost, continued after the circumstances attending the loss were forgotten. The result was, an earnest longing after eternal life. Responsive to this

anxiety, comes from the Divine presence the announcement that *they* who are in Christ Jesus have passed from death unto life; that they are joint heirs with Him "who only hath immortality."

Thus then, the forfeiture of immortality consequent upon the fall, and the subsequent prohibition to eat of the tree of life, with his expulsion from the garden of Eden, left deeply fixed in man's nature a vivid and enduring impression, manifesting itself outwardly, in a yearning after eternal life. In process of time, the desire came to be regarded as evidence of a fact, and satisfactory proof of the natural immortality of the Soul. Previous to the Gospel Revelation, the desire developed itself in those extravagant views which have been, in some measure, noticed. When Christianity was published, the like causes, aided by the widespread influence of Platonism, conduced to a like result; and as the certainty of a future life formed a leading feature of the new religion (although such shall be enjoyed alone by those who shall be made partakers of the gift), the future eternal existence of *all* souls appeared to be established, and was in time accepted as a dogma of Divine truth.

The anxiety which prevailed to propagate the new religion without a strict regard to what in reality was the truth, caused many of the errors of Paganism* to be adopted, with a view to enlist, as far as possible, the favourable assent of all. The number of those who became converts, was thought of more importance than the truthfulness of the profession made, and a great compromise took place. One result among others was, that the natural immortality of the soul was asserted *ex-cathedrà*, and a sort of modified Platonism was elevated into a dogma of the religion of Christ. Like all compromises, the result was

* See "The Two Babylons," by the Rev. Alexander Hislop, in which work, striking instances are given of the introduction of Pagan errors into the Christian Church.

pregnant with error, and the fruit continues to the present day, sufficient to frighten the weak and timid, but without power to influence or awe the strong.

It is to be borne in mind that the nature of the soul is one thing, its future destiny is another. The former is that branch of the subject upon which human reason might speculate, and even discover some truth. The latter concerns the purposes and intentions of God, and is beyond the limits of man's investigation when unaided by Revelation. Philosophers carried their speculations beyond the one, respecting which they might have attained to some degree of knowledge, and entered upon the other, respecting which they were sure to fall into error. It might, with reason and justice, have been concluded, that as the soul was immaterial, and of a moral nature, it was fitted to enjoy, and capable of receiving immortality ; but it could not, and ought not on that account alone to have been concluded, that it possesses immortality as a right.

Not only will the universal desire which man exhibits to obtain an immortal existence be accounted for, on the hypothesis suggested, but the popular opinion regarding the natural immortality of the soul is shown to have been such, as might have been anticipated according to the course of human experience. The conclusion contended for—viz., that God created the soul, subject *altogether* to his control, and consequently unfettered in his disposition of it by any fixed law, whether of immortality or the reverse—entirely accords with the anxiety found to exist in the mind of man.

Man, then, is justified in looking forward to eternal life in a future state, as a *gift* which God may confer upon the soul, not as a right to which man is entitled—not as a condition of his being, which he must in every event possess—but a prize to be sought for, a crown to be coveted, a gift which, according to revelation, God will certainly bestow upon some—namely, those who are born, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Man's position in this life is one of hope and expectancy. He recognizes within himself that desire to enjoy immortality which the possession of a moral nature justifies; and this anxiety, with the certainty of a future life for some, is that which satisfies the several grounds of argument upon which the alleged natural immortality of the soul rests, and from which it has been erroneously concluded.

It is for eternal life that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth. Immortality is that which God has promised to bestow upon his people in a new heaven and in a new earth. Immortality is not man's birthright through Adam; it is the birthright of those *alone* who have been born again in Christ Jesus. "Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again," are the words of Him who spoke as never man spake; and they who are so born according to God's sovereign grace, become the children of God, the members of his family, and joint heirs with Christ, of an eternal inheritance.

CHAPTER IV.

KNOWLEDGE POSSESSED BY THE JEWS CONCERNING THE FUTURE STATE AND FINAL DESTINY OF THE SOUL.

THE Jews were God's peculiar people; and among *them*, if not among the other nations of antiquity, the essential immortality of the soul ought certainly to have been known and recognised, and ought to have exercised an active influence upon their life and conduct. After the family of Jacob had become a nation and had suffered during many years the oppression of the Egyptians, it was led forth by God's outstretched arm, was miraculously guided through the wilderness, and finally given the promised land for an inheritance.

The Jewish constitution was framed by Moses, under Divine direction, and laws were established for the regulation of morals, written upon tables of stone by the finger of God himself. To this favoured nation were also committed the oracles of God. In the writings of Moses, the Hebrew possessed an authorised narrative of the creation and fall of man; and from it might have learned to look forward to the period when the Messiah should come, and bestow upon mankind that eternal life, which Adam, by transgression had forfeited. Finally, the Jews had present with them Prophets, whose inspired writings, as the time drew near, revealed with more and more distinctness the character and mission of the Anointed.

The Jews, then, assuredly, ought to have known this great and important truth—the Soul's natural immortality—if truth it is.

Yet what is the fact? Neither the Mosaic narrative of the fall of man and promise of redemption, through the seed of the woman—nor the law—nor the prophetic writings, announce, as a truth to be recognised, the essential immortality of the soul. The fact is, to say the least, remarkable. Indeed, if the soul be immortal, in the sense commonly alleged, it is well nigh incomprehensible. The sanctions of God's moral law, as delivered to the Jewish nation, are entirely of a temporal character; and so far as obedience was induced, or disobedience reprobated, no such punishment, as the eternal existence of the soul in torment in a future state, is announced or revealed. To repeat:—the Eternal existence of the soul in a future state, which, in popular estimation, supplies so great an inducement to obedience, was unknown to the Jewish economy—an economy of Divine institution. . On the contrary; temporal punishments were announced as the result of disobedience, and temporal rewards as the recompense for devotion, to the Supreme Being. "Honour thy father and thy mother," is an example illustrative of the entire law, in which the reward for so doing is immediately stated—namely, "that thy days may be long upon the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee." (*Ex.* xx. 12.)

There is abundant proof of the correctness of this remark. References are given in the note* which the reader can at his leisure consult. The following may, however, be taken as characteristic of the entire.

Temporal rewards:—

"If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians." (*Ex.* xv. 26, *Deut.* vii. 15.)

* Exodus xv. 26; xx. 12; xxiii. 22-31; Leviticus xxv. 18; Numbers xiv. 22; xxxii. 11; xxxiii. 55; Deut. i. 35, iv. 1; v. 29; vi. 2, 3; vii. 19, 20; viii. 1, &c.; xv. 4, &c.; xvi. 20; xvii. 19; xxviii. 1, &c.; xxix. 22, 23; xxx. 1; xxxi. 16-18; xxxii. 23-25.

“He shall bless thy bread and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee.” (*Ex. xxiii. 25.*)

“Ye shall dwell in the land in safety.” (*Lev. xxv. 18.*)

“The land shall yield her fruit, and ye shall eat your fill, and dwell therein in safety.” (*Lev. xxv. 19.*)

“Ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword.” (*Lev. xxvi. 7.*)

Temporal Punishments :—

“I will even appoint over you terror, corruption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain; for your enemies shall eat it.” (*Lev. xxvi. 16.*)

“Ye shall be slain before your enemies.” (*Lev. xxvi. 17.*)

“Your land shall not yield her increase; neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits.” (*Lev. xxvi. 20.*)

Whatever, then, may have been the reason, the condition or existence of the soul in a future state, formed no part of the sanction of the Divine Law, as delivered to the Jews.

Is it, however, contended that the Jews had no source of knowledge regarding a Future state? By no means. The knowledge of the existence of a future state does not, however, involve a belief in, or the reality of, the essential immortality of the soul. The Jews certainly did possess intimations—indistinct, but not uncertain—that God had in store the gift of immortality ready to be conferred upon his people, and to be procured, in some way or other, by the coming Messiah. But the intimations which conveyed this truth, suggested no grounds whence they could have concluded, *nor did they conclude*, that God had also prepared a state of torment, in which the souls of the lost should exist eternally in misery and pain.

It was not from the Law, that the Jew might have derived his knowledge of a future state, so far as such knowledge was possessed. It was from the Mosaic record of the fall, from the promise subsequently made by God as recorded in that narrative, and from the announcements of the various

Prophets, who from time to time testified of the coming Saviour. It is important to bear in mind that the Law, did not afford any knowledge of a future state; that it did not convey to the minds of the people the existence of such a state, so as to satisfy them of its reality. It was otherwise with the ordinances of religion, the ceremonials of which were typical of the "better things" included in the New Covenant; but then, their character and meaning were neither realized nor understood.

Intimations given in the Mosaic writings, and references made by the Prophets to the Messiah, construed by the light of Gospel truth, speak of an hereafter. But in what sense were they understood by the Jew? Assuredly not as they should have been accepted; for then THE CHRIST would not have been rejected, when he came. It was undoubtedly alone through faith in the promises, afterwards fulfilled by Him who bruised the Serpent's head, that the Jew, in times of old, could look for redemption. Faith in the promises according to their true import, was accounted for righteousness, and comprised reconciliation and acceptance with God. Instances of particular individuals who looked forward to the Messiah in his character of a Saviour from the consequences of the fall, and the penalty of sin, are abundant, from the earliest times down to the period when the law was about to vanish away. Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day, and he saw it, and was glad; and so with many others: but to the people at large—to the Jewish nation as such, it was otherwise. The promise of a Messiah the Jews certainly accepted; but of his character, and the object of his mission—to purchase redemption for his people, and to take away the sins of the world—they were, as certainly, ignorant. They looked for an earthly sovereign, under whose rule their nation should attain pre-eminence and stability; and so impressed were their minds with the temporal nature of His mission—so foreign to their ideas was a future spiritual kingdom, of which Christ was to be

at once the Author and King—so little did they think that the gift which He came to bestow, was eternal life in a future state—that even those who acknowledged the “Desire of all nations” in the person of the lowly Jesus,—even his disciples, were ignorant of the truth; and, with minds yet unenlightened, inquired:—“Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”* although He had previously, in express language, declared, “My kingdom is not of this world.”† After His Resurrection also, the two disciples to whom he appeared as they journeyed to Emmaus, gave similar expression to the hopes they had cherished. “They trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.”‡

It is easier to understand the ignorance which prevailed among the Jews concerning the Person and Mission of Christ, than it is to account for the want of knowledge which existed regarding the certainty of a future state, *especially* if the essential immortality of the soul was expressly revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures, or generally known and accepted as a truth. And yet such was the case; for when Christ spoke of his coming death and resurrection, his disciples questioned what the rising of the dead should mean; and after the fact had been attested by many infallible proofs, there were not wanting those, even among professing Christians, who thought that the resurrection had already passed.

The more intelligent classes among the Jews appear to have been almost equally divided in opinion upon this very question. The Sadducees—a very influential body, which formed no inconsiderable portion of the council before which Paul was arraigned, and whose members were eligible to the office of High Priest itself—a sect, no doubt, well skilled in the law, well acquainted with the prophetic writings, and versed in all the traditions of their nation—avowed their

* Acts, i. 6.

† John, xviii. 36.

‡ Luke, xxiv. 21.

unbelief in the reality of a resurrection, and in the existence of either angel or spirit.* *They* consequently could not have believed in the natural immortality of the Soul : and the fact that such views were entertained by any respectable portion of the community, is sufficient to establish that the Old Testament Scriptures afforded no certain knowledge in regard to the soul's future being ; for were it otherwise, the Sadducee would have had no show of reason in support of his error.

Is it possible to account in any way for the prevalence of this error—one which so widely prevailed ? May it not be referred to the principle, that extreme opinions in one direction are calculated to engender extreme opinions in the opposite direction ? so that, if some were found ready to assert the natural immortality of *all* souls, others were not wanting, to deny the immortality of *any*. The Sadducees, rejecting the doctrine that all souls must exist hereafter—an opinion which (requiring the everlasting misery of the great majority of the human race), it may be supposed, they conceived at variance with God's revealed character and intentions—fell into the error of denying the possibility of eternal life being possessed by any. The truth lay between the two extremes : God was the God of the living,† and every soul which possesseth life, either in this world or the next, must live in Him ; but it does not on that account follow that all souls must live hereafter, and therefore continue in either endless happiness or endless woe.

The reference made by Christ, when he upbraided the Sadducees for their great error, and with “not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God,”‡ justifies the view now urged. Christ makes the inquiry—“Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God ; saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”§

* Acts, xxiii. 8.

† Matt. xxii. 31.

‡ Matt. xxii. 32.

§ Matt. xxii. 23-32.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were God's holy men of old ; they represented God's faithful people—the children of the promises, who should inherit eternal life. "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." In other words, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, representing and including the entire class of believers, are asserted to be the living: God is their God, and they are his people. Not so with regard to those, who belong not to the spiritual seed of faithful Abraham ;—they are the dead. God is not their God: He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. He is not the God of those who are without Christ—that is, now dead though living, who shall receive in a future state the wages of sin—eternal death.

The reference is altogether to a future state. The discussion concerned the next world and the reality of a life hereafter; for if the signification of the words "of the dead" and "of the living," be confined to physical or temporal death, and to existence during the present life, the argument loses its force and application. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had long departed this life, and paid the debt of nature. The argument of Christ can alone be understood, according to the context, by referring the expressions "of the dead" and "of the living" to the existence or non-existence of the soul in that future state, of which He was then treating.

Eternal life as the gift of God for the saved,—eternal death as the wages of sin for the lost, was, then, the truth of which it is written, "when the multitudes heard this they were astonished at his doctrine." (*Matt.* xxii. 33.)

The opinions which prevailed among the Jews at the period of Christ's appearing, owe their origin in no small degree to the philosophy of the Greeks, and particularly to that of Plato. The Old Testament Scriptures were referred to, in support of the views thus derived, rather than as suffi-

cient of themselves to justify them. Dodwell, in his treatise on the Soul—a work which, in some respects, supports the views urged in the present inquiry, in that he denies that the soul possesses any natural or essential immortality—remarks: “Really the opinions then received among the Jews are a sufficient proof that they knew of no Divine revelation concerning the future state of the soul;”^{*} and Whately, in his essay, writes: “It is highly probable that the belief of a future state, as it prevailed among the Jews in our Lord’s time, and for a considerable period before, was not, properly speaking, drawn from their Scriptures in the first instance, was not founded on the few faint hints to be met with in their prophets, though these were evidently called in to support it; but was the gradual result of a combination of other causes with these imperfect revelations.” Again, the celebrated Joseph Mede states “that he knows not on what passage the Jews of old could have formed a belief in a future state except upon the one passage in Daniel” (xii. 2). Upon this passage some observations will be ventured at a subsequent page.

Guided by the light of the New Testament, the Mosaic and Prophetic writings can be read at the present day with an understanding of their proper import which the Jews of old could not have possessed. Intimations of the Divine purpose, and language which, clearly enough to the Christian, points out the reality of a future state and the destiny of the soul, can be referred to in the Old Testament. But while many such passages may be recognised, setting forth the promise of eternal life and its anticipated enjoyment, the language of others describes the ultimate fate of the ungodly, as that of destruction and death. This is manifestly the case, unless indeed the words are understood as used in a non-natural sense, or in one, different from the usual and popular signification of the

^{*} Dodwell on the Soul, p. 111. A.D. 1706.

terms—a course of construction which, if the conclusion arrived at in subsequent chapters be correct, ought not to be adopted and cannot be justified. At the present stage of the inquiry such a construction—the non-natural one—is not demanded on any sufficient grounds; and consequently in the following passages, which are characteristic of those prevailing throughout the Old Testament, the terms should receive their ordinary signification:—

“They go to *nothing* and *perish*.” (*Job*, vi. 18.)

“That the wicked is reserved to the day of *destruction*; they shall be brought forth to the day of *wrath*.” (*Job*, xxi. 30.)

“Hell is naked before him, and *destruction* hath no covering.” (*Job*, xxvi. 6.)

“Is not *destruction* to the *wicked*?” (*Job*, xxxi. 3.)

“The way of the ungodly shall *perish*.” (*Psal.* i. 6.)

“For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth *for ever*.” (*Psal.* xlix. 8.)

“Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is *like the beasts that perish*.” (*Psal.* xlix. 20.)

“For thou hast delivered my soul from *death*.” (*Psal.* lvi. 13, cxvi. 8.)

“*Destruction* shall be to the workers of iniquity.” (*Prov.* x. 29.)

“Hell and *destruction* are before the Lord.” (*Prov.* xv. 11.)

“I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves and live ye.” (*Ezek.* xviii. 32.)

“I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from *death*.” (*Hos.* xiii. 14.)

Examples such as the foregoing might be multiplied to no end. They manifestly speak of the end of the wicked—not in regard to this world, but in regard to the next;—not as to their temporal condition, but as to the destiny of their souls. If taken in their ordinary and natural signifi-

cation, it is impossible to mistake their import. They reiterate the assurance—"the Soul that sinneth, it shall die."

With regard to the passage from Daniel, referred to by Mede, in the passage already quoted; there is in it a plain intimation of the resurrection, the judgment, and a future state; but the passage is far indeed from asserting the eternal existence of the soul in torment. The statement reads: "and many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." (*Dan.* xii. 2.) Nothing can be plainer than that the "everlasting contempt" to which it is said the wicked shall awake, is a contempt *towards* them, not experienced by them; while the shame is that felt by them, not exhibited *towards* them. The shame is subjective, while the contempt is objective. The shame is theirs, the contempt is the contempt of others. Those who believe not, shall at *that* day be ashamed, and the object of "everlasting contempt." Does not the language coincide with that quoted by St. Paul: "Whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed" (*Rom.* x. 11), and with the words of St. John, when he says: "And now, little children, abide in Him; that when He shall appear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him, at His coming." (*1 John*, ii. 28.) As those who awake to life, shall enjoy immortality, so shall the rest be overwhelmed with "everlasting contempt" in the presence of the angels of God.

Thus then, while the ancient Jew possessed but scanty means of acquiring correct and distinct knowledge regarding a future state, and the final destiny of the soul, he yet possessed sufficient light to distinguish through the darkness, the outline of a great and momentous truth, looming in the distant future. The faint memories of what had been lost, and the expectation of again receiving eternal life at the hands of God, through the reconciliation to be effected by the Messiah, afforded for those who looked forward to its attainment, sufficient evidence of the indistinct foreshadow-

ing. As the period of Christ's appearing drew near, the dark clouds which concealed the prospect began to clear away. The feeble light of dawn brightened at the approach of day, until finally the arrival of the Sun of righteousness dispelled the last trace of darkness, and revealed in its full splendour—IMMORTALITY, the gift of God conferred upon the redeemed soul, through Jesus Christ, in whom pre-eminently, was life, and whose "life was the light of men."

CHAPTER V.

MAN NOT CREATED IMMORTAL—DEATH IN THE WORLD BEFORE ADAM—TESTIMONY OF GEOLOGY—THE MOSAIC NARRATIVE—DEATH OF THE SOUL THE PENALTY INCURRED BY TRANSGRESSION—LIFE FOR THE SOUL CONFERRED BY GOD THROUGH CHRIST UPON THE REDEEMED.

THE preceding chapters have been devoted to the removal of those erroneous impressions which have been so generally entertained upon the subject,—namely ; that the natural immortality of the soul may be assuredly established by Reason and Natural religion, and that the dogma has obtained acceptance among all nations, and at all periods of the world's history. As yet no direct argument has been advanced in support of the contrary opinion,—that God created the soul free of any essential law of immortality or the reverse, although some of the grounds upon which the latter may be urged, have been incidentally hinted at in the course of the observations already made.

The error, of relying upon human reason and natural religion as sufficient to establish the immortality of the soul, while they alone intimate the reality and not the duration of a future state, has been dwelt upon. It has been pointed out that the doctrine of the soul's immortality, in the sense commonly held, was unknown to the Ancients, and formed no part of the sanction of God's law as promulgated for the Jews—a people under his special care and guidance. It has been also shown, that while the opinion contended for, can rely for support on every argument put forward to

establish the natural immortality of the soul, (in as much as it maintains that the soul is fitted to enjoy, and in the case of many, will, in fact, enjoy, eternal life), it is not open to the objections, many of them of great weight, which may be justly urged against the necessary immortality of all souls; and further, that the hypothesis advanced, is in perfect accordance with, and satisfies the aspirations and impressions which prevail among mankind, and which are to be recognised in the various systems of religion and philosophy, that have existed in the world.

It is proper now to examine the grounds, and explain the reasons upon which the opinion urged, is founded. It is submitted, that the reasoning which follows is just, legitimate, and conclusive; that the declarations of God's word are express and free from doubt or difficulty; and not a little confidence is felt, that the arguments, in their accumulated force, will fully establish the conclusion arrived at, to the satisfaction of every candid inquirer.

It may not be out of place, again to state concisely the doctrine contended for as the true one, regarding the creation and future destiny of the human race. It is submitted as a truth established by reason and revelation, that God originally created man, having an animal body, and possessed of a vital principle similar to that of other animals of inferior species.* That God conferred upon man at the same time a spiritual entity, which is commonly recognised, and called the Soul—a moral existence, made after God's image, not *of itself* immortal, but which was capable of enjoying, and suited to possess eternal life. Each—the animal life and soul—was distinct the one from the other; each was subject to different laws, and each had its distinct destiny. It is important to bear in mind the perfectly different nature of the two, and to keep the fact constantly in view. It is contended, that man as to his animal nature,

* "The first man Adam was made a living soul." (1 Cor. xv. 45.)
 "Psyché, 'becoming thereby a natural or animal body.'" *Vide* Alf. G. T., n.

was ever subject to physical or temporal death ; that is, to the dissolution of his bodily frame, and the loss of his animal life ; that he was *created to die* in the due course of nature ; that he would have died had the fall never taken place ;—that is, the soul freed from the animal body, and animal life, would have passed to another sphere of existence. In fact, that physical or temporal death existed, independently of the penalty due to transgression. It is further submitted, that man's soul, the possession of which distinguished him from other animals, was capable of enjoying immortality, and would have done so, but for the fall,—not, however by virtue of its creation, nor upon this earth as then constituted, but in another and a better world, the entrance to which would have been through the portals of physical death, but death divested of its terrors, and free from pain.

If it can be shown that physical death existed as a law of nature, subject to which man was made—that death was in the world, prior to Adam's fall ; the fact would go far to conclude the question at issue. For if physical death thus existed as a condition of man's being, so far as his animal nature was concerned, then *that death*, which was the penalty announced as the result of disobedience, could not have had reference to the physical or temporal death which then, as now, prevailed ; and man's soul would alone have remained as the subject matter, upon which the "death" intimated in the curse, could have taken effect. Accordingly it is contended, that the curse emphatically affected that spiritual entity which had been conferred by God upon man ; and that the "death" indicated, was the withdrawal from the soul of that eternal life which God was then prepared to confer and which shall hereafter be granted to those who shall be redeemed through the blood of Christ,—the loss of that immortality which would otherwise have been enjoyed by the entire race in another world, and a more perfect state. The grounds upon which these assertions are founded must now be

entered upon more fully; but, if for a moment their accuracy be admitted, it is plain that the conclusion follows, that the soul is not naturally immortal, and that the penalty of sin attaching upon the individual soul unredeemed by Christ's sacrifice, *may* be its final death and destruction. In accordance with the conclusion thus arrived at, the pages of Scripture are found to abound with numberless declarations, the signification of which cannot be gainsayed, all of which announce, in language more or less express, that the guilty shall be "*punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of God.*" (2 *The*s. i. 9.)

The question will, perhaps, be asked, when does this result take place? When will this punishment be inflicted? Will the soul be destroyed at the moment of physical death, or at a subsequent period? Certainly at a subsequent period; for all must arise and stand before the judgment seat of Christ. In what condition, or under what circumstances, the wicked shall exist during the period which elapses after physical death and before the judgment it is not pretended to define. The reader will bear in mind that the present inquiry does not concern the condition of souls during the intermediate state. This is important to recollect, for many passages which are appealed to as determining the condition of the lost hereafter, have reference *solely* to the state of departed spirits before the resurrection, and are inapplicable to the present inquiry, which alone concerns the destiny of the lost, after final judgment shall have been pronounced.

However opposed to preconceived notions the statement may be, that man was created subject to physical death, there is yet nothing unreasonable in the assertion, or contrary to what may well be the fact. Man, created mortal as an animal, but possessing a soul capable of enjoying perpetual existence according to the Divine will, after passing through his allotted sphere of duty on earth, would have yielded up, obedient to an universal law of nature, his earthly

tabernacle and animal life, and entered into the realms of eternal glory. His death would have been an easy and a happy one. Free from pain and those anxious thoughts of hereafter, which now agitate the soul, and keep mankind in bondage, he would have passed to the full enjoyment of an everlasting home, in the presence and the service of his Maker. But the fall having taken place, the fatal knowledge of sin, having brought man in guilty before God, the light of God's countenance was withdrawn, and the soul liable to the full wages of iniquity would ever have remained subject thereto, had it not pleased Him, to provide that fountain in which guilt can be washed away, and to supply the righteousness of another, with which the soul may be clothed.

Man's passage from this world, in consequence of sin, became a matter of fear and anxiety. Doubt, and the prospect of a righteous judgment, fills the guilty soul with terror, unless that peace which passeth knowledge, has been communicated by God in his infinite mercy. Without that peace, the dark valley of the *shadow* of death (not yet the valley of death itself, —that second death which awaits the unredeemed) must be traversed by every person without one ray of light or hope. The day of Christ's appearing to judge the world ushers in the last act of the great drama, when the sea shall give up the dead that are in it, and death and hell (Hadēs) shall give up the dead which are in them ; and while the souls of the saved out of every nation and tongue, clothed in white garments, shall be received into everlasting joy in the presence of admiring angels, the unredeemed shall stand naked and ashamed in the presence of the Saviour, and, in accordance with the curse originally pronounced, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. "This is the *second death* ;"* for the "wages of sin is death, and the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

* Rev. xx. 14.

The first proposition, then, which it is desirable to establish is, that physical or temporal death existed in the world as a universal law of nature subject to which man was created. This will appear from the fact that physical death was a law of all organic and inorganic existence before the creation of Adam.

A brief consideration of the evidence afforded by Geology will render this fact indisputable. Geology can scarcely be said to have as yet attained the certainty and accuracy of a science. Though still in its infancy, it has, however, thrown considerable light upon the history of the world's creation. It proves that this earth was subjected by God to a long course of preparation, extending backwards far into eternity, before it was finally fitted for the reception of man. The Earth, at first without form and void, passed through a cooling process, during periods known only to the Infinite, before its surface was suited to the existence of the most humble organism of vegetable or animal life. During the progress of ages, strata after strata was formed by the power of God's omnipotence, working on the rude material according to laws which He himself had established and ordained. Plants and animals, each commencing with the simplest type, were formed, as the condition of the earth's surface was rendered fit for their existence and support; until, after successive creations, each ascending higher in the scale of being, man was formed—an animal of physical constitution similar to many of those which preceded him, although specially favoured with the possession of a distinct entity or soul, of a moral nature and immaterial substance. It is to be observed, that God's plan was one of successive creations, each advancing still higher than the former, until the present condition of things was attained—a state which is as yet far from being perfect—a state which God never intended to be the final one.

Now, throughout the entire course of nature, from the first appearance of organic life, advancing upwards by pro-

gressive creations, and not by development, it is found that physical death existed, as a universal law of both animal and vegetable life, long before man was created, or the curse pronounced.

This fact rests on the most conclusive evidence. The fossil remains of animal and vegetable existence—the medals of the creation, as they have been aptly termed—lie scattered through the various sedimentary rocks in greater or less variety and number. None can reasonably doubt that these remains were once endowed with life, and that they lived and died ages before the creation of man. The fact of their death *before* the creation of Adam is that which chiefly demands attention; because, though such remains are now found, and afford evidence that their various organisms *once* lived and died, yet it may be objected that they were subjected to death for the first time, when the curse was pronounced, and death, as it is commonly said, entered into the world. The objection, however, does not bear investigation. The animal organisms whose remains are discovered in a fossiliferous state must beyond dispute have lived and died before the creation of man. They must have lived, if they lived at all, ages before man was created; for an examination of their physical structure and constitution, establishes the fact that man and several of the extinct types could not have had a cotemporaneous existence. The cooling process which took place in the crust of the earth, rendered it essential that a difference in the constitution and organization of animal life should from time to time take place, so that existence under the altered temperature might be possible. The fossil remains of extinct species are therefore found to have been specially adapted to support a considerable degree of heat—existences which have no representatives at this day, and which could not support life under the present circumstances of the earth's temperature. In like manner, the present constitution of animal existence is such that by no possibility could life be supported under the

degree of heat which once prevailed. Such considerations, and others of a like nature, naturally lead to the conclusion that most, if not all, of those animal organisms whose remains are found in the fossil state could not have existed contemporaneously with man. If, then, such is the fact, it follows that if they ever possessed life, they must have perished before man's creation; for the change which rendered the world fitted for the reception of the latter, likewise rendered it unsuitable for the existence of the former.

Again, not only is there evidence of the existence of death; but there is abundant reason to recognise the presence of *violent* death during the pre-Adamite periods. The mode in which the various sedimentary rocks have been formed, establishes this conclusion. Mighty revolutions of nature, upheaving and submerging forces, ocean currents and other mechanical agencies, have been at work during untold ages, and must have been the fruitful source of sudden and violent death. But the fact does not depend upon inference alone. There is ample testimony to the truth of the assertion in the scattered remains and torn fragments, found in a fossiliferous state; denoting that death, sudden and violent, must have prevailed. There is, however, evidence even more direct than the foregoing. Mr. Gosse, in his work entitled *Omphalos*,* would have his readers believe that the several fossils embedded in the various strata of the earth's crust, were placed there by the Creator as they are now found; and that they never had a real existence as living organisms. But examination clearly proves, not only that they possessed life, but that they supported existence by feeding on one another. Many of the extinct animals were provided with instruments to seize, teeth to masticate, and stomachs to digest and assimilate their prey; and instances have been noticed in which, in the fossiliferous state, the remains of one animal

* *Omphalos*—An Attempt to untie the Geological Knot. By Philip H. Gosse, F.R.S. 1857.

are found to have been partly digested in the stomach of another.

Now if the existence of pre-Adamite animals having various organs constituted for the purpose of digestion, be established; it would be simply ridiculous to deny that such functions were given for the purpose of being used, and consequently the destruction and consumption of animal and vegetable life must be admitted. In fine, unless it is denied that fossiliferous organisms are the remains of animals once possessing life, or that they existed before the creation of Adam, it is impossible to escape from the conclusion insisted on. The reproduction of their kind during lengthened periods, would have caused an increase perfectly inconceivable, unless death had been present to curtail the excess, and each species had acted as a restraint upon the undue propagation of the other. It is impossible, therefore, not to admit the justness of Professor Hitchcock's remark, when he says:—"Death existed in the world untold ages before man's creation; while physiology declares it to be a universal law of nature, and a wise and benevolent provision in such a world as ours."*

The testimony of other distinguished writers is of a like nature, and to the same effect. "Ever since," writes the late Hugh Miller, "Ever since animal life began upon our planet, there existed, in all the departments of being, carnivorous classes, who could not live but by the death of their neighbours, and who were armed in consequence, for their destruction, like the butcher with his axe and knife, and the angler with his hook and spear."† And again—"The early exhibition of tooth, and spine, and sting—of weapons constructed alike to cut and to pierce—to unite two of the most indispensable requirements of the modern armourer—a keen edge to a strong back,—nay, stranger

* The Religion of Geology and its connected Sciences, by Edward Hitchcock, D.D., LL.D., p. 71.

† The Testimony of the Rocks, by Hugh Miller, p. 71.

still, the examples furnished in this primæval time, of weapons formed not only to kill, but also to torture,—must be altogether at variance with the preconceived opinions of those who hold that until man appeared in creation, and darkened its sympathetic face with the stain of moral guilt, the reign of violence and outrage did not begin, and that there was no death among the inferior creatures, and no suffering. It is a truth as certain as the existence of a southern hemisphere, or the motion of the earth round its own axis and the great solar centre, that untold ages ere man had sinned or suffered, the animal creation exhibited exactly its present state of war.”*

Among other writers, Oersted also may be referred to: “I feel myself now called upon to say that our numerous investigations on the interior structure of the earth, and the laws of its development, have shown, that long before man came into the world, many great and destructive changes had taken place, in which whole species, indeed, whole races, of animals, perished; that in those times also many animals swallowed one another, and, indeed, in the bones of the earliest creatures distinct marks of disease have been traced. Such are the clear proofs we possess that suffering, destruction, sickness, and death are older than the fall of man.”†

The existence of “suffering, destruction, sickness, and death,” so far as concerns animals inferior to man, ought not then to be attributed to the curse pronounced upon Adam.

The conclusion having been arrived at, that physical death existed as a universal law before the creation of man, the next question manifestly is,—Was man as to his physical constitution formed in accordance with the same law, or was he created exempt from it, and immortal? It is submitted, as a matter beyond all reasonable doubt, that man, as well as the inferior animals, was created subject to the law of

* The Testimony of the Rocks, p. 75.

† The Soul in Nature, by H. C. Oersted, p. 183.

physical death; and for the following reasons:—First, because, regarding the progressive course of creation, it is more reasonable and but according to analogy, and also more in accordance with that unity of design which must pervade all God's works, to conclude, that a law which prevailed without exception, commencing with the lowest type of organic or inorganic existence up to man, should include and apply to man; than to hold that he alone was exempt from its operation—a solitary exception to the universal rule. Secondly, because, as man's physical structure coincides in many essential particulars with the functional organisation of many pre-Adamite animals, he must have been liable to the like accidents and subject to the like laws of organic existence which prevailed in regard to inferior animals; unless his physical constitution before the fall essentially differed from what it was after the fall. It may, no doubt, be contended that, a change in man's physical nature took place as the immediate consequence of Adam's transgression, and that man's animal constitution being exempt from decay before the fall, became subject to death immediately after. It therefore becomes necessary to enquire whether any warrant exists for the assertion, that such a change did take place;—a change which implies that man was at first physically constituted so as to be altogether independent of the conditions which universally prevailed in respect of organic life, and had been placed above the several natural laws which governed the material world—a change which, if it took place, would have been equivalent to a new creation. It will be found that there is no warrant for the assertion, and that while it leads to manifest difficulties, it is also opposed to the reasonable interpretation of the Mosaic narrative.

If such a change in man's physical constitution did take place; in other words, if man, before the fall, was created physically immortal, he must have been especially exempted from the then existing laws of decay and death which, as

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previously shewn, affected all other organic and inorganic existence. Man would have possessed a physical immortality in the presence of constant change arising from the destructive energy of the elements, the consumption of food, and the various other operations of nature constantly in force around and about him. This would be contrary to all analogy. The alternative presented is either to conclude that, before the fall, all created existence was free from disease, destruction, and death, and that these several evils were the result of the curse pronounced upon Adam as the penalty for sin, and were signified and included in the "death" announced as the punishment; or, to believe that physical death having always formed part of God's original plan in creation, man was subject to it, *before* as well as after the fall, and seek to discover some other signification as the true one, for that penalty of "death" which was announced. It is necessary to adopt either alternative, and there can be little difficulty in the choice.

It must be borne in mind that, if any such change as is alleged, took place as the consequence of the fall, it must have been a *physical* and not *alone* a *moral* one; or at all events, a change including both—an alteration from a physical organisation capable of enjoying a terrestrial immortality, to one unfitted for its enjoyment, such as that which man now possesses, in which the seeds of decay and death are present from his birth. The idea of any change in God's design in creation, (and this, in fact, is what the objection amounts to,) must be rejected as altogether inconsistent with the attributes of the infinitely wise God. When God's infinite knowledge, wisdom, and power, are regarded, it is difficult to admit the possibility of any alteration taking place in the constitution of his creatures, on account of any external accident or event. It is derogatory to the attributes of Deity to contemplate a radical change in that which, He, with perfect knowledge of future events, formed at first. How can it be alleged that, that Deity, who, at

the moment his creative fiat issued, had before his view the infinite future; how can it be alleged that He created man physically immortal, but the fall having taken place—an event necessarily present to his mind from the first, for the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world, proves that the scheme of salvation was predestined and planned from eternity—that He thereupon altered man's constitution, so as to be subject to physical death! Such an allegation would involve something very like the assertion, that God was ignorant that man's fall would have taken place; that He had not provided in his original plan for such an event; that He had not ordained for his people an eternal life of glory *in his presence*, but, at the first, had intended that man should alone enjoy an earthly immortality; that redemption was an afterthought—a mode devised to rescue man from the unprovided for, consequences of sin; that Satan was successful in his efforts to overthrow God's first design, and original purpose; and that, in consequence of the success which attended the temptation, a second place was originated, whereby the results of that triumph were in a measure obviated. Perish the thought! Surely it is much more in accordance with correct notions of the Divine nature to believe that God, knowing all things, foreseeing the fall as a necessary step in the grand purpose of bringing many sons to glory through the redemption and sacrifice of Christ, created man mortal as to his physical constitution, in accordance with that universal law of decay and death which prevailed in regard to all pre-existing life; and that, the intimation given to Adam that in the day he should eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he should surely die, had reference—not to man's animal nature, (in respect of which it could have no meaning, according to the facts already commented upon,) but to that spiritual nature or soul, which, as the seat of moral sense, would properly be liable to punishment in case of disobedience of the express commands of its Creator. Is it not, then, more

probable that God, even before this earth was formed, having in view that New Heavens and New Earth in which righteousness shall for ever dwell, destined this world as a transitory home, rather than as a perpetual dwelling place; and that the scheme of redemption, though for the first time communicated after the fall, formed a prominent part of God's original design in creation?

To put the question in a somewhat different point of view: If, according to the inspired record, physical death was announced as the punishment to follow transgression, as is generally supposed, it is not too much to conclude, that *but* for Adam's disobedience, man would have enjoyed a physical immortality; yet, this conclusion involves difficulties so serious as to secure its rejection. That, man should have been physically immortal, surrounded by animal existences created subject to death, and in the midst of a world where the destructive agencies of nature were ever at work, is more than improbable. Reasons have been already brought forward to shew that such would have been contrary to the course of nature, and to the plainest analogy; but there is a further consideration, which ought not to be overlooked. As the earth was constituted, and according to the laws of the material universe which have ever prevailed, man's preservation could alone have been secured by the continued exercise of God's miraculous power exerted in his behalf. Such special interference might, no doubt, be possible. God *could* so have provided, but it is highly improbable that He ever intended to do so, or that man was designed to enjoy a physical immortality in the midst of mortality. It is contrary to every principle of interpretation, to adopt a construction which would render the continued exercise of miraculous power, a necessity. Hitchcock, in his work already referred to, remarks: * "Mortal and immortal natures could not exist in the same natural constitution, nor could a condition adapted to undying creatures be

* The Religion of Geology, p. 96.

changed into a state of decay and death, without an entirely new creation. Death, therefore, entered into the original plan of the world in the Divine mind, and was endured by the animals and plants that lived anterior to man." In another place he adds:* "It is not as easy to see how, by any natural law, man could have been proof against mechanical violence and chemical agencies; there, we must admit, miraculous protection, or a self-restoring power more wonderful than that possessed by the polypi."

Chalmers observes: "It is remarkable that God is sparing of miracles, and seems to prefer the ordinary processes of nature, if equally effectual for the accomplishment of his purposes. In short, He dispenses with miracles when these are not requisite for the fulfilment of his ends."†

It is essential, however, to examine the inspired record, and ascertain whether the narrative itself confirms or contradicts the assertion, that physical death has ever existed as the universal law of Nature, affecting man as well as other animals. If the ordinary creed be true, that physical death entered into the world immediately upon Adam's fall, and that a great change took place in man's physical organization as the consequence, it is certainly remarkable that a change so great, whether it affected mankind alone, or embraced the entire course of nature—a change equivalent to a new creation—should not in any way be noticed in the inspired narrative. This is a fact deserving of consideration, for the absence of any reference to so important an event, as such a change would be, is a strong argument against the correctness of the common opinion. Not only is no reference made to such a change, but positive evidence is supplied in the narrative itself, that *such* a change did not, in fact, take place.

So early in the creation as the third day, the earth, it is stated, "brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his

* The Religion of Geology, p. 88.

† Daily Scripture Readings, vol. 1, p. 10.

kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind." On the fifth day, "God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind:" and God blessed them, saying: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth." In the sixth day, God "made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind;" and then, having formed man, He blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth," and unto them He gave "every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed," to be for meat, "and to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life," God gave "every green herb for meat." It is further stated that "there was not a man to till the ground;" that, in the garden, grew "every tree that was good for food," and that "the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it, and to keep it," with a permission to freely eat of every tree except the "tree of the knowledge, of good and evil." It is further to be noticed, that God regulated the seasons and divisions of time in the fourth day. Spring time and autumn, seed time and harvest, were then instituted.

It thus appears that, the several laws of the vegetable and animal kingdom were ordained by God antecedent to the fall; and what does the fact intimate? In the institution of seasons; in the statement that there was no man to cultivate the ground; in the direction to Adam, to till and to dress the garden of Eden; in the fact that the herbs yielded seed, and the trees yielded fruit after their kind, and that they were given as meat to man; in these several particulars is afforded the most explicit evidence that the law of decay and death was then in force, in relation to the vegetable kingdom. It is not denied that subsequent to the

fall, the toil and labour of cultivation was increased, and the ground brought forth its fruit less spontaneously than before; but this result might well be attained without recourse to a change in the physical and organic nature of things, by laws, similar to those according to which God, in his providence, at the present day, may render one season more or less productive than another. The change which the ordinary opinion demands, is a change which must have struck at the root of the then existing laws of nature, and which must have converted that which before was free from decay, into that which is subject to corruption. With such a change the language of Scripture is quite irreconcilable. Then, as regards the animal kingdom, including the human race, the language is equally explicit, and the inference equally strong. Previous to the fall, the command was given to Adam and Eve—be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it. This direction was given to man in common with other animals, and it is consequently impossible to deny that God from the first intended a successive procreation of the human family, just as he had determined a succession of race, in regard to the inferior animals. Now to adopt the words of Hitchcock: “A system of death is certainly a necessary counterpart to a system of reproduction, and hence, where we know the one to exist, the assumption is very strong that the other exists also.”* In other words, and with regard to man; succession of race by means of re-production, is inconsistent with the enjoyment by man, as such, of immortality in the same state of existence.

In connection with this observation, the answer given by Christ to the Sadducees is worthy of notice:—“They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry or are given in marriage; neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels.”† In the state of existence—the present one—

* The Religion of Geology p. 80.

† Luke, xx. 35-6.

in which marriage was instituted, death was present as a necessary law ; but in that state—the future one—in which life shall be eternal—that is, for those who shall be accounted worthy to obtain “that world”—in it, there shall be no reproduction, for they neither marry, nor are they given in marriage. Immortality, therefore, which shall be enjoyed in the latter state of existence, is impossible, according to the nature of things, in the former—that is to say, the present state—in which marriage was, from the beginning, instituted.

Again, if man had been created to enjoy immortality upon earth, and *had not* fallen, further difficulties suggest themselves in connection with the command to increase and multiply—difficulties not perhaps insuperable, but at all events, serious and weighty. Suppose the fall had not taken place, it is not unreasonable to conclude that, mankind, in obedience to the command, would have been equally prolific, if not more so, than it has been. If this had been so, and that every one born of woman from the birth of Cain down to the present day, had continued to live; together with all those, probably a far greater number, who, in the course of nature, would have been born into the world as the issue of those who have died, the number of persons existing at one and the same time would exceed all conception. But this is not all ; the mind must contemplate, if it can, a still further and infinite increase during the progress of eternity ; for each would enjoy, according to the allegation, everlasting life on earth. This earth, finite in extent, must, under the circumstances, have either already failed, or, in course of time, must fail in *extent*, to contain the number ; and although here again the believer in man's physical immortality before the fall will, no doubt, have recourse to the miraculous power of God, by means of which the area of the world might be constantly enlarged as occasion required, it is submitted that, such an answer is not a fair or legitimate mode of meeting the difficulty.

Again, the *support* of so vast and innumerable a multitude presents a further ground of difficulty. The produce of the earth was expressly given to man for *subsistence*, and that, prior to the fall. Man's support was consequently, in some measure at all events, dependent upon the consumption of food. If, then, the human race was dependent in any, the smallest degree, upon the produce of the earth, the supply must in time have proved inadequate, even though the entire world formed one vast garden and brought forth fruit spontaneously, unless recourse is again had to miraculous interference.

There certainly is one method whereby the difficulties suggested might be got rid of without recourse to the constant exercise of miraculous power, and that is, by alleging that, if the fall had not taken place, God would have imposed a limit upon the productive energy of mankind, whereby the numbers of the human race would have been curtailed. There is no authority, however, to adopt this mode of escape from the difficulty, nor is it one which commends itself to the judgment. It would plainly be in derogation of the command,—“be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth;” but even if this mode of evading the difficulty was justifiable, the increase of the race, however slow that increase might be, would attain, in the progress of eternity, a number equally infinite; and the power of increase should be altogether stayed, and man should cease to be obedient to the law of his creation, before a limit could be determined.

There are two passages in the inspired record which may be said to suggest the idea of a change in the constitution of nature, as the result of man's disobedience and fall. God, addressing Adam, said, “cursed is the ground for thy sake; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.”* But this language

* Gen. iii. 17, 18, 19.

does not justify the assertion that a change took place in the *laws of nature*, such as is alleged. The language intimates that the earth should produce less abundantly than before, and that the labour of man in cultivation should be increased, but there is no reference to any change in the course of production, or in the organic constitution of the vegetable kingdom. The curse pronounced was a punishment *upon* man, —cursed is the ground for thy sake; for from thenceforth shalt thou eat bread “in the sweat of thy face.”

The other passage alluded to, is that in which God is represented as cursing the serpent—“Because thou hast done this, thou are cursed above all cattle; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.”* It is unnecessary to dwell on the difficulties which suggest themselves, if it be insisted that the language in the narrative must be understood in a literal sense. So far as the reptiles now known as serpents are concerned, they certainly do not now feed upon dust, but are carnivorous in their habits; nor do they appear to enjoy an existence more wretched than that of other cattle after their kind. It is enough, however, to remember that if a change took place in the physical constitution of serpents, the change was confined to serpents alone, and did not extend to the course of nature or apply to other members of the animal kingdom. God may, perhaps, have visited upon that particular animal, the form of which Satan assumed when he succeeded in working man’s ruin and gratifying his own malevolence, a punishment which affected its physical organization. If such was the case, it was manifestly an exceptional change specially calculated to mark God’s displeasure. If the change applied to the animal kingdom without exception, the punishment inflicted upon the serpent would lose that distinctive and special character which the narrative requires should apply to the serpent alone. In fact the language

* Gen. iii. 14.

rather excludes the idea that, other animals were included in God's displeasure. It is unnecessary to offer any conjecture upon the subject; for, admitting, to the fullest extent, that serpents suffered in the manner stated, although it is far from certain that the "serpent" referred to, belonged to the class of reptiles now recognized as such, the fact would be quite insufficient to effect the conclusion already arrived at, namely—that temporal death existed as a law, subject to which the vegetable and animal kingdom, including in the latter man himself, were constituted.

It is then submitted that the ordinary opinion, that when man transgressed a great change took place in the *laws* of creation as the consequence of his fall, and that physical death was thereupon introduced into the world as a new law of nature, has been fully disposed of; and with it the doctrine that had man not fallen, the human race would have enjoyed immortality, and have continued exempt from physical death.

Other explanations have been suggested by those who, finding it impossible to reject the evidence in favour of the existence of physical death in the world before the fall, have endeavoured either to prove man an exception to the general rule, or to reduce the significance of the "curse" from the fact of death then for the first time incurred—an opinion they feel forced to abandon—to the mere *mode of dying*. All such theories, however, more or less, rest upon the doctrine of miraculous interference exerted in man's behalf, so as to account for his immunity from the laws of nature in force around him. Thus it has been maintained, that, "in the state of pristine purity, the entire view of the case leads us to believe that, the bodily constitution of man was exempted from the law of progress towards dissolution which belonged to the inferior animals. It must have been maintained in that distinguished peculiarity, by means to us unknown: and it would seem probable that, had not man fallen by transgression, he and each of his posterity would, after faithfully sustaining an individual

probation, have passed through a change without dying, and have been exalted to a more perfect state of existence.”*

The above statement avowedly asserts the physical immortality of man before the fall, and his immunity from temporal death; yet Dr. Smith admits that man would have passed to a more perfect state, “through a change,” as he states, “without dying.” But what is this change, if it be not, as it is in reality, physical death? In other words, then, man’s spiritual entity, the subject of immortality, would have passed to a more perfect state, the animal body being changed for one more suited to the new conditions of the soul’s being. The objection, therefore, to which the hypothesis of Dr. Smith is open is simply this, that, not only are the means by which “the bodily constitution of man was exempted from the law of progress towards dissolution” *unknown*,—that would be no great objection—but the means must have been *contrary* to all the laws of creation as they are known to have existed, and could only be accounted for by the constant exercise of miraculous power. The statement likewise involves an inconsistency; for while it asserts man’s immortality *as* created, it speaks of a “change,” which is just what death effects, when applied to man’s complex nature—disuniting the physical body, animal life, and soul.

Admittedly, there would have been a change, to a more exalted state of existence, after man had fulfilled his duty upon earth. This is the opinion contended for in these pages; but the change, would not have extended to the translation of the animal organism from the one sphere of existence to the other. The soul, would have been transferred from one kind of body to another kind of body; the body would not have changed, though there would have been a change of body. Man, having used that body which had been framed with special

* *Scripture and Geology*, 3rd Edit., p. 291, by Dr. J. P. Smith.

reference to the laws and accidents of *this* state, would, on his transfer to a higher state, have, so to speak, left it behind—cast off in death, as an old and faded garment. It is plain that the change must be a change *of* the body, and not merely a change *in* the body. It must be a change, from an organization adapted to a state in which marriage was instituted, to one suited for that more exalted and perfect state, in which there shall be no distinction of sex, neither marrying or giving in marriage. The change must of necessity be one, which shall terminate the first or original constitution; and consequently man, *quoad* his animal body, could not have been created free from change, or immortal. Such a change cannot be conceived except on the basis of a total dissolution of the one—or “animal” body, and the creation of a distinct one—or “spiritual” body. “There is an animal body, and there is a spiritual body.”* In other words, that which is of the earth—earthy, must be cast away, before the soul can be clothed with its house which is from heaven.

Again, it has been said, by Jeremy Taylor:—“That death, therefore, which God threatened to Adam, and which passed upon his posterity, is not the going out of this world, but the manner of going. If he had stayed in innocence, he should have gone placidly and fairly, without vexatious and afflictive circumstances; he should not have died by sickness, defect, misfortune, or unwillingness.” The view advanced in the foregoing statement, admits that Adam was created subject to physical death before the fall, but limits the effect of the curse, *alone* to the circumstances which should thenceforth attend man’s removal. No doubt many of the ills that flesh is heir to, owe their origin to the fall; but they are ills accruing by virtue of laws previously existing, and not by virtue of laws then for the first time established. In regard to physical death, that

* 1 Cor. xv. 44. The word rendered “natural” in the authorised version, more correctly signifies “animal.”

fear which has kept mankind "all their lifetime subject to bondage" accrued as a direct result of sin; but while it is true that the circumstances attending death have been aggravated by the fall, it can scarcely be contended that the *circumstances* attending man's removal by death from one state to another, formed the full, and emphatic purport of the penalty announced for transgression. Must not the declaration made to Adam—"thou shalt surely die," have conveyed a more express and serious significance, than that, *that* physical death, with which he was well acquainted from the fact of its presence around and about him, should be attended with "afflictive circumstances?" and, may it not also be reasonably inferred that, "if the whole state or condition of misery, sorrow, and whatever is afflictive in nature," formed the essential character of man's punishment, the result of the curse having been removed by Christ's atonement, there should have been also, so far at all events as his people are concerned, a removal of the evils mentioned?

The difficulty, then, has been to explain how "death" always existed in the world as a law, subject to which man was created, while "death" was announced as the consequence of man's disobedience: and yet, the true explanation, as has been shewn, is extremely simple. It is undoubted that man was created as an animal, possessing vital powers and functions similar to those of other animals, although distinguished by the gift of a spiritual entity, or soul, which God conferred upon him alone. Each is perfectly distinct and separate—the "psyché" and the "pneuma;" and so far from having a necessary connection, the present state of being is unquestionably unsuited for the full development of the two, in the one person. The law of the spirit of life, when communicated to man, maintains a constant warfare with the normal tendencies of the natural man, and this warfare alone ceases when the pneuma, the true spiritual being, having been regenerated, ultimately becomes free from the body of death. The former—the animal soul—was

created subject to vanity, and to temporal or physical death; the latter was dependent for life upon God's favor, and was that to which God's commandment was addressed; *it* became obnoxious to the punishment incurred by disobedience, and thus while the animal constitution of man continued liable to decay and dissolution, as it ever had been, so upon the fall, that nobler part of man, that which is essentially *the man*—in regard to his future being—the *pneuma*, became subject also to DEATH. The curse has been removed from those who are saved by grace,—from those who are born again,—they shall receive the gift of eternal life; while those who reject Him who is essentially the life of the world,—Him who is “a life-giving spirit”^{*} continue obnoxious to the curse, in their case unremoved, and at the judgment will receive the full consequence and penalty of sin, everlasting condemnation to death. There can be no escape from the conclusion contended for, if “death” is understood in its ordinary signification of *ceasing to exist*. And why should it not be so? When death is applied to man in his complex being as he now exists, “death” is equivalent to the dissolution of the whole being into its distinct entities. When applied, however, to a *simple* entity, such as the soul, it can alone signify the ceasing of that entity to be what it was before death accrued. When applied to the animal life, no one doubts its effect to be the termination of animal life, and so, too, when spoken of in connection with the soul, it can alone signify the termination of the soul's being—the ceasing to exist of the “*pneuma*.”

The explanation thus afforded, offers a plain and easy solution for many difficulties. No exception on man's behalf to the universal law instituted by God in creation, is required. The explanation is in conformity with that unity of design which, according to analogy and reason, must pervade creation. It requires no radical change to have taken place in

* 1 Cor. xv. 45. *Vide* Alf. G.T. in. lo.

the laws and course of nature on the occasion of the fall—a change which would be inconsistent with the immutability of God's original plan, and one which is altogether unnoticed in the inspired narrative. On the other hand, the explanation is enforced by the express language of the narrative itself. It accords with God's direction to the parents of the race to be fruitful and multiply, and does not render necessary recourse to the continued exercise of miraculous power, as the sole means whereby escape can be had from serious difficulty. Man, having enjoyed his appointed existence on earth, would have thrown off his mortal body, and at once assumed his spiritual body. Free from sin, and the more painful results of the tendency to decay and death, and, above all, free from the fear of judgment, man would have left his earthly tabernacle with joy, and have passed to a more intimate intercourse with his Creator and God. This is a view, glorious in its circumstances and results—an explanation simple, consistent, and reasonable.

There are, however, other considerations suggested directly by Scripture which appear to place the matter beyond all reasonable doubt. Man was created a moral and intelligent being. Though sinless before the fall, man's nature had, nevertheless, a capacity for sinning; for he was possessed of a free will. The moment God gave the commandment that, the fruit of a certain tree should not be partaken of, then immediately a duty arose on man's part, the neglect of which was sin—the violation of which, involved the penalty of transgression. Where there is no law, there can be no sin. The command was addressed to man's moral nature, that part of his being which was capable of comprehending, and which recognised the obligation to obedience. The sanction of the law must, consequently, have been one which would affect, not the animal life, but the soul; the penalty must have had special reference to that possession which distinguished him from inferior animals, and not to that which was, in common with them,

ever subject to death. It is reasonable, therefore, to conclude that the "death" which was announced as the penalty, was the death of man's soul.*

Again, let it be remembered, that Adam, before the fall, had present to his view on every side the traces of physical death. When, then, God announced, that in the event of disobedience, he should surely die; it is but reasonable to conclude that Adam anticipated as a punishment a far more serious death than that, which he must have recognised as a general law of creation. If the penalty, however, extended to that spiritual entity which Adam was conscious that he possessed; if he understood, not only that his animal nature was subject to dissolution, but, that his soul also would become subject to death; then he could recognise the awful consequences of sin, and estimate the abhorrence with which the Deity must regard transgression. Nor should the forcible language in which the punishment is announced, be disregarded. There appears a special significance in the language,—“dying thou shalt surely die;”—as if a twofold death was pointed to—as if God had declared that, in the day man should eat of the forbidden fruit, not only should the prevailing law of death affect his animal life, but that he should also experience a punishment, the greatest which God could, consistently with his attributes, impose—namely, the death of that soul which had been formed capable of a never-ending existence in communion with its Creator.

The language is deserving of observation. It seems to indicate a fact already existing, and a penalty in certain events to be incurred. “Dying”—here is the fact, for man as an

* *Vide* note of Dean Alford, on 1 Cor. xv. 46, where he quotes the following remarks of Meyer with approval:—“Since the body of Adam is thus characterised as a psychical (animal) body, as ver. 45, and animal organism involves *mortality* (ver. 44), it is clear that Paul treats of Adam *not as created exempt from death*: in strict accordance with Gen. ii. 7; iii. 19.” Meyer, no doubt, adds—“Nor does this militate against his teaching that death came into the world through sin.—Rom. v. 12.”

animal was formed from the dust, and unto the dust he must return. "Thou shalt surely die"—here is the penalty in the event of disobedience. The peculiar significance of the statement is lost, if the simple fact of physical death is regarded as the full measure of the curse.

But there are intimations in the inspired word more distinct, if possible, than those already noticed. In the banishment of Adam and Eve from the garden is presented a striking instance of God's mercy, and a powerful argument in favour of the opinion insisted on. In the second chapter of Genesis and ninth verse, it is stated, that, "out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." And God addressed Adam and said, "of every tree of the garden thou mayst freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." This was before the fall: but that event having taken place, the Lord God said, "Behold man is become one of us to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever,"—man is sent forth "to till the ground from whence he was taken;" and to prevent his return, cherubims were placed at the east of the garden, "and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

It is manifest from the narrative that no prohibition was in the *first* instance imposed upon Adam, except as regards the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Of every tree man might freely eat, except the one tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The permission accorded would plainly have justified Adam in partaking of the tree of life; but immediately upon the fall having taken place, immediately upon the reception of that fatal knowledge of evil which worked man's ruin, then, and not till then, did God take steps to remove man from the garden, where the tree of life is

represented to have been placed. And what was the manifest signification and purpose of this precaution? Scripture itself replies: "lest he should put forth his hand," and under the altered circumstances of his moral nature, "take also of the tree of life and eat and live for ever;"—therefore it was that God expelled man from Eden, and a manifestation of the Divine presence guarded the way of the tree of life. Now the entire course of reasoning, already dwelt on, precludes the belief that, the immortality which man might have secured by partaking of the tree of life, could have been an earthly immortality. It must have been eternal existence for the soul, which thus might have been obtained; but in order to prevent the immortality of a corrupt spiritual entity, man was removed *after* the fall, from the source of life. If Adam, at the first, had taken of the tree of life, his soul would, indeed, have become possessed of immortality, from union with the source of life. He did not do so, and having sinned and broken God's law, he was thenceforth not permitted to involve himself in further ruin, by rendering the eternal existence of a corrupt being, a matter of necessity. To Adam, while in a state of innocence, was presented, so to speak, an opportunity of securing for that spiritual entity which had been conferred upon him an indefeasible title to eternal life. On the other hand there was presented to him the penalty of disobedience. Adam under the temptation of the Evil one, choose that which appeared pleasant to the eye, and rejected the real good. He broke the command, the penalty immediately and inevitably followed; and death, as the consequence of sin (for it is declared to be its wages—its due reward), fixed itself upon that which previously had been exempt from its operation. But the tree of life still adorned Paradise, and the possibility of Adam putting forth his hand and partaking thereof, sinner as he had now become, still existed. That such was, in some sense, the fact, is manifest from the language used, "lest he put forth his hand and take also

of the tree of life and eat and live for ever." God therefore, to prevent this catastrophe, in mercy banished Adam from the garden. In this removal was displayed great and ineffable love. If the certain results which must have followed can be contemplated; if the necessary condition of human souls can be appreciated, supposing Adam had been permitted to have taken of the tree of life, and to have received its life-giving virtues after he had become corrupt; it is impossible not to recognise God's infinite grace in the course adopted, whereby the necessity of an eternal existence of spiritual beings at enmity with God, was prevented. By reason of man's removal from Eden, whereby the tree of life was placed beyond his reach, the terrible consequences were prevented. Yet it is said, that man's soul was created immortal; and it is alleged that the very catastrophe, to prevent which Adam was expelled from Paradise, followed notwithstanding. If redemption had not been provided, the destiny of all souls could *then* alone have been a perpetual existence in torment; and, notwithstanding the redemption which has been effected, never-ending wretchedness must be the end of all who shall not be saved. This, the very result which the ordinary dogma maintains, was, it is confidently believed, mercifully prevented by the removal of Adam from the garden, thereby rendering it impossible that man could acquire immortality, until born again of incorruptible seed through the Spirit.

Has it been sufficiently considered by those who hold the ordinary creed, that, the eternal existence of souls at enmity with God, involves an eternal existence in rebellion and opposition to the Divine Creator; an eternal struggle against his authority; an eternal existence in blasphemy and sin?* Such, however, is the necessary conclusion, if it

* "I saw that the current orthodoxy made Satan eternal conqueror over Christ. In vain does the Son of God come from heaven and take human flesh and die on the cross. In spite of Him, the Devil carries off to hell the vast majority of mankind, in whom not misery only, but sin is triumphant for ever and ever."—Newman, *Phases of Faith*, p. 78.

be held that the soul has been created essentially immortal ; unless, indeed, there be a final restitution of the ungodly to the favour of the Supreme Being, for which there appears no sufficient warrant in Scripture.

Is it not the privilege of the Christian to look forward to the time when all things shall be subjected to the Father, that God may be all in all ? and shall there not be a final triumph over all enemies, over all that is contrary to the Divine Will, and in opposition to the Divine nature ? Can this consummation be said to have been secured, while vast multitudes of the human race ever continue in active rebellion against and hostility to God ? If it be legitimate to look forward to a final triumph over all evil, and if there shall be no restitution of the lost to God's favour, the unredeemed cannot for ever continue to exist in torment.

When the fall was an accomplished fact, God, in his wisdom and mercy, removed from man the source of immortality, figured by the " tree of Life." He thereby displayed his infinite mercy in preserving the soul from an immortality of endless woe ; but further, He provided that, that eternal life which man in the garden of Eden had the privilege to secure, and which, upon his expulsion, existed but as an object of his desire, should in due time be realized as the free gift of God, purchased by the atonement of his Son, and bestowed according to His sovereign grace.

The nature and institution of sacrifice *after* the Fall affords further testimony to the truth contended for. Sacrifice was both a type and a symbol : as a type it foreshadowed the one great sacrifice perfected once for all upon Calvary ; as a symbol it published the truth, that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. The first recorded sacrifice teaches an important lesson. Cain's sacrifice to God was rejected, though by the act itself he testified to God's sovereignty and his right to worship. But Abel's was accepted, and why ?

Observe the relative nature of each, and in what respect the latter differed from the former. Life was offered in each case, but blood was shed in the one alone. There is a "living power" in the products of the vegetable as well as in the animal kingdom. The flowers and fruits of the field perished upon Cain's altar, but no blood was shed; and the acceptance of the one offering and the rejection of the other depended upon this fact, namely—that in the blood of the victim was signified the necessity of an atonement for forfeited life, while without the blood, there could have been no fit expression of the necessity which existed to provide a substitute for the soul. In the blood of the victim, reference is made to the necessary substitute of life for life, to effect and secure redemption. The blood, as distinct from the body of the victim, was the typical substitutional offering for the soul's redemption, rendered necessary by *its* death as the consequence of Adam's disobedience. In the institution of the Passover the blood of the lamb was sprinkled upon the door posts or lintel; and, with regard to blood, it is written—"For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it (the blood) to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your *souls*: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."* Hence it is plain that, the truth intimated was, that life should be sacrificed before the soul could be redeemed to life, or rescued from the consequence of the fall. That consequence must necessarily have been the loss of "*the life*" to which the soul shall be redeemed by Him who laid down his life as a ransom for many. "Thus the idea was conveyed to their mind through the senses, that the desert of sin in the sight of God was the *death of the soul*. And while they stood praying in the outer court of the tabernacle, and beheld the dark volume of smoke ascending from the fire that consumed the sacrifice which was *burning in their stead*, how awful must have been

* Lev. xvii. 11.

the impression of the desert of sin, made by that dark volume of ascending smoke! The idea was distinct and deeply impressed, that God's justice was a consuming fire to sinners; and that their souls escaped only through a vicarious atonement."*

The narrative of man's creation and fall suggests so many ranges of thought, that it is difficult not to dwell upon it further; the reader will, however, probably discover for himself additional reasons for the truth of the opinion urged. It is time to bring this chapter to a close, but before doing so a short resume may not be altogether out of place. When God formed Adam and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, a moral being was created, distinct from pre-existing animals, in that, while all such were formed subject to death and destruction, man as to his soul was capable of existence independently of his physical constitution and animal life. Man's destruction was not necessarily involved in physical death, for such was a pre-existing law of nature, and affected that alone which was natural or animal, and not the spiritual entity which formed the essential part of his being. The soul was adapted to an immortal existence, but was not necessarily immortal. Thus circumstanced, Adam was placed in the garden. On the one hand was the tree of life, the only source of life-giving energy to the soul, exhibited to his view and placed within his reach, with full permission to partake of it. On the other hand, the future destiny of his soul was not left undecided; a certain punishment was announced as the result of disobedience, a law was given and a sanction proclaimed; God was dealing with the spiritual entity which dwelt in his creature—man. Life was exhibited on the one side; death on the other. Adam sinned, and the soul became subject to the curse—the wages of sin—*death*. Then it was for the first time that,

* Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation, p. 63.

that immortality, the right to possess which had been forfeited, but which in time was to be again brought to light by the Gospel, was promised and made known. The seed of the woman, it was declared, should bruise the serpent's head; and eternal life was held up to man's view—not as a necessary attribute of the soul, so that all must possess it, but as a *gift* to be conferred on those who God shall be pleased to call out of darkness into his marvelous light.

If the reader now turns from the early pages of Genesis to the close of the book of Revelation, he will find that in the heavenly Jerusalem, in the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, the "tree of life" is displayed. Is there not here a striking confirmation of the truth contended for, as well as ample testimony to the perfection of God's inspired Word? "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."* Thus, once again, those who shall have "entered the city" shall have a right to the tree of life. They are those, whose names are written in the book of the Lamb—those who are the heirs of the purchased inheritance. He, who is the true bread that came down from heaven—He, shall be the great life-giver and sustainer of the saved, throughout the endless course of time.

From the foregoing considerations, is it too much to conclude, that the penalty incurred by Adam, and through him by the human race, was the death of that "pneuma" or soul, which distinguished man from pre-existing animal creation?

Is not the conclusion consistent with the volume of God's truth, as afforded in nature? Does it not satisfy many objections and difficulties which the ordinary opinion fails to unravel? Does it not account for the various opinions found to exist among the nations of the world,

* Rev. xxii. 14.

in times past and at the present day, concerning a future state; originating as they do, from the impressions to be traced to the fall and the consequent loss of eternal life? Is it not confirmed by the Mosaic narrative of creation, and that great event in man's history, which has been commented upon; by the promise of redemption as announced in the Old Testament Scriptures; by the essential nature of God's attributes; by His justice, His mercy, and His love? Most assuredly, all combine to force upon man's acceptance the truth, that the death of the soul is in God's sight the desert of sin, and that he never could have designed an endless existence in misery, as the "wages" to be received by the vast majority of a race which owes existence to his sovereign will.

It remains to establish, from the fuller light of Gospel truth, that the punishment of the ungodly will, *after* the judgment, eventuate in their utter destruction—a task for which the way has been now prepared by the removal of those misconceptions which so commonly prevail, and which have exercised so great an influence in favour of the popular doctrine. The hope is indulged that the candid inquirer after truth, has discovered from the perusal of the foregoing pages, that the dogma which he has been accustomed to regard as a truth, to be received without question, is not so certainly true as he once considered; and if it shall appear that, the spirit and language of the Christian revelation, are not only consistent with, but confirm and establish what has been urged, it will then only remain for the reader to give a hearty and thankful assent to the truth contended for—that as regards the lost soul, the wages of its sin, is its eternal death.

CHAPTER VI.

SCRIPTURAL ASPECT OF THE ENQUIRY—CONSIDERATION OF THE GROUNDS RELIED ON IN SUPPORT OF THE ETERNAL EXISTENCE IN TORMENT OF THE LOST.

THE everlasting existence of the soul in torment, firmly as the doctrine is held by many, will be found to rest upon very inadequate grounds, if only the language of Scripture is carefully considered, and its general tenor regarded with a view to establish harmony throughout. "Search the Scripture," is the rule which all who are anxious to ascertain the truth, and who admit the Bible to be the Word of God, are bound to adopt; and it is therefore to the Scriptures, and more especially to the New Testament, as containing fuller and clearer declarations of the Divine purpose, that recourse must now be had.

It is proposed, then, to examine the several passages upon which the popular dogma is said to rest; and having investigated their import and value, to call attention to the plain declarations of God's Word, and the consistent testimony rendered in favour of the opinion insisted on in these pages. It will be subsequently pointed out with what force the latter presses upon the judgment when brought to bear upon many important questions connected with Divine truth.

It will be found that, the language of Scripture does not require, and much less does not establish, the everlasting existence of the lost in torment, *unless* it be assumed that the soul has been created naturally immortal. If the reader takes his stand upon the assumption that, the soul has been

so *created* by God, that he cannot destroy it at any time without a change in the law of its being; or, in other words, that the soul is naturally immortal, then, beyond all doubt, the language of Scripture can alone be regarded as announcing a state of torment hereafter—a state in which the soul must ever pass its necessary existence. It is a mistake, however, to suppose that such a conclusion can be arrived at by virtue of what Scripture *alone* has declared; on the contrary, the conclusion has been come to, because Scripture has been interpreted in accordance with an opinion previously adopted upon grounds quite inadequate, and altogether insufficient to support it.

Indeed, if the soul must needs have an eternal existence, it would be quite unnecessary that Scripture should announce any particular punishment for the unredeemed. Eternal existence in hopeless absence from the Divine presence would be enough.

It is manifest, therefore, that if the soul does possess in itself a natural immortality, there is no room for further discussion. Natural religion does not, however, establish the immortality of the soul, nor do the Old Testament Scriptures assert it to be a truth. On the contrary, enough has been shewn to justify the observation, that it is impossible any *created* being can possess in itself an absolute immortality, consistent with the reservation to the Deity of his complete and absolute sovereignty. Of Christ alone it can be asserted, by reason of his Godhead—He alone hath immortality. The life of the saved will be eternal; they will enjoy an immortality acquired through heirship with Christ—an inheritance distinct from anything derived by man from his first parent.

Nor can it be said that, the great truths of the reality of a future state, and the certainty of punishment for the lost, in any way depend upon the fact that, man possesses by nature an entity or soul, which must for ever continue to exist. They are perfectly consistent with the fact that, the

punishment of the lost, after the final judgment, will be everlasting destruction and death. The hopes and aspirations of man, the consciousness that he possesses an entity distinct from his natural or animal life, the reality of a future state, God's plan of the creation, fall, and redemption, His moral government, his nature, and his attributes, are all adequately satisfied—nay more, are vindicated and exalted, by holding that the soul possesses no such immortality, but may receive from its Creator an inheritance of eternal life, which is the promise to those who shall be born again of incorruptible seed through the Divine Spirit.

It is admitted that the unredeemed will be punished, that there is, and ought to be, a fearful looking-for of judgment. It is admitted that, the unbeliever shall be shut out from the marriage feast of the Lamb. It is admitted that, with the lost there shall be "weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth." It is admitted that, the Wicked One, and all that offend, shall be cast into the lake of fire,—but unless the soul is naturally immortal, no expression of the kind, or declaration to the above effect, is sufficient to establish a never-ending existence in misery. It is not attempted to determine the measure of anguish denoted by the expressions just quoted,—but unless the soul is naturally immortal, the anguish need not be eternal. It is not attempted to describe the pains or torments, mental or otherwise, of those who shall be cast into the lake of fire,—but unless the soul be naturally immortal, that torment need not be everlasting. It will thus be observed, that, it is the perpetual existence of souls in a state of positive subjection to torment, which is controverted. It is the immortality of the lost which is denied to be capable of proof from Scripture. Let but the assumption that the soul was created naturally immortal—a mere speculation of the schools—be got rid of; and then the reader will be free to form his own opinion from Scripture alone, and will not be constrained to modify his views of Divine truth by the bias of mere human philo-

sophy which insensibly warps the judgment. The sentence pronounced at the last day will be irrevocable; the judgment or condemnation eternal; the death and destruction everlasting. As the chaff is burned, and the rebellious servants are taken and slain, so shall the lost utterly perish in their own corruption. But there will be no ever-continuing endurance of mental or bodily pain, no everlasting life in a state of enmity and hostility against God—a state, which is alone demanded by man for his fellow sinner, in order that his theory of the natural immortality of the soul may be complete and consistent.

Whatever, then, the truth indicated in the Word of God, the language should be carefully examined with a view to ascertain how far it fairly implies a continued *existence* in a state of punishment, so as to determine whether, there is enough to warrant the assertion that, Scripture *alone* announces the immortality of all souls, or whether, in truth, the popular dogma does not, to a greater or less extent, depend upon mere human philosophy. Attention will hereafter be more fully directed to the nature of that gift which is announced in the Gospel to sinners, and conferred upon the saved; and, in contrast therewith, to the punishment to which the unredeemed shall be subjected “He that believeth in me hath everlasting life”—“The soul that sinneth it shall die.” Why should the beautiful simplicity of the contrast so plainly set forth in the foregoing passages, between life for the soul, and death for the soul—the gift and the punishment—be marred, by adopting a dogma of belief which, contrary to the words of Scripture, makes happiness the gift, and not life; and everlasting anguish the punishment, and not death.

Before proceeding with the investigation proposed in the present chapter, it is necessary to make one or two short remarks. In the first place, it must be recollected that, it is not proposed to inquire into the condition of those who are unredeemed by the Blood of Christ, during the

period which must elapse after physical death, and before the judgment. The condition of the soul in the intermediate state, is not the subject of the present inquiry; consequently such passages in Scripture as have reference to that state, whether they refer to the saved or to the lost, do not bear upon the question at issue, which concerns alone the punishment awarded at the final judgment, to those who shall be then condemned. This observation will be subsequently found of importance.

Again, although the English version of the New Testament is remarkable for its accuracy, it is undoubted that the translation frequently fails to convey the true sense and signification. Not only is this the case, but it frequently happens that, the same expression has received two or more renderings, distinct from one another, while the original terms and language are the same; and further still, since the period when the translation was made, the signification of English terms have, in many instances, undergone a change, so that at the present day the reader cannot be certain that he correctly appreciates the sense in which they were used by even the translators themselves. The result has been that the particular question at issue is generally discussed with great inaccuracy. Pre-determined significations are given to terms which they never were intended to, and do not, imply. Popular opinion has fixed a sense upon them which accords with its own view, and fallaciously argues on premises of its own construction to the conclusion desired. The term Hell (Hades) is well known, *not* to signify the place or state to which those condemned at the judgment day shall be dismissed. The term "damnation" is unjustly adopted, when judgment only is denoted; and the "damned" are alleged to be consigned to a particular condition or state of punishment, while the language expresses that, they are but judged or condemned.

If, then, the language of Scripture is taken and regarded in the sense in which it was used, without importing philo-

sophical dogmas to aid a given construction; if the reader is content to admit that there is no *absolute necessity* to deem the soul naturally immortal; and if the precise question at issue—*eternal existence* in torment—is kept prominently before the mind with a view to determine whether such is, in fact, established as Divine truth; it is confidently believed that enough will be found to render it necessary to abandon the popular dogma as one unsanctioned by natural religion, reason, or revelation.

The several passages of Scripture relied on in support of the popular opinion, and which have no doubt long since suggested themselves to the reader, may be properly referred to three distinct classes. First—Those which can be shown to have reference to the intermediate state. Second—Those which refer to punishment after the judgment, but which do not themselves determine its duration. Third—Those which appear to assert the continuous existence of the lost in torment. The former class of passages clearly can have no reference to the question at issue. Those which comprise the second class, not only do not establish the eternal existence of the soul in torment, but on the contrary intimate the reverse. The result of the investigation will be found in a great measure to depend upon the true interpretation of the statements included in the third class, which are few in number, and will be found capable of an explanation different to the ordinary one, but consistent with the general tenor and positive declarations of Scripture, to which attention will be called in the next succeeding chapter.

The New Testament may be regarded as divided into the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles. The former is the record of Christ's walk, and ministry on earth; his oral teaching in metaphor and parable; the second is the narrative of the missionary labours of the disciples in preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom; while in the Epistles is unfolded "the deeper verities" of Christ's religion and doctrine. For the method of instruction adopted in the

Gospels, there are substituted in the writings of the apostles, distinct and unfigurative declarations of the Divine purpose. The nature of that kingdom which was neither appreciated nor understood during the period of Christ's sojourn on earth, was more clearly manifested to the early churches when the divine Spirit had taken of the things of Christ and shewn them to the apostles. The milk of the word preceded the strong meat. It, therefore, is but reasonable to expect from the writings of the apostles, information upon subjects such as partake rather of doctrinal than practical truth ;—such as deal with the hopes of the believer in the next, rather than his practice in this, world, far more explicit and unmistakable than that found in the Gospels.

It is but natural that, truths inculcated in parable and figure in the former, should subsequently receive a more distinct recognition and fuller exposition from those, who as divinely commissioned ambassadors of Christ, urged upon an unbelieving world the Gospel of salvation. Now, the popular opinion upon the question at issue is principally supported by reference to language occurring in the Gospels. The truth intended to be conveyed by such language, is that upon which difference of opinion exists. The language itself is that of figure and allegory, likely to be misunderstood, and open to a two-fold interpretation. The truth, as a kernel, thus enclosed, is one of great importance, and, if such as is commonly alleged, would naturally form the groundwork of many a caution, and the basis of many an exhortation in the course of the apostles' teaching. Yet what is the fact? Throughout the epistles there is not a single passage, which, if the epistles stood alone, could justify the assertion, that the lost soul shall for ever continue to exist in torment; nor is there in the narrative of the Acts of the Apostles a single example of their having ever urged salvation upon the acceptance of sinners, or a single instance of their having ever pressed upon their hearers the necessity of laying hold of eternal life, *for the reason that,*

they were commissioned to announce, on the authority of their Divine Master, a never-ending existence in torment to all who should die in their sins, without repentance towards God and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ.

It has been already remarked, that the popular opinion chiefly rests upon the language and phraseology of the Gospels. Regarding the Gospels as the record or narrative of the Lord's ministry on earth, two facts cannot fail to strike the reader,—namely, that Christ, when instructing the multitude as to the nature of his doctrine and the design of his mission, did so, not in the plain language adopted by the apostles in their writings, but in parable, or figure, or allegory—“that which exhibits one thing in words, and another in meaning”^{*}—and further, that the truths thus communicated failed to be understood, not alone by the multitudes, but even by his most intimate disciples—“All these things spake Jesus unto the multitudes in parables, and without a parable spake he not unto them.”[†] To his disciples, indeed, when they were alone, He expounded all things, and expressly stated, that to them “it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to others in parables, that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.” (*Luke*, viii. 10.) Notwithstanding, however, the discourses held with the disciples in the hours of their retirement, it is manifest, that even among them, ignorance and misapprehension upon many truths prevailed. In one instance, it is stated, “they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him” (*Mark*, xix. 32); in another, “it was hid from them that they perceived it not” (*Luke*, ix. 45); and again, in another place, it is said, “they understood none of these things, and the saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.” (*Luke*, xviii. 34.) After the transfiguration, as the disciples, accompanied by their Divine Master, came down

^{*} Quintilian, Richardson's Dictionary.

[†] *Mat.* xiii. 34; *Mark*, iv. 34.

from the mountain, Jesus "charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of Man had risen from the dead;" and immediately it is added, "they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean." (*Mark*, ix. 10.) The request made on behalf of the two sons of Zebedee, also proves how mistaken were the views, entertained in regard to the nature of Christ's kingdom. Christ replied, "Ye know not what ye ask." (*Mat.* xx. 22.) The disciples thought "the kingdom of God should immediately appear." (*Luke*, xix. 11.) And those who travelled to Emmaus shortly after the resurrection of Christ, in answer to his question, "what manner of communications are these that ye have, one with another?" stated, that, they had trusted it had been he which should have redeemed Israel, and were made astonished at the statement of certain of their company who alleged he was alive.

It would thus appear that the ability of the disciples to accept and understand the truth was limited, while Christ, in bodily presence, sojourned among them upon earth. He informed them: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." (*John*, xvi. 12.) He directed their thoughts forward to the time when he would send the Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth, who was to guide them into all truth; and his parting injunction was, that they should tarry at Jerusalem until they should be endued with power from on high.

If such ignorance prevailed among the immediate disciples of the Lord, it cannot be a matter of much surprise that his language should have been misunderstood by the multitude among whom he ministered; and much greater would the liability to error be at the present day, were it not that recourse can be had to the clear light of the apostles teaching, as afforded in their epistles? It is not too much to say that until the Spirit of Truth had come, with his enlightening power, no other result could have followed the preaching of the Gospel.

It may be further remarked that the Gospels, especially those of Matthew and Mark, abound in allusions to customs, places, characters, and events, all of known import and special significance to the Jewish nation. Allegory was the common form of public instruction—almost, the language of their every-day life; and the parable which was applicable to their habit of thought, and presented a certain truth or lesson to their mind, by reason of the similitude to some well-known circumstance, habit, or event, is likely to convey, *now*, but a very inaccurate impression, and must lose its force and vigour unless the then popular notion in regard to the place, custom, or event, from which the similitude is derived, can be fully appreciated and understood. Dr. Burnett in his Treatise concerning the state of the Dead, uses the following language, which is pertinent to the present topic. “I desire leave, to add, that when our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was conversant upon earth, in the form of a servant, he spoke not in the language of a philosopher, but in that of the sons of men; and especially in that of the Jews, to whom he was chiefly sent, as has been abundantly observed by learned men in their comments on the discourses of Christ; and therefore he follows, for the most part, the received opinion and the phraseologies of his country; and in the instructions which he gave them for the promoting their piety, he willingly uses those expressions which were known to the people and to their magistrates, either from the law or the prophets, or from vulgar tradition.”*

It is desirable to bear in mind the foregoing observations; for the peculiar language made use of in the Gospels in relation to the subject under discussion, admits of an interpretation entirely consistent with the plain language of Scripture, and with the opinion contended for in this treatise. It is cer-

* Treatise Concerning the State of Departed Souls, before, at, and after the Resurrection, by Dr. Burnett, LL.D., D.D., p. 356.

tainly no small additional reason why the truth contended for, should be adopted, when it is arrived at by a course of interpretation, in accordance with what has been shewn to be the general rule adopted by Christ himself, in making known the Divine purpose and will, previous to the time when his doctrine was fully preached to the world by his disciples, enlightened by the outpouring of the Spirit upon the day of Pentecost.

The substance of the above remarks is further enforced, if regard is had to the distinctive character of the several gospels. Of the four, Matthew and Mark were written first in point of time; and the former, it is generally believed, originally in the Hebrew tongue. The gospel of St. Matthew is supposed to have been chiefly prepared for the use of Jewish converts. There are in it, more abundant references to Jewish customs, laws, and localities, than in the others, and fewer interpretations of the allusions made, are given; such being unnecessary, for the reason stated. On the other hand, the Gospel according to St. John, was written much later in point of time, at a period when the religion of Christ had been very generally published, and when a knowledge of the deeper meaning of his words and doctrines, had become desirable.

Now, it is certainly remarkable that, it is in the former—the Gospel of St. Matthew—those peculiar expressions which are so confidently relied on, as warranting the idea of continued existence subject to, either material or mental, torment, after the judgment, are found. In it principally occurs that language upon which such reliance is placed,—expressions peculiarly Hebrewistic—illustrations peculiarly Jewish in the circumstances, from which they are borrowed.

In Mark, with the exception of the ninth chapter, and in Luke, excepting the sixteenth chapter, which contains the parable of Dives and Lazarus, there is almost a total absence of that language which, found in the gospel of

St. Matthew, is altogether wanting in that according to St. John. This is more remarkable, if the importance which is attributed to the popular creed is borne in mind; * for the natural course of proceeding in making known the "deeper verities" of Christ's religion is thus reversed,—that is, provided the popular creed, is correct. When, as the doctrine of Christ's kingdom was unfolded under the guidance of the Spirit, instead of clear assertions, pointing out the truth previously presented, by way of allegory in the Gospels—if truth it be, as alleged—there is found to be nothing in the epistles, which, *standing alone*, could justify the popular opinion, it is manifest that the ordinary course in revealing truth has been reversed. The Acts of the Apostles will be searched in vain for proof of the soul's *eternal existence* in torment. The writings of the Apostles contain no such doctrine; and the prophetic allegory of the book of Revelation (in which four or five expressions occur which appear at first sight to warrant the popular dogma), will be found, upon investigation, quite insufficient to establish a doctrine of so terrible an import. The foregoing observations explain the principle, upon which expressions occurring in the Gospels should be regarded, and the mode of interpretation which should be adopted.

The word Hell, in popular estimation, has reference to that place or state in the next world, in which lost souls are condemned to undergo an eternal existence in punishment, suffering the most exquisite torment. There are two distinct terms in the original which are translated by the one English word hell—namely, Hadès and Gehenna. With the view, then, to ascertain how far those terms justify the idea conveyed by the English word hell, according to present conception, it is essential to understand the distinct meaning of each, what they were regarded to denote, and

* We have heard a clergyman state that, in his belief, the eternal existence in torment of the lost, was the *hinge and turning point of all religion*—that the whole truth of Christianity depended upon the dogma!

lastly, to inquire whether, modern views are in accordance with their proper signification.

As regards "Hadēs," there can be no question that it simply denotes the state of disembodied spirits—that condition into which all souls enter upon death, and in which they remain until the resurrection. Dean Alford, in his note upon the sixteenth chapter of Luke, says: "Hadēs—in Hebrew, Sheöl—is the abode of *all disembodied spirits* till the resurrection; not the place of torment—much less Hell as commonly rendered in the authorised version."*

The essential idea conveyed by the Hebrew term, Sheöl, and the Greek term, Hadēs, is that of silence, invisibility, forgetfulness, or rest; and, as used in Scripture, they intimate the condition in which the soul exists in the intermediate state, out of which there shall be, in the time to come, a deliverance.

Neither term is to be understood as denoting the grave or sepulchre, to which the animal body is committed,—although sometimes so used,† especially in the Old Testament,—when death, by terminating animal life, separates it from the soul. Hadēs is that state in which the soul abides in expectation of the last great trumpet to sound, and the resurrection to judgment.

A distinction has been drawn between the original ideas conveyed by the Hebrew and the Greek terms, respectively. The former, Shoël, implies, the unknown land; while the latter, "Hadēs," indicates rather, the unseen or invisible land,—that place in fact to which the language may well be applied, "the night cometh, when no man can work." The

* Trench, in his Brief Notes on the Greek of the New Testament, states:—"We have no word for the original *ᾅδης*, in its ordinary meaning, *i.e.*, the place of departed spirits. Its usual translation ('Hell') creates constant misapprehension; the same English word being put twelve times for *γίγνηται*, and ten times for *ᾅδης*."

† In 1 Cor. xv. 55, Hadēs is rendered "grave." "O grave, where is thy victory?"

distinction is not of any great importance, for the general sense is alike and may be illustrated by a few examples from Scripture. The Psalmist exclaims, "unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence." (*Psal.* xciv. 17.) And again, the "dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence." (*Psal.* cxv. 17.) In both passages the original Hebrew is rendered in the Septuagint, by the Greek term "Hadës." Again, "for in death there is no remembrance of thee; in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" (*Psal.* vi. 5.) The prophet Isaiah exclaims, "For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth." (*Is.* xxxviii. 18.) And the following also from Ecclesiastes: "For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest." (*Eccl.* ix. 10.)

In some passages the term is manifestly used simply to denote death—that is, physical death: as when Jacob, lamenting the loss of his son Joseph, says: "I will go down into the grave (Hadës) unto my son mourning." "Then shall ye bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave" (Hadës); but in others there is that distinct reference to the deliverance of the soul, which has been already noticed, when the period of redemption shall arrive. Thus in Job, "But man dieth and wasted away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep! oh, that thou wouldst hide me in the grave, that thou wouldst keep me secret, until thy wrath be past." (*Job*, xiv. 10, 12, 13.)

As regards the condition of souls in Hadës, it is also plain, from the connection in which the term occurs, that Hadës cannot necessarily denote a condition of suffering. The passage from the sixteenth Psalm, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell," is quoted by Peter as having distinct reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, who, upon the day of

his Crucifixion, entered into Paradise. "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

But while Hadës does not involve the idea of either happiness or misery, there is abundant reason to believe that in the intermediate state, while in Hadës, happiness will be enjoyed by God's people; and misery of some sort—possibly, the anticipation of coming judgment, and the knowledge that eternal life in God's presence is placed beyond their reach,—will be endured by those who depart this world rejecting Christ's salvation. The former will possess an amount of bliss which, however, falls short of that "exceeding and eternal weight of glory" which shall be finally conferred, and the latter will endure a certain fearful looking-for of judgment, until they shall be "punished with everlasting destruction." The former state in Hadës was figuratively, and, in popular language, spoken of as "Abraham's bosom," where all the "Fathers were conceived as resting in bliss,"* and to which all the blessed were supposed to be at once transferred upon death, as to a place of comfort and security. The address of Christ to the dying thief plainly intimates the fact, that happiness is enjoyed by God's people in Hadës, while the parable of Dives and Lazarus illustrates the reality, that anguish shall be endured by the impenitent and disobedient. "The beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died, and was buried, and in Hell (Hadës) he lift up his eyes, being in torments." (*Luke*, xvi. 23.) In the parable are represented the two great departments into which, it was believed, the place of departed souls in the intermediate state was divided, a state which shall be terminated when God shall judge the world, and when the full measure of his wrath shall be poured out at the period of the *second death*.

Such were, in some sort, the ideas presented to the Jew, when, in the discourses of the Lord, "Hadës" was the term

* Alford, G.T. in. lo.

employed. Christ adopted the common line of thought prevalent among his hearers; and while, on that account, it is impossible to press the language to the full extent of its strict literal signification, as if all the incidents and circumstances of the parable must receive an actual fulfilment, yet the reality of an intermediate state is thereby undoubtedly established, and the general aspect in which it was regarded, justified and approved.

It may, perhaps, be objected, that Scripture represents the souls of believers as at once entering upon the enjoyment of perfect bliss in the presence of God, and that, *for them*, no intermediate state exists. The contrary is submitted to be the case; nor is there any ground for apprehension or alarm in accepting such to be the truth, and in believing that the crown of life, the gift which God is prepared to bestow upon the soul, will not be conferred until the judgment. Then, and not till then, will the saved enter upon that complete happiness, that perfect joy which is prepared by God, for those who love him. When the Lord shall descend from heaven the dead in Christ shall rise first, and those which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with him in the clouds, and so shall they ever be with the Lord. This is that consummation for which the whole church (comprising not alone those on earth, but those also who shall have previously fallen asleep), is taught to pray, and to look forward to with patient expectancy. Christ distinctly tells his disciples, "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself." Christ speaks of his departure without his disciples, and before them, for a particular purpose—I go to prepare a place for you. When that place shall have been prepared, and the great day of his appearing shall have arrived, then He will come again and receive his people to himself. Until then,

all who fall asleep in Jesus must rest in Hadēs, having committed themselves to Him who is able to keep their souls, against that day.

It may be objected that the statements of St. Paul in the fifth chapter of second Corinthians, and the first chapter of the epistle to the Philippians, are opposed to this view. But this is not so; Paul asserts in the former that, he is willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord; and in the latter, "To live is Christ, and to die is gain;" and further: "Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." There is nothing in this language which requires the conclusion that, Paul believed he would, immediately upon his death, attain to that perfect felicity which shall be enjoyed when the "inheritance" shall be conferred. The expressions must be construed consistently with the language of Christ, when he says: "I will come again and receive you unto myself." Paul was willing to be absent from the body—and well he might. Who can fully estimate the weight of care and anxiety, distress and privation, under which Paul laboured? Truly, in this life he must have been most miserable, were it not for the assurance of that crown of life which he knew the Righteous Judge would give him at "that day." To die was gain to him, for from thenceforth he would "rest from his labour." Paul's language in the several passages referred to, should be read in connection. The day when the crown of righteousness shall be conferred, is not the day of his departure from this world. During the interval,—until the day of Christ's appearing shall arrive, the crown is reserved; and the expression, "being present with Christ," may well be understood as equivalent to resting in his care, and under his guardianship, until that day arrives.

The view advocated by Whately* and others is not so satis-

* Scripture Revelations concerning a Future State. Seventh Edition, pp. 75—100.

factory, and does not appear to accord so fully with the general tenor of Scripture, which manifestly suggests the idea of consciousness during the intermediate state. His opinion is, that the condition of the soul shall be one of sleep and unconsciousness, and accordingly, that upon temporal death, notwithstanding the period which shall elapse, there is in effect an immediate passage of the soul to judgment, and consequently, in the case of the saved, to that state of supreme beatitude prepared by God for his people, and ever to be enjoyed by them. Now, although the condition of those who depart this life is frequently described as one of sleep, it is not always so, nor is unconsciousness always implied; while, if there be consciousness, there must be perception of duration. The following passage from Burton's treatise, already referred to, may be here quoted: "The souls of the righteous may be said to be with Christ as they will be under the guardianship and protection of Christ, resting in hope of his coming, and the resurrection. For Christ being now about to expire, recommended his soul into the hands of his Father; that is, into the custody and protection of his Father; but when Christ by dying had conquered death, and so was become the Lord both of life and of death, St. Stephen, expiring, deposited his soul into the hands of Christ, who dying, cried out, 'Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit.' After the same manner the soul of Paul would be with Christ, deposited with him, and in his protection."

The belief of the soul's conscious existence in the intermediate state, was held by Justin, Irenæus, and Tertullian. The latter writes: "That region I call Abraham's Bosom, a place not of celestial height, yet higher than the infernal regions which we mentioned before, adapted to afford refreshment to the souls of the righteous, till the consummation of all things completes the fulness of their reward, in consequence of their resurrection." Origen, Lactantius, and Victorinus, who lived in the third century, expressed

similar views. The statement of two Cæsarean bishops, Andrew and Arathras, is to the same purport. "Death," they state, "is the separation of the soul and the body, but 'Hadès' is the country to us invisible, that flies from our inquiry, and hides itself from our knowledge, and that receives our souls as soon as they depart from our bodies. It is for this reason that the saints under the altar are seen to desire with impatience the consummation of the world, because they are commanded to wait till then, and to bear the delay till the death of all their brethren, that they may not, according to the divine Apostle, be made perfect before them."

So also, St. Chrysostom: "The thief, therefore, though he obtained Paradise, obtained not the kingdom of heaven, but he will be let into that, too, with all those others that are mentioned by St. Paul. In the meanwhile he has possession of Paradise, the kingdom of spiritual rest;" and so, too, Euthymius writes: "Christ, knowing the intention of the thief, promised him what appeared most desirable to him, for the thief was acquainted with Paradise by the Mosaic doctrine, and Christ promised that he should be with him in Paradise, as an earnest, that he should be with him one day in his kingdom, where he should enjoy eternal and inexpressible happiness; for none of the just as yet have had the performance of the promises, as the great Apostle of the Gentiles has taught us."

Of Christ alone can it be said that his soul was not left in Hadès; and by implication it may be affirmed that the souls of all others are left there, until having overthrown all enemies he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all. Here are the souls detained in prison—a place of safe keeping. Here are God's "hidden ones." It was here the saints abode, who appeared unto many in the holy city on the occasion of the Crucifixion. It was here the dying thief accompanied Christ. It was here that the souls of those that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held

from under the altar, cried : “ How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth,” anxiously desiring the fulfilment and completion of their joy. With what propriety, then, can passages in which reference is made to Hadēs be relied on as justifying the views commonly held regarding “ Hell.”

The following passages are those in which reference is made to Hadēs in the New Testament, and in which the term has been translated by the English word Hell :—

1. “ And thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell.” (*Matt. xi. 23, Luke, x. 15.*)

2. “ Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (*Matt. xvi. 18.*)

3. “ And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.” (*Luke, xvi. 23.*)

4. “ He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell.” (*Acts, ii. 31.*)

5. “ O death where is thy sting? O Grave—(Hadēs)—where is thy victory?” (*1 Cor. xv. 55.*)

6. “ I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death.” (*Rev. i. 18.*)

7. “ And I looked, and behold a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him.” (*Rev. vi. 8.*)

8. “ And death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them.” (*Rev. xx. 13.*)

9. “ And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is second death.” (*Rev. xx. 14.*)

It is almost unnecessary to comment upon the above passages; the simple reading of them in their respective contexts is sufficient to convince every impartial mind that they concern alone the intermediate state, and that whatever may be the condition of souls in that state, the question of eternal existence, after judgment, in a state of torment, is one which, *if true*, must be established on

testimony distinct from that supplied by passages which refer alone to Hell, or Hadēs.

A few observations may not be out of place, however, upon the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, and also upon the passages quoted from the book of Revelations; upon the former, because it is so frequently misapplied, even by those who ought to know better, and upon the latter, because they confirm and bear out the opinion contended for. On no possible principle of construction can the parable be understood in its strict literal sense. It, no doubt, represents the existence of a state of happiness and a state of wretchedness after death, as already admitted; but none can contend that, the object of the discourse embraced or concerned the condition of souls after the resurrection and final judgment. The narrative in the parable forbids such a conclusion; the rich man speaks of his brethren still living on earth, and pleads with Abraham that a revelation might be given, attested by the resurrection of one from the dead, whereby the truth might be brought before their minds in a more striking and convincing manner, than it had been by the testimony they possessed—namely, Moses and the prophets.

It is as if Christ intimated to the Jews, that, those hard and impenitent hearts, which led them to reject the witnessing of the Law and the Prophets, would fail to be touched and convinced, by the evidence about to be afforded to the reality of his Divine mission and nature, in the fact of his coming death and resurrection. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." This appears to have been the real purport of Christ's address, enforced by an illustration, distinct and powerful, for the very reason, that it coincided with popular notions upon the subject.

It is not necessary, however, for the purpose of the present inquiry, to determine what the parable does mean; it is enough to point out what it cannot apply to—the con-

dition of the lost *subsequent* to the judgment—and this is indisputable.

“I am not ignorant,” writes Burton, “that in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, the souls of the departed are soon carried, on one side into the bosom of Abraham, and on the other, into tormenting fires. But, in the same relation, Dives has a tongue and lips, and the other organs of speech, and consequently his whole body, as if he had carried it entire with him to Hell; which evidently shows that that relation is not true according to the letter, but that it is like a fable or emblem, accommodated to the use and capacity of the people, and contrived and invented to represent truth by fiction, viz.: that the soul survives after the body is extinct, and that in another life, the good will be happy, and the wicked miserable.”

Whately appears to have considered that the parable does not even intimate a state of conscious existence during the intermediate period. “If all that is here told were to be considered as a narrative of a matter of fact, which actually took place, it would be perfectly decisive”—of conscious existence. “But all allow that the narrative is a parable—that is, a fictitious tale, framed in order to teach or illustrate some doctrine; and although such a tale may chance to agree in every point with matter of fact,—events which actually took place—there is no necessity that it should. The only truth that is essential in a parable is the truth of the moral or doctrine conveyed by it. Indeed the very circumstance of the torturing flames, implies, literally the presence of the body; and therefore cannot be literally true of a state in which the soul is separate from the body.”*

The same writer refers with approval to another exposition of this parable; he says:—“It has been supposed, and I have no doubt with reason, that there is also another meaning more appropriate to the Gospel scheme, in this

* Scripture Revelations, p. 56, 59.

parable: that the rich man represents the Jews, originally God's "peculiar people," and Lazarus, the despised Gentiles, who were afterwards admitted to "sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven."

Nothing then, appears to be plainer than, that the state or condition designated by the term Hadēs, shall have a termination. The expressions, "the gates of hell" and the "keys of death and hell" are remarkable. Does not the language of Scripture, to which attention has been called in connection with Hadēs, convey the idea of a place of confinement, the gates of which shall be opened, when the period of imprisonment shall have terminated? To destroy Satan was one, at all events, of the great objects of the manifestation of Christ.* The whole human race, brought into subjection by the Father of Lies, has been, as it were, retained by his power in a vast prison house. When Satan offered to Christ, "the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them," he, no doubt, truly stated that the power thereof was his, and to whomsoever he pleased, he gave them. Like a strong man armed he maintained his dominion, and ever must have continued to do so, but that a stronger than he has come. Satan himself, his reign and power, had been doomed from the beginning; his head was bruised, and now, it is but a matter of time until the gates of death and hell shall be for ever unlocked, and he himself and his ministers for ever destroyed. Christ, triumphed over death and Satan's power. He freed those who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. He was manifested that he might DESTROY him that had the power of death. Nothing can be more explicit as to the final doom of the great enemy of mankind.

It may be asked, when shall this consummation be effected? When Christ shall appear the second time without sin offering

* "He also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil."—Heb. ii. 14.

unto salvation; and shall consume, that Wicked One with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy, with the brightness of his coming. Then, Death and Hell shall be cast into the lake of fire; all which expressions denote—if language has a meaning—the complete termination of Satan’s empire and Satan’s self. The like result awaits all that offend—the Devil, his angels, death, and hell. When the gates shall be opened, and death and hell shall have given up their dead, and all shall rise to judgment, the complete annihilation of evil out of God’s universe is at hand. A general resurrection of the just and of the unjust to judgment, has ever been a determined event in the arrangements of the Deity. Christ, by his victory, became entitled to the keys of death and hell; and at his coming, all will be liberated,—the righteous to the resurrection of life, the wicked to the resurrection of condemnation.

In the Apocalypse is intimated the course and nature of these events. At the close of the present dispensation all things will be made new—“Behold I make all things new.”* Death and Hell (Hadēs), and all whose names shall not be found written in the book of life, shall be cast into the lake of fire. This is the SECOND DEATH. Then shall be blotted out from God’s universe all evil, and Satan, who, with his ministers, has been permitted for so long a time to maintain his antagonism to the Divine sovereignty, will no longer exist, and “God shall be all in all.” The fact of Satan’s final discomfiture and utter destruction may well be supposed to be known to him—an event to which he looks with fear and trembling. He who was possessed with the spirit of an unclean devil inquired of Christ,—“Art thou come to destroy us?”†

The casting of Death, and Hell, and Satan, into the lake of fire, manifestly denotes the termination of the former, and the utter destruction of the latter. It is said that casting

* Rev. xxi. 5.

† Mark, i. 24; Luke, iv. 34.

into the lake of fire, implies a continued existence therein. No assumption can be more gratuitous, or less in accordance with the well-known effects of fire—the symbol under which the agent of destruction to be employed is denoted. The term fire, is used in Scripture in several associations, and has different imports; but, principally, it is used as the symbol of irresistible power, the effect of which nothing can withstand, and which consumes and overpowers everything submitted to its influence. It is accordingly used as a symbol of the Deity himself. “The Lord thy God is a consuming fire.”* God exhibited his presence to Moses in the burning bush.† It is stated that, Christ, at his second coming, will reveal himself in fire, “taking vengeance on them that know not God.”‡ God’s wrath is compared to fire,|| and Daniel describes a fiery stream coming forth from before the divine presence.§ The Holy Spirit, in his renovating and purifying influence, is compared with fire. “He shall baptise with the Holy Ghost and with fire.”¶ Fire is the test which shall try every man’s work. God’s angels are compared to fire—“He maketh his ministers a flame of fire;”** denoting the power and energy employed in the fulfilment of his commands. In like manner, God’s word is compared to fire: “Is not my word like as a fire?”†† and similar examples might be multiplied.

Now, when the like term, is used to denote the agency employed in the punishment of the lost, as when it is stated that the Devil, and “whosoever was not found written in the book of life,”‡‡ were cast into the lake of “fire;” it is not too much to assert that, the language is used as the most forcible mode of expressing the all-powerful and destructive nature of that agency which will overwhelm and destroy the wicked. But further, the various

* Deut. iv. 24.; Heb. xii. 29. † Ex. iii. 2. ‡ 2 Thes. i. 8.
 || Ps. xviii. § Dan. vii. 10. ¶ Matt. iii. 11; Luke, iii. 16.
 ** Ps. civ. 4; Heb. i. 7. †† Jer. xxiii. 29. ‡‡ Rev. xx. 10, 15.

illustrations afforded throughout the gospels and in the epistles, places the matter beyond all reasonable doubt. The fire which shall destroy the world shall likewise destroy the lost. "The heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men,"* and again, "the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."† Fire is here referred to as the agent of destruction adopted by God; and whether it be, in fact, material fire, or some other instrumentality symbolized thereby, the result intimated is the entire and complete destruction of all things terrestrial, as the prelude to that new heaven and that new earth wherein righteousness shall for ever dwell.

None question the meaning of such language applied to the world and the works that are therein; but the very same expressions are, if possible, in a stronger sense, applied to the end of the ungodly. The wicked are compared to those substances whose end is to be burned, and which are most easily consumed. The result to the material substance is compared to the result which must await the immaterial soul. The consequence is in each case analogous. Thus the wicked are compared to chaff. "He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."‡ "Every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."§ "Bind the tares in bundles, to burn them."|| "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."¶ None can doubt the end, as regards the chaff, the withered branch, and the tares,—they are utterly destroyed. If not annihilated, they, at all events, cease to be what they previously were,—there is no need to use an expression which calls forth a philosophical objection—but the analogy is expressly drawn to the end of the wicked:

* 2 Pet. iii. 7.

§ Matt. iii. 10.

† 2 Pet. iii. 10.

|| Matt. xiii. 30.

‡ Matt. iii. 12.

¶ John, xv. 6.

“as, therefore, the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.”*

What more fit and suitable illustration could be used to intimate the destruction of the lost. The passages just quoted do not admit the inference that, those who, at the end of this world, shall be submitted to a destructive agency, such as fire, shall continue to exist for ever, subject to its influence. The fire shall be unquenchable. Surely, the force of this expression consists in the fact that its power is irresistible; that no possibility of extinguishing it can exist; that it must consume everything submitted to its energy, escape from the consequences being beyond all hope, and the result being inevitable. The consideration of the peculiar force of such terms and expressions, is postponed for the present; but no language could be used of equal power to convey the immediate, certain, complete, and ever-enduring destruction of the lost. The illustrations would cease to be pertinent, unless similar results followed the application to the condemned soul of an agency, analogous to that fire which shall consume the chaff and tares.

The language of the apostle Paul is to the like effect: when speaking of those who fall away, and who crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, he compares them to that which beareth thorns and briars, which is nigh unto cursing, and adds, “whose end is to be burned.”† And again he asserts, that for those who sin wilfully, after they have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth alone a “certain fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.”‡ In the second chapter of the second epistle to the Thessalonians the statement is very distinct. The brethren are cautioned against being troubled or shaken in mind regarding the day of Christ being near at hand. It is explained that there must first come a falling away, and that the man of sin, the son

* Matt. xiii. 48.

† Heb. vi. 8..

‡ Heb. x. 27.

of perdition, must first be revealed. Then it is that, that Wicked One shall be revealed, of whom it is declared that the Lord shall consume him with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of his coming.* Destruction is thus the plain and distinct announcement in regard to the end of him whose coming is after the working of Satan, in them that perish.

When, then, the Devil and all things that offend shall, after the termination of this dispensation, be cast into the lake of fire, it is not too much to conclude that the period of his final extinction has come, and with him, of all who believe not; either immediately upon the announcement of the sentence, or in due time, having regard to the efficacy of the agent employed for the end determined.

The passages in which *Hades* is the term employed in the original, appear, therefore, to have no reference to the final punishment or ultimate destiny which awaits lost souls; and it further appears, that hell itself, being subjected to a fate which involves the whole earth, the present dispensation, the wicked, Satan, and all things that offend, shall have an end, when the period arrives in which old things shall pass away, and all things shall be created new.

It is necessary now to consider the signification of a distinct class of passages which have reference to the punishment of the ungodly,—passages in which the term employed in the original is likewise rendered “Hell” in the English version, and upon which considerable reliance is placed as establishing the truth of the popular opinion, that the lost eternally exist, enduring the agonies of the unquenchable fire, and the undying worm. The passages alluded to are those in which the term “Gehenna” is employed, a term which, when used, is generally associated with “unquenchable fire,” to which is added, in the passage, occurring in Mark, the further expression—“where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”†

* 2 Thes. ii. 8.

† Mark, ix. 44, 46, 48.

Now, here again, the inquirer must be on his guard not to understand "Gehenna" in a sense different to what it in fact conveyed, or to give it a meaning derived from the present state of popular ideas, rather than that which is the proper signification of the term itself. The question is, what was "Gehenna;" what were the circumstances connected therewith; what the result which reference to it, as a place of punishment, indicated? It is alone, by ascertaining the truth in answer to the foregoing inquiries, that the signification of such passages as that in Matthew can be understood—"It is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."

The passages in which "Gehenna," is the term employed, will be found in the following references. The reader can examine them for himself:—Matthew, v. 22, 29, 30; x. 28; xviii. 9; xxiii. 15; xxiii. 33. Mark, ix. 43, 45, 47. Luke, xii. 5. James, iii. 6.

It will be observed that the majority of passages occur in the gospel of Matthew, in which Hebrewistic expressions and allusions mostly abound,—a fact which, in itself, is of no small value in determining the meaning and intention of the statements, in which the term occurs.

Gehenna, as is well known, was a place south-east of Jerusalem, and derived its name from Hebrew words, signifying the valley of Hinnom, or the valley of the sons of Hinnom. In it, had formerly been practised the abominable rites of Moloch. Children were sacrificed upon the altar to propitiate the favour of the Deity—the fruit of the body was given for the sin of the soul.* In subsequent times the place came to be regarded with special abhorrence by the Jews. Into it were cast the carcasses of animals and the dead bodies of malefactors. Worms, generated by corruption, devoured the putrid mass, and the

* Micah, vi. 7.

climate was such as to render necessary the kindling of large fires to consume the remains, so as to prevent the poisoning of the atmosphere, and consequent occurrence of pestilence. In the valley of Hinnom was Tophet. Tophet is said by some to signify the stone furnace enclosed in the brazen idol, in which the victims, generally children, were consumed, while the beating of drums and other discordant noises drowned the cries of suffering, until death terminated the horrid sacrifice. Others understand by Tophet, the place of slaughter outside Jerusalem, in which a constant fire was kept up to consume the carcasses and other offal from the city. "It was in the same place that they cast away the ashes and remains of the images of false gods, when they demolished their altars and broke down their statues." Such, or such like, was the place known to the Jews as "Gehenna;" and hence originated the expressions—"unquenchable fire," and "the worm that dieth not," in connection with it, as a place of punishment to which the vilest malefactors were consigned.

In the old testament, reference to the valley of the children of Hinnom and to Tophet is not unfrequent. In the second book of Kings* it is stated that Josiah defiled Tophet in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Moloch. The abomination which Manasseh committed in the sight of the Lord was, among other things, the causing his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom.† Isaiah, when speaking of the destruction of the Assyrians, says: "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."‡ In a subsequent chapter the following passage also occurs: "They shall go forth and look upon

* 2 Kings, xxiii. 10.

† 2 Chron. xxxiii. 6.

‡ Isa. xxx. 33.

the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched,"*—the very words which are quoted in the ninth chapter of Mark—"And they shall be an abhorring to all flesh." Evidently describing, to use the words of the late Archbishop Whately, "the kind of doom inflicted by the eastern nations on the vilest offenders, who were not only slain, but their bodies deprived of the rites of burial, and either burned to ashes (which among them, was regarded as a great indignity), or left to moulder above ground and be devoured by worms."† Jeremiah also refers to Tophet in terms indicative of abhorrence.‡

There can hardly be any doubt, then, as to the sentiments with which the ancient Jews regarded Gehenna. It existed, in their view, as a place of punishment the most repulsive that could possibly be imagined; as a place in which the rites of burial were denied to those who, *after death*, were cast into it;—as a place in which the lifeless remains were consumed by fire—a result held in sacrilegious abhorrence. Thus, by traditional association, by the language of the prophets, and its actual presence in their immediate neighbourhood, the punishment of "Gehenna" was regarded as a penalty the most extreme it was possible to incur,—namely, loss of life, attended with circumstances of extreme indignity and disgrace. It was not that, severe pain or bodily torment was endured through condemnation to "Gehenna," beyond the suffering incurred under the lesser sentence of the "Council," for in each case, the sentence was loss of life; but the former was a greater punishment than the latter, inasmuch as under it, loss of life was followed by a denial of the rite of burial, and the burning of the lifeless corpse added much to the dreaded anticipation of the penalty.

Now the Lord always adapted his language to the capacities of his hearers, and selected illustrations such as could

* Isa. lxvi. 24.

† Scripture Revelations, p. 233.

‡ Jer. xix. v. 5, 11.

easily be understood. In the particular instance, the truth intended to be conveyed was illustrated by reference to the temporal punishment of Gehenna. And, assuming, if only for argument sake, that the punishment of the lost will be the final destruction of their souls, may not the language in the passages under consideration, be with reason understood as intended to communicate such a truth? The temporal punishment is referred to as one especially to be avoided. It was one in which *no additional pain or agony was endured by the criminal after death*, but it was one in which indignity, shame, and everlasting contempt, followed.

The agency which affected the lifeless remains, not the living person, was two-fold—the “worm” and the “fire,”—and each secured, as well as intimates, the like result.

Postponing for the present, the consideration of the terms “everlasting” as applied to fire, and “undying” as applied to the worm,—language, which is said to establish the *continued existence* of the lost in a state of misery, but which, in fact, does not warrant the assertion; it is desirable to make a few observations upon the force and meaning of the expression, “the worm” that dieth not. It may be remarked, also, in passing, that, allowing to the terms “everlasting” and “undying” a signification as full as can be desired by the most ardent advocate of the popular creed, they are applied to the “fire” and the “worm,” and not to the soul, which is said to be subjected to the punishment.

It has been already shown that “fire” is a suitable emblem of destruction. The “worm that dieth not,” is, in like manner, equally suitable to convey the like result. The latter expression occurs alone in the Gospel of Mark, and in express connection with Gehenna; so that the “fire” and the “worm” which manifestly cannot exist together, are each of them applied in immediate association as descriptive of the punishment of “Gehenna.” It is the common result that follows the application of each, which justifies the application of illustrations so diverse, though each is descriptive

of the same end. The passage from Mark is a quotation from the prophet Isaiah,* who uses the very words in a context, which can alone be understood in relation to a temporal event and a physical result. If the expressions occurred in a different connection to that of "Gehenna," there would be some reason for the inference commonly attempted to be drawn; but the context determines the meaning in a way which cannot be disregarded. The lifeless body soon becomes corrupt; an organic change takes place, and worms are generated until the whole mass of what was once flesh ceases to be so. The consequence, therefore, is the complete dissolution or destruction of the body, and analogy warrants the conclusion that, a like result must follow in the case of the soul,—that is to say, as the worm preys upon the body until it is dissolved, so shall it be with the soul; as the body ceases to continue a body when devoured by the worm, so the soul will cease to exist when subjected to the destructive energy of God's wrath. As the fire of Gehenna was unquenchable, in that nothing could resist its power; so the worm is said to be undying, as when once the process of corruption began, nothing arrested its progress or stayed the result; the body was consumed by either agent,—dust it was, and unto dust it thus returned.

In harmony with the idea conveyed by the expressions just considered, are found passages denoting that the end of the wicked shall be "corruption," language strictly applicable to the body alone, but figuratively applied to the soul. It is asserted that, the wicked "shall utterly perish in their own corruption;"† that, they who sow to the flesh, "shall of the flesh reap corruption."‡ In the like sense the place of the wicked is termed the "pit of corruption."§ Now, Christ, in referring to the condition of the lost, adopts the temporal punishment of "Gehenna," as illustrative of that which

* Isa. lxvi. 24.

† 2 Pet. ii. 12.

‡ Gal. vi. 8.

§ Isa. xxxviii. 17.

awaits the impenitent and unbelieving. Christ does not describe the *place* of future punishment, he but illustrates the *result*. It is by no means essential that the valley of Hinnom should have its exact counterpart in the next world, or that the circumstances actually existing in the present state, should find a similar reality in the future state. It is manifestly more in accordance with the rules of scriptural interpretation to look for the analogous end or result.

There are three ideas suggested by the temporal punishment of Gehenna, and it is enough that the punishment of the lost should include the principle of each. They seem to be as follow :—First, that those who reject Christ shall receive the full measure of God's wrath. Secondly, that the punishment shall be one imposed under circumstances which admit of no reverse, and shall be final and irrevocable; and Thirdly, that the punishment itself will be the complete and entire destruction of that which is subjected to it.

The several particulars which, in the punishment of "Gehenna" stand out so prominently as characteristic, have their counterpart in that punishment which awaits the ungodly. As in the temporal punishment there was loss of life as to this world; so in that punishment which concerns the soul, there shall be loss of life as to the next world. As the temporal punishment was one involving perpetual indignity, *but not perpetual suffering*; so will it be with the punishment of everlasting destruction from the presence of God. As the sentence of the earthly tribunal was irrevocable, and the punishment everlasting by reason of its very nature when once imposed; so will it be with the condemnation and punishment of the wicked at the last day. But further, and in addition, the analogy plainly suggests the inference that, as there could be no pain endured by the criminal condemned to "Gehenna" either from the fire or the worm, which alone operated upon the lifeless remains; so there can be no torment endured by the soul after it shall have received the wages of sin—even death.

If it still be urged that, the worm is said, to *never* die, and the fire *never* to be quenched; the answer is, that such language was not intended as the statement of a fact, and could not have been so intended. Applied as it is primarily to the worm and the fire in the valley of the sons of Hinnom, it cannot be regarded as literally true; and as illustrative of the punishment hereafter, can alone be understood as implying continuance, so long as is necessary to secure complete destruction.

Out of the twelve passages* in which the phraseology occurs, seven are to be found in Matthew; three in Mark, occurring in the one context and spoken on the one occasion; one in Luke, and one only in the epistles, namely, in James, where it is said that the tongue, that unruly member, is set on fire of hell, or Gehenna.† The last mentioned passage can hardly be referred to as affording grounds to believe that the lost soul shall be eternally subjected to torment, and may be dismissed as plainly figurative and beside the question. As regards the others, they chiefly abound in the gospel of Matthew, which, as already mentioned, was written specially for the Jews, and was peculiarly suited to their habit of thought. Upon the passage which occurs in the fifth chapter of Matthew and twenty-second verse, Dean Alford writes:—"There were among the Jews three well-known degrees of guilt, coming respectively under the cognizance of the local and supreme courts; and after these is set the Gehenna of fire, the end of the malefactor, whose corpse, thrown out into the valley of Hinnom, was devoured by the worm or the flame. Similarly, in the spiritual kingdom of Christ, shall the sins even of thought and word be brought into judgment and punished, each according to its degree of guilt, but even the least of them, before no less a tribunal than the judgment seat of Christ. The most important thing to keep in mind is, that there is *no dis-*

* Ante, p. 150.

† James, iii. 6.

inction of kind between these punishments, only of degree. In the thing compared, the "judgment" inflicted death by the sword, the "council" death by stoning, and the disgrace of the "Gehenna of fire" followed as an intensification of the horrors of death; but the punishment is one and the same—death. So also in the subject of the similitude, all the punishments are spiritual; *all result in eternal death.*"

It is manifest that no distinction existed as to the result of the punishment so far as the pain endured by the criminal himself was concerned, and that in truth the "Gehenna fire" was superadded as a disgrace to follow, not as a torture to be inflicted. Entirely in accordance with this conclusion, is the forcible statement contained in the twenty-eighth verse of the tenth chapter of the same gospel,—than which nothing can be more distinct, and which corresponds with the parallel one in Luke. "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell"—Gehenna. This is plain language, and intimates that God *may* destroy the soul, just as man may destroy the body. The power of God and the power of man are, so to speak, compared. The latter is able to kill the body, but that is all his power can extend to; not so with the Divine Being, He can destroy the soul as well. The possible exercise of this power on the part of the Deity, which is thus contemplated, is inconsistent with the alleged essential immortality of the soul. With what justice can it be implied that, the destruction of the soul by God (the contingency suggested by the comparison), is within the bounds of possibility, if the eternal existence of the soul is a necessity! The language is as clear as possible. Destruction cannot mean perpetual existence, unless violence is offered to ordinary language and to common sense: it is of even greater import, and fuller signification, when applied to the soul than the analogous expression "kill" is, when applied to man's animal being.

The passages which occur in *Matt.* v. 29, 30; xviii.

8, 9; and in *Mark*, ix. 43, and following verses, will, no doubt, be relied on as affording ground for the popular opinion. The language is very similar in each of the passages, and the meaning is, no doubt, alike in all. "It is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire." "Hell fire" is substituted for "everlasting fire" in one passage; Hell or Gehenna occurs simply in another; while in the passages from St. Mark, are added the further expressions, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Now, in the several passages, to which the reader can refer if he pleases, life—that is, life in a future state—is undoubtedly contrasted with a state, in which the fire is said to be everlasting and unquenchable, and in which the worm "dieth not." The terms "everlasting," and "unquenchable," no doubt, must, *primâ facie*, be taken in their full signification; but it will be presently shown that, they may, in accordance with the frequent use of the terms in other passages, yield their unlimited sense to a limited signification, when the context, either justifies or requires such to be the case. In the passages just quoted, it cannot be denied that Christ speaks metaphorically, and a plain and intelligible meaning may be gathered from the language, entirely consistent with the general views and reasoning already urged upon the reader. None can assert that a sinner having two eyes or two hands—a condition which supposes a physical organization exactly alike to that which man possesses in this life,—in fact, an animal body—can, in the nature of things, for ever live subject to the influence of everlasting and unquenchable fire: yet, this, in substance, is asserted in the passage, and is maintained by those who hold the popular creed. The language, even taken literally, does not *directly* assert that the sinner lives as long as the fire lasts. The fire may be unquenchable and everlasting, while that submitted to its power may yet have

a termination, and it is only inferentially concluded that, the life of the soul will endure for ever under the influence of a flame sufficient to torment, but insufficient to destroy, although "unquenchable." It is, in like manner, hardly possible seriously to allege that, this place of punishment shall confine within its bounds, those who shall live for ever "maimed," "halt," or with "one eye," in the future state. Christ was teaching the necessity of putting away all those various occasions of offence, and inducements to sin which, however prized, should be crucified in the flesh. It is better to cast off an arm or leg, or pluck out an eye, and enjoy the benefit of life in this world without them, than to retain such advantages for a time, and to be cast into Gehenna. This would be the prudent course to adopt in regard to one's worldly interests—better enjoy life, maimed, than lose one's life, and suffer the disgrace of exposure in Gehenna, where, as is well known, the body is either consumed, or devoured by worms. So, too, in regard to spiritual interests,—in regard to that future state which concerns the soul,—abandon every worldly lust and pleasure, every besetting sin, no matter how much valued, if only they interfere with the obedience which is due to God's commands; if only, they cause offences to come by reason whereof the soul may perish everlastingly. What shall a man give in exchange for his soul? The appeal is made to that sense of prudence which actuates mankind in the ordinary affairs of life. A similar appeal is made in the parable of the unjust steward. The fire referred to, was that fire of Gehenna, which was eternal and unquenchable, in a manifest, though restricted sense; and no difficulty could suggest itself in the application of the language to the spiritual realities, were it not that, the soul is assumed to possess *in itself* a natural or essential immortality,—an assumption, which forces those who adopt it to conclude that, if the soul must for ever exist, the fire which consumes it must have a like perpetual duration.

The only other passages in which the language under notice occurs, afford no ground of argument on the one side or on the other. There is nothing in them at variance with the interpretation insisted on, or with the nature of that future punishment which is contended to be the wages of sin. They are as follow:—

“Make him two-fold more the child of hell.”—*Matt.* xxiii. 15.

“How can you escape the damnation of hell?”—*Matt.* xxiii. 33.

The latter is a simple assertion that there *shall be* a condemnation similar to the temporal one, which shall terminate with complete destruction, under circumstances of contempt and disgrace; but does not in any way assert either existence in a state of punishment, or its duration.

It is necessary now to proceed a step further, and inquire into the import of the expressions “everlasting,” “eternal,” and “unquenchable,” as variously used in Scripture, and the question properly arises, *must* they, in *every case*, be taken in their strict and unlimited signification; or *may* they, if the context and the nature of the case justify it, be regarded in a limited sense?

The expressions “everlasting” and “eternal” are applied both to the punishment to be inflicted, and to the agents by means of which the punishment is carried into effect. The former—that is, the punishment—may be everlasting in the strict sense of the term; the latter may be everlasting in a limited sense,—that is, enduring until the end to which they are applied, has been effected. Not only is there no reason why the same expressions, when applied to that death which awaits the wicked, and to the fire or instrument by means of which the sentence shall be enforced, should receive the same interpretation; but the very opposite course of interpretation is warranted by the varied use made of the term in Scripture. In the one case, as the sentence of

death shall never be revoked, nor, the soul which dies be ever again called into being—the death is everlasting; in the other case, as the agent of destruction lasts as long as is necessary to secure a similar consummation, it too, is everlasting in a limited sense.

In fact, wherever the terms expressing everlasting or eternal duration are met with, it cannot be immediately determined, whether or not, they denote absolute duration, *until* it be first ascertained whether that of which they are predicated, requires such an interpretation. Thus, for example: "The gift of God is eternal life." Here life is a positive gift, the possession of which is derived from union with Christ; and the fact that, He hath immortality, secures to all who are joint heirs with him, an eternal inheritance. "Eternal," in this context, must, therefore, by the very necessity of the case, signify an "endless" life. On the other hand, the land of Canaan was promised by God to Abraham, and to his seed after him, for an "everlasting" possession;* and here the signification is manifestly limited to a period which, though of long duration, had its determined end. Other passages of Scripture might be quoted to justify the rule of construction insisted on.

It has been just remarked that the expressions "eternal" and "everlasting," are applicable in their fullest sense to the punishment of the lost; but in saying so, it is not to be supposed that the perpetual *existence* of the soul *enduring* punishment, is thereby admitted. There is a marked distinction between eternal punishment, and eternal existence enduring punishment. The former is not only admitted, but is asserted; the latter is denied. The eternal destruction of the soul is an eternal punishment; eternal life in eternal torment would also be eternal punishment; but the question is, what is that particular eternal punishment which God will inflict upon all who know him not, and who,

after this transitory life is over, shall arise to judgment? This is the question. There is no necessity that the punishment should be endless life in endless torment, unless the soul has been created essentially immortal; but as the possession of any such essential immortality is denied, that which would follow, as a necessity, becomes a matter upon which difference of opinion may be allowed to exist, until the fact has been ascertained, whether God has so declared his intentions towards the unredeemed in his Word.

It may be urged that, punishment would not be eternal, unless there was a perpetual consciousness of its duration; and that a punishment which ceases to be *felt*, ceases to be a punishment. This is a mistake. None can contend that the criminal, who forfeits his life to the offended law of his country, is not for ever punished, so far as this world is concerned. The punishment is, by its very nature, irrevocable and eternal. So, in regard to the lost, the language, used by the apostle Paul, writing under the guidance of the Divine Spirit, is,—“They shall be *punished* with everlasting destruction;” and what language can be more express?

The statement of all others the most forcible in the entire Bible in support of the popular creed, is that made use of by the Lord himself, when he says of the unredeemed: “These shall go away into everlasting punishment.”* At first sight it may appear doubtful, what the meaning of “everlasting punishment” is,—whether it may not signify, “these shall go away into an everlasting existence in eternal punishment,” as is commonly alleged, though certainly such is not expressed in terms; but when the language of St. Paul is taken and regarded as the statement of what the punishment shall be, all doubt as to the correct meaning is removed. He distinctly states—“The wicked shall be *punished* with everlasting destruction,” and the true sense of the former

* Matt. xxv. 46.

statement is thus established to be—these shall go away into everlasting destruction, but the righteous into life eternal. Everlasting destruction is equivalent to everlasting punishment; and the interpretation of the passage from Matthew, which might justify the belief that the punishment intended was eternal existence in suffering, is precluded by the language of St. Paul, from which it appears that while the punishment is eternal, the existence of the lost shall have a termination, by reason of their destruction.*

There is not a single passage, figurative or otherwise, throughout the entire Scripture, in which the *eternal existence of the soul*, in punishment after the final judgment, is asserted. The reader is earnestly solicited to examine for himself the pages of his Bible. "Everlasting" is applied to the fire, which consumes the *body* in Gehenna, and to the worm which devours it, and so is applicable to the agency which shall destroy the soul; but it is nowhere asserted that the *lost soul* shall exist for ever under the influence of that which is symbolized by the "fire" or the "worm."

The gift of life conferred upon the saved, will be eternal; the punishment of death imposed upon the lost will be eternal also. The latter is thus commensurate with the former in duration, and affords a direct and perfect contrast, without the necessity of maintaining the reality of an endless life in infinite misery. Destruction, which implies a total extinction of that which is destroyed, is an everlasting punishment, unless the sentence be revoked and the soul be recreated. A punishment, which, when once imposed,

* "In our translation it is 'everlasting' in the first part of the sentence, and 'eternal' (of which the meaning is the same) in the other, but in the original Greek the same word is used in both places. But some understand by the word, in both places, 'lasting during the whole of existence,'—'not coming to an end while the Being continues to live,' and this while it would imply to the blessed, eternity; would not be inconsistent with the final *destruction* of the ungodly."—*Scripture Revelations*, p. 218.

remains for ever unremoved, is an everlasting punishment without regard to a continued consciousness of suffering on the part of the punished.

This view at once puts an end to the assertions of those, who properly holding that the Divine Being is incapable of maintaining, in his economy of creation, a state in which pain shall for ever exist, and yet believing that the soul is essentially immortal, are driven to find refuge in the hope that God will, at some future time, restore all to his favour and the enjoyment of happiness. Such persons are right in judging that, God cannot consistently with those attributes in respect of which he claims man's love and worship, maintain for ever a state of suffering—for nothing can subsist except by his sovereign power and will; but they err in assuming that, the soul must of necessity exist for ever, and hence the fallacy of their conclusion. When the day arrives, and God's judgment is pronounced, "depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire," the sentence will be irrevocable, the punishment eternal, the destruction entire and complete.*

Now, notwithstanding the full import and unlimited signification of the expressions used in connection with the punishment of the lost, it is quite consistent and legitimate to hold that, the same language, when applied to the agency employed, is limited in its sense. The Greek words translated "everlasting" in their varied form of phrase, do not necessarily signify infinite duration. "αἰών," "ætas," "eternus," signify strictly, an age or long period of time, but not of necessity an infinite one; or, in the words of Dr. Smith, "no more accurate definition of αἰών can be given

* The reader is referred to Dr. Smith's pamphlet, *The Doctrine of Eternal Punishment* (Herbert, Dublin, 1865), which contains a full, fair, and learned exposition of the various meanings of the term αἰών and its phrases. The note is well deserving of attention, though we differ from many of the arguments used, and the conclusions drawn by Dr. Smith in favour of the views he holds.

than that, it implies the whole duration of which the subject is capable." As examples of the use of the phraseology in Scripture the following may not be out of place:—"I will give unto thee and to thy seed after thee the land of Canaan for an *everlasting* possession." (*Gen.* xvii. 8.) "To thee I will give the land, and to thy seed for *ever*" (*Gen.* xiii. 15), that is for a long space of time. In Genesis, xlix. 26, the "everlasting hills" are spoken of; so called, to denote their antiquity, stability, and duration. In like manner "the expression is used to denote the long continuance and durability of Joseph's blessing. God promises a throne to David, an eternal kingdom, a posterity that shall never be extinguished—that is, that he and his son's empire shall be of long duration. (*2 Sam.* vii. 16; *1 Chron.* xvii. 14.) And in many other places in Scripture, and in particular where the word 'for ever' is applied to the Jewish rites and privileges, it commonly signifies no more than during the standing of that commonwealth, or until the coming of the Messiah. (*Ex.* xii. 14, 17; *Num.* x. 8.)"

The covenant with Abraham was an everlasting covenant, and yet there is the new and better one in Christ: the former has passed away. The late Archbishop Whately remarks:—"All Christians are agreed that the declarations of the everlasting duration of the Mosaic Law, must be understood not literally but figuratively and spiritually." The things of the law were but the shadow of better things to come.

The Greek words translated in the English version, as everlasting, eternal, and the like, have, in many instances, received a different rendering, where, in the opinion of the translators, the context justified such a course. Thus, in *1 Cor.* viii. 13, St. Paul says:—"I will eat no flesh while the world standeth," here in the original the words are εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. Again, in *2 Cor.* iv. 4, the expression occurs:—"The God of this world"—Θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος. In *Eph.* ii. 2, "according to the course of this world"—αἰῶνα

του κοσμου. In Hebrews, ix. 26, "but now once in the end of the world," the like words τῶν αἰώνων, are so rendered. In Romans, xvi. 25, "which was kept secret since the world began;" and in 2 Tim. i. 9, "before the world began" the same phraseology occurs. The correct idea being, from age to age, which may or may not denote *eternal*, according to the context. In the epistle of Jude,* the fallen angels are said to be reserved "in everlasting chains unto the judgment," that is, the chains are said to be everlasting, although the day of judgment limits the period during which the restraint is applied.

In the same epistle, the language applied to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah afford a strong illustration of the sense in which the term "everlasting," as applied to fire, should be understood. In the epistle of Jude, it is stated, that those cities "are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." This statement can alone be taken in a figurative sense, denoting that they for ever remain subject to the *result* of that fire which was poured forth from heaven and which destroyed those cities. Complete destruction was undoubtedly the result. In Luke, xvii. 29, in one of the discourses of the Lord, it is stated, "the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all." Such are the simple words of Christ himself, and what can be more explicit as to the result of that visitation of the Divine wrath. One of the objects attained by that judgment certainly was,—as it is stated by St. Peter to be,—"an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly."† For this purpose, it is stated, God turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into *ashes*, condemning them with an overthrow as an example of that similar destruction which shall overtake all who reject the gospel. The expressions which occur in Luke and in Peter respectively,—"destruction" in the former, and "ashes" in

* Jude, 6, 7.

† 2 Pet. ii. 6.

the latter, denote the perfect extinction of those cities; and the destiny of the lost upon the final judgment, is expressly compared with their fate, and is illustrated by a like catastrophe—"Even thus shall it be, in the day when the Son of man is revealed."* And here it is to be remarked that, those cities are said to be *suffering* the vengeance of eternal fire, which is precisely the sense in which the lost shall *suffer* eternal punishment,—not that there is in the former case, or shall be in the latter, perpetual existence in a state of consciousness. The object aimed at, was destruction; and that object could not have been attained, unless and until complete destruction had ensued. It is manifest that, in the particular instance of the "cities of the plain," destruction did follow, for Peter states that they have been "turned into ashes." In what sense then do they *suffer* the vengeance of "eternal fire," if it be not that, the vengeance or result is now, and ever shall be endured, though they have long ceased to have existence, and notwithstanding that the fire has long since been extinguished. When, then, it is found that the expression "eternal fire" is thus applied, it certainly is not unreasonable to demand for the phrase, (used in connection with Gehenna, and applied, by way of illustration, to the destiny of the lost), a like interpretation; particularly, when the result to the latter is stated to be *everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord. There can be no inconsistency in understanding the *result* which follows the infliction of the punishment, as strictly eternal, while, as regards the agent employed, it is held that it shall last as long only as may be necessary to attain the full purpose and design of its application.

The like reasoning and observations equally apply to the language which speaks of the "worm that dieth not."

The other expression used in Scripture in connection with the fire of Gehenna,—the agent to be employed in

* Luke, xvii. 30.

securing the destruction of the condemned, is, "unquenchable." It is applied more frequently, than the term "everlasting," to the fire of Gehenna, and its meaning is less open to uncertainty and doubt.

Unquenchable fire is that which nothing can quench; a fire so absolute in its power that nothing can resist its influence,—so overwhelming, that every thing it acts on, must be subdued and destroyed. Thus the chaff to which the wicked are compared, shall be burned with unquenchable fire. So, too, the withered branches and tares which men gather in bundles and burn, illustrate the destiny and end of the lost. What becomes of material substances, such as chaff and withered branches, when submitted to the resistless energy of "unquenchable fire?" Surely they do not remain unconsumed. Surely they cease to exist as "chaff" or "branches." The ashes which remain, are no more the substances which previously existed, than two distinct things can be the same thing. The tares and branches are for ever destroyed; so that, the "unquenchable fire," and the "fire that never shall be quenched," manifestly imply in the strongest possible manner, irresistible power to secure the end for which they are applied, and the certainty of that destruction which must follow.

The variety of illustrations made use of in Scripture, to describe the punishment of the unredeemed, is not a little remarkable. There can be no question that, the result indicated by each must be the same result in fact, however diverse the illustrations may be. It is the *common* result, which is intended to be forced upon the conviction; and beyond the reality and fact of final destruction, to which they all point, no certain conclusion can be drawn.

Exclusion from the Divine presence,—deprivation of the Divine gift of life, is the punishment which awaits the lost soul. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life,"*—the wrath of God abideth on

* 1 John, v. 12.

him; he receives the wages of sin—death. This is the simple but express language of Divine truth. Side by side with this, are the illustrations which describe the nature and effect of God's wrath, and which point to the destruction of the soul,—*its* death. The illustrations all point to the one result as the end of the wicked, although in themselves, each is distinct and varied. They are comprised in that large class of passages which speak of the unredeemed as being "thrust out,"—"cast away,"—absence from God,——"outer darkness,"—"blackness of darkness,"—and statements to the like effect. The several expressions all suggest, absence from light and heat, and are applied to the selfsame state or result, to which the "unquenchable fire" and the "undying worm" are also applied. Regarded by themselves, they do not determine the *duration* of existence in the condition and circumstances stated. They, no doubt, establish what has been already admitted, that, tribulation and anguish shall overtake those who shall be excluded from the kingdom of God; but the perpetual and eternal existence of such souls, is certainly unconcluded by any of the statements referred to. They do not necessarily denote everlasting destruction, nor, on the other hand, everlasting existence in misery: but considerations are not wanting, which may justly be urged to show that, they may with reason be interpreted in harmony with the opinions advanced in these pages, and that, making allowance for the figurative language adopted, they are equivalent to deprivation of life, and to eternal death.

Bishop Bloomfield remarks, on the passage from the eighth of Matthew,*—"The expression denotes darkness the most remote from light, and is employed in opposition to the brilliant lights which are figuratively supposed to be burning in the banqueting room." The condition of the lost then, is compared to those who are thrust out from a sumptuous ban-

* Matt. viii. 12.

quet—the marriage feast of the Lamb—an illustration often used in Scripture, to represent the joys prepared by God for those who love his appearing. In the banqueting room the brilliant light illumines the feast, and diffuses gladness and warmth around. Without, is the absence of all this—darkness and cold,—outer darkness and gnashing of teeth. Thus are the lost banished from the presence of the light of the Son of Righteousness—thrust out from the glories prepared for the redeemed. “As *light* and *life* are closely connected ideas, so are *death* and *darkness*,” is the observation of Dean Alford.*

But the expressions are of deeper import. Christ is stated to be the Light of men. The saved, have in them no darkness at all. In Christ was life, and “the life was the light of men,” that was the true light—which shineth in darkness, “and the darkness comprehended it not.”† In that light there is life for the soul: in that darkness there is death for the soul. The passage in which it is inquired, “what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world and lose himself, or be cast away? (*Luke*, ix. 25);”‡ or, as in *Matt.* xvi. 26, “lose his own soul,” places the “casting away” as equivalent to the loss of the soul; and how can the soul be lost, and, at the same time, retained by the sinner? The soul might lose its happiness; it might lose the joys prepared for those who shall sit down to the marriage feast, but such a loss would not be in any sense, the loss of the soul itself. It cannot be controverted that in God, man lives, and moves, and has his being. While the soul exists, it must live and exist in God. It is the constant operation of God’s power which supports the soul in life: withdraw that power and the soul must cease to be. Thus, absence from God implies the withdrawal of God’s life-sustaining power: banishment, its removal from that fountain of life

* Alford, G. T., *John*, i. 5.

† *John*, i. 5.

‡ The original Greek signifies “bearing the penalty of losing his life.”
Vide Trench’s Brief Notes on the Greek of the New Testament.

which sustains existence. The flower of the field lives under the genial influence of the sun's rays, it expands its leaves and unfolds its blossoms; removed from its influence it withers, languishes, and dies. So, too, the soul, living under the eye and in the presence of God; sustained by his ever-renovating and renewing grace; when removed into the blackness of darkness for ever—into which no ray of light shall pierce, must, of necessity, expire. If it be true that, in God man has his being, there can be no continuance of life when cast away from him; and, unless the soul possesses in itself life—essential life,—unless man is necessarily immortal, the statements now under consideration must be taken as intimating the death and extinction of those, whose souls shall be banished from the presence of God.

It is easy to understand, and is consistent with what has been urged, that, when God shall pronounce those fearful words—"depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," the effect produced on those thus addressed, is fitly described as that of "weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth." Surely, the everlasting destruction to which they shall then depart, justifies the strongest expressions of indignation and wrath as descriptive of the righteous judgment of God, and the most vivid representation of the remorse of those upon whom the sentence shall fall, without asserting that an endless existence in misery is the punishment indicated by the language. Regarding the omnipresence of God, banishment from his presence is equivalent to non-existence—for where shall that place be found where God is not? The Psalmist exclaims—"If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there."* The bread which came down from heaven, of which, if a man eat, he shall never die, is the support of believers

* Ps. cxxxix. 8.

alone. Those who have no claim to this supply,—who have no right to the tree of life set in the midst of the heavenly Jerusalem, are without the sole support of life; and as the former never die, so the latter cannot live.

In the Book of the Revelation, some passages occur which require comment, as they contain expressions which may, perhaps, be regarded by those who hold the popular opinion as confirmatory of their views. In the fourteenth chapter, and tenth and eleventh verses, it is written:—“He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.” Again, in the nineteenth chapter, third verse, “her smoke rose up for ever and ever;” and again, “the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”*

Now, without dwelling on the general characteristics of this book, which is so manifestly figurative, it is enough to observe that, the events therein described are those which shall take place previous to the end of this present age or dispensation, up to, and including the final judgment;—and that most probably they are in course of fulfilment at this very time. Regarding the passages quoted, the language is used in connection with, and upon the occasion of the fall of the spiritual Babylon—that great city which “made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication;”† and it is subsequent to her fall, that the command is given to the angel,—“thrust in thy sickle and reap: for the harvest of the earth is ripe.”‡ Upon the occasion of her overthrow, glory is given to God for the judgments inflicted upon the great mother of harlots. The eighteenth chapter describes in

* Rev. xx. 10.

† Rev. xiv. 8.

‡ Rev. xiv. 15.

detail the circumstances of her fall ; and again, at the commencement of the nineteenth chapter praise is ascribed to God for the victory. " Alleluia ; salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God. And again, they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever." Then in the twentieth verse it is written : " And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him." " These both were cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone."

Now, it has been already shewn what the expression, " the lake of fire," imports ; beyond all doubt, the beast and false prophet shall be cast into the place thus symbolized ; and it is submitted that, the inevitable result which would follow such an event in regard to material things, shall be attained in the case of what is thus figuratively described. Subsequent to these events, Satan, who was exempted from the judgment inflicted upon the beast and false prophet, is bound for a thousand years,* and subsequent again, and upon its termination, he must be loosed a little season to deceive the nations. The expressions, therefore, which are used in regard to those who received the mark of the beast, in the fourteenth chapter, and to Babylon and the great whore in the nineteenth chapter, must be taken to denote those *temporal* visitations of God's wrath which shall be inflicted upon the representatives of those false systems of religion which are thus figuratively described, *prior* to the consummation of all things, which does not arrive until after the millenium period shall have expired.

Advancing, then, to the twentieth chapter, in it, is prophetically recorded, from the ninth verse to the conclusion, a consecutive series of great and wonderful events, commencing with the loosing of Satan, and terminating with his destruction, and the end of the world. When the thousand years are ended, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison. He

* Rev. xx. 2.

shall go forth to deceive the nations, and gather them together against the saints of God in battle. The number of his followers is represented as the sand of the sea. In the ninth verse, is recorded their utter discomfiture and consequent destruction. "Fire," it is said, came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. In the tenth verse, the result of this great victory is shewn by the casting of Satan himself into the lake of fire and brimstone, to which the beast and false prophet had previously been consigned; and it is stated he "shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." In the former passage from the nineteenth chapter, it is related how the beast and false prophet, being overthrown, were cast into the lake of fire;—now, Satan also, having previously been bound and subsequently loosed after the expiration of the thousand years, in the figurative language used, is cast into the same place,—is condemned with a like overthrow. It is of importance to observe that, a distinction is drawn between the fate which overtakes the followers of Satan who went up to do battle with the saints, and the judgment inflicted upon the beast and false prophet. The former were *persons*; the latter represent *systems* of false religion, so that while the former—the persons—were devoured by the fire which came down from heaven, the latter—the systems—with Satan himself, are said to be cast into the lake of fire to be tormented day and night, for ever and ever. "For ever and ever," must here signify, during the entire course of the present dispensation, and *need* mean no more. It is to be recollected that, the Revelation deals with events to take place *on earth* down to the period of the coming of Christ, the resurrection, and judgment;—that is, its purpose was to shew to the servants of Christ the things "which must shortly come to pass" upon "the inhabitants of the earth."* The first nineteen chapters are accordingly engaged with the narrative of the events

* Rev. i. 1; viii. 13.

which shall take place before the final judgment. Then it is, that the end shall come. The very expression, "day and night," seems to point to the endurance of the torment for a definite period,—that is, until the end. "For ever and ever,"—so long as day and night shall continue according to the course of the present dispensation, and until all things shall be created new;—until the new heavens and the new earth shall be formed, and the heavenly city shall descend as a bride adorned for her husband, in which there shall be "no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."*

After the events referred to in the foregoing passages, which have created so much difficulty in the minds of many, the great white throne is exhibited, and Him that sat on it: from whom, it is stated, the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them.† This assertion manifestly intimates the destruction of this world, and all that is therein. St. Peter states that, "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat,"‡—an event which in the first verse of the twenty-first chapter of Revelation is spoken of as having been then accomplished. The order of events is as follows: the dead both great and small shall stand before God for judgment, and the final result is set forth in the fourteenth and fifteenth verses of the twentieth chapter, affecting not only those whose names were not found written in the book of life, but death and hell also. After this, the first heaven and the first earth are described as having "passed away;"§ and it is further added,— "There shall be no more death."|| Death and Hell shall no longer exist as realities. Then comes the language— "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and

* Rev. xxi. 23.

† Rev. xx. 11.

‡ 2 Pet. iii. 10.

§ Rev. xxi. 1.

|| Rev. xxi. 4.

idolators, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.* Such is the distinct and forcible language used to denote the place of destruction, and the result which was expressly stated in the fourteenth verse of the twentieth chapter, is reiterated in the above passage, in language which to adopt in its non-natural sense, would be perfectly unwarrantable,—THIS IS THE SECOND DEATH.

Whatever may be the force and signification of the figurative expressions applied to the judgments inflicted by God in the course of his dealings with mankind, Satan, unbelief, and error, during such time as the present dispensation shall last; it is beyond all question that, subsequent to the great and final act recorded in the twenty-first chapter of the book of the Revelation—the triumph of God over all things that offend—the destruction of this world, and the outpouring of his righteous judgment upon sinners—there is no intimation of the continued existence of souls in torment. On the contrary, the plain and simple, but most explicit statement (when the destiny of the lost is dealt with, as regards the future state), stands prominently forth: “*This is the second death,*”—a statement which can never imply or warrant an endless life in misery.

It is a fair and reasonable rule of interpretation, to accept the language of Scripture in the natural and ordinary signification which the terms convey. But if the ordinary sense of some particular passage leads to conclusions which it is believed are not warranted by Scripture; then it becomes a duty to examine further, whether the terms may not admit an interpretation, which harmonizes or is consistent with what Scripture in unfigurative and unmistakable language teaches; and this course is the more essential when a translation has to be dealt with.† The conclu-

* Rev. xxi. 8.

† Dr. Salmon, in his sermon on “The eternity of future punishment” (Dublin: Hodges, Smith & Co., 1864), observes: “In the Bible, if we

sions urged upon the reader are arrived at by adopting the above rule of investigating truth. Taking the words, eternal, everlasting, and the like, as applied to the *punishment* of the lost hereafter, there can be no difficulty in allowing to them their full and unlimited signification—that which, in ordinary language, they possess. That the punishment once inflicted will never be revoked, or the destruction once suffered will never be repaired, is a truth taught beyond yea and nay, in Scripture; the wicked “shall receive their righteous doom, even an *everlasting destruction*.”* This result is consistent with the nature and reason of the case. There can be no warrant for objecting that, the Giver and Supporter of life should withdraw support from the soul, and by virtue of his sovereignty allow it to expire, if He so deems fit. But the like interpretations of the same expressions, when applied to the agents employed to illustrate the mode and manner of destruction, may well be questioned, when they are said to establish, by necessary inference, the continued existence of the lost; for in such case the conclusion rests upon the *assumption* that the soul possesses in itself absolute immortality, which is nowhere asserted in Scripture, and cannot be proved.

find a statement which seems to contradict what either another part of the same volume, or evidence of some other kind, has proved to us to be true, any one who holds Scripture to be authoritative and infallible must be convinced that the fault is not in the Bible but in his mode of interpreting it. If a passage interpreted in the most obvious manner asserts something untrue, then that most obvious interpretation is not the right one. . . . We may point out to him that his interpretation of the word *αἰώνιος* makes it impossible to prove from the Bible, either that God is eternal, or that the happiness of the blessed is eternal; he will still, in very reverence for the Scriptures, cling to his interpretation as the only way of saving the Bible from teaching what he holds to be certainly false.” This is just what we say. We may add that Dr. Salmon directs his argument rather against the doctrine of universal restoration, than against the opinion contended for in this treatise, though, no doubt, he will equally object to our conclusions.

* Such is the correct rendering of the passage (2 Thess. i. 10) given by Conybeare and Howson.—*Vide “The Life and Epistles of St. Paul.”*

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from Natural religion or by human reason;—an inference which forces the conclusion that, the Deity, who claims man's worship, by virtue of his power and excellence, has, in the economy of his creation, provided a state hereafter in which unnumbered beings deriving their life solely from Him, shall pass an endless existence in wretchedness.

The difficulty is resolved by the fact, that the terms employed in the original admit in some passages a limited interpretation, while in others they may be taken in their full import. Thus, when everlasting destruction is stated, as in the passage from Thessalonians, to be the *punishment* of the lost, it is right to take it in its full signification—when applied to the fire of Gehenna it is legitimate to take it in the sense contended for, viz., that it shall continue so long as shall be necessary to effect its purpose. Again, and on the other hand, when it is said that the wages of sin is death; when death is repeatedly set forth in contrast to life as the end of the ungodly; and when it is manifestly applied to, and must take effect upon, that which is the subject of the Future state—the soul itself; the proper, fair, and reasonable course is to take the language • in its natural signification, namely—ceasing to exist. Nor can there be any motive to refuse to adopt the obvious meaning of the term according to the rule before stated, unless indeed the soul be established to possess in itself absolute immortality; for the simple and natural interpretation, vindicates God's right to punish, answers the claims of justice, and is entirely consistent with all and every of the sovereign attributes of the Deity; and further, will be found to simplify and elucidate many of the most important truths set forth in God's word, in respect to which difficulty and misapprehensions prevail, as the result of the popular belief upon the subject under discussion.

A great deal has been recently written, and no small attention has been attracted to the alleged restoration of the lost to the favour of God by an act of sovereign mercy at some

future time in the progress of eternity. It has been contended that, the wicked shall be restored to the joys of heaven, after enduring a very protracted but not an endless existence in torment. This error is the result of holding the dogma of the immortality of the soul; which, being held, has driven men to speculate, and speculating to conclude, that God's attributes require that he should provide, though in a manner not revealed, some means of escape for the lost, from that eternal existence in misery which is too revolting to the moral conscience of man to contemplate as a reality.

Such an escape from the difficulty is, however, nowhere intimated in Scripture, nor if the opinions advocated in these pages be correct, is such at all demanded by the attributes of the Deity. But the effort which has been made to reconcile the developments of Platonic philosophy with the nature of God as he has revealed himself in his word, forcibly illustrates the tendency in man's mind to reject the popular creed as *contrary* to reason, and as such irreconcilable with the word of God.

In the observations already made, the objection that, the like terms are used as well in reference to the life which the saved shall enjoy, as to the condition of the lost, and therefore that the life of the saved might thus be limited in duration, has been incidentally answered. The gift of life is a positive inheritance to be conferred on the redeemed through Jesus Christ, and is guaranteed to be enjoyed by them. The perpetual duration of that life does not alone depend upon the interpretation of the term *αἰών*; though in the case of the blessed, it cannot receive any other interpretation than that of endless existence. The full and unlimited signification which the word bears, when used in connection with life hereafter, is to be referred, not to any essential force in the term itself, but to the nature and source whence that life springs. Christ alone hath immortality, and he takes into union with himself those

whom he purchases with his blood. They, possessing Christ, possess in him eternal life, and there cannot be a greater mistake than to suppose, as Dr. Salmon has done, that, the interpretation of *αἰώνιος* insisted on, "makes it impossible to prove from the Bible either that God is eternal or the happiness of the blessed is eternal."* The nature of the inheritance to be enjoyed by the redeemed forbids the idea that, life *once conferred* as the gift of God can ever terminate. "Whosoever eateth of this bread shall never die,"—"neither shall they die any more," is language which, applied to the saved, can admit of no doubt as to the eternal life of the redeemed. Christ came for the purpose of conferring life on his people, and that they might have it more abundantly; once conferred, the same love which moved God to bestow it of his grace, will suffice to continue it for ever, for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. There shall be no more death, neither sorrow or crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the *former things* have passed away. "Behold I make all things new."

There are, no doubt, several passages, as already more than once admitted, which represent the day of judgment as one to which the wicked should look forward with sentiments of terror and anxiety, and that, that day shall be for them a day of tribulation and wrath. But the question in regard to such passages is not, whether they are applicable to the belief commonly held, as they certainly are; but whether they are not equally applicable and equally consistent with the opinion contended for, that the suffering of the lost is limited in duration, although the sentence of death shall last for ever. There are abundant passages which speak of the vengeance of the Lord, of judgment to come, of the damnation of the wicked, and the wrath of God, which shall be revealed against the ungodly. That there

shall be a day of judgment, that the wicked shall be condemned and punished, that there shall be an outpouring of God's wrath, and that such must be looked forward to with fear and trembling, is most assuredly true. But this truth does not, in any respect, impair or contradict the other truth insisted on, that, that day shall eventuate in the complete destruction of the wicked,—that it shall be one in which they shall die eternally. Tribulation and anguish, no doubt, there shall be for those who are as “vessels of wrath fitted to destruction,” and who shall receive “the righteous doom of God”—tribulation and anguish, when they shall see the redeemed collected from the north and from the south, from the east and from the west, and sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, and they themselves thrust out; but upon the authority of such statements to assert that, the wrath of God, and the “damnation” of the lost, necessarily involves their eternal existence in torment, is to assume the very question in dispute. The language of Scripture is far, indeed, from asserting such a result. To arrive at the conclusion, death must be held to signify everlasting life in torment and destruction, an ever-continuing existence in misery and pain. The day of Christ appearing to judge the world is spoken of as the day of God's wrath; as in Job, xxi. 30: The wicked “shall be brought forth to the day of wrath;” and in 2 Peter, ii. 9: They shall be reserved “unto the day of judgment to be punished.” Again, mankind is exhorted to flee from “the wrath to come,” and men are said to be by nature “the children of wrath;” or as the statement intimates, wrath is the natural inheritance of mankind through Adam, for “by the law is the knowledge of sin,”* and so, too, “sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”† Now, the redeemed of God are saved from the consequences of this wrath through Christ,

* Rom. iii. 20.

† James, i. 15.

by the gift of God conferred in him. Thus, "God hath not appointed *us* to wrath, "but has delivered *us* from the wrath to come," while it rests upon the children of disobedience, and on them that obey unrighteousness. These several passages distinctly assert that, God's condemnation will be inflicted at the day of judgment upon those who know him not, and who have not obeyed the truth; but as to its nature or duration, as to whether it will utterly destroy the wicked, or suffer them to exist enduring torments through untold ages, they are silent, and their general import must be judged from other passages of Holy Writ. Attention will be called in the next chapter to numerous statements, most express and clear, which intimate what that "wrath" shall be; but the expressions just considered *may* mean, and are consistent with, the final destruction of the soul, while the context in which the language frequently occurs is sufficient—even standing alone—to justify the statement that it shall be so. Thus, it is stated that, the wicked are as the "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." Again, the condemnation of the wicked is described as the taking vengeance upon them in flaming fire, and while they are "reserved to the day of judgment to be punished," yet, it is immediately stated,—“they shall *utterly perish*” in their own corruption. While tribulation and anguish shall overtake every soul that doeth evil, and the future is for such persons a fearful looking-for of judgment, yet, it is a fiery indignation which shall *devour* them.

Such passages are far indeed from establishing the perpetual *existence* of the lost in torment. The expression "damnation" has acquired a special signification, quite unauthorised by the proper meaning of the term of which it is the translation. It is written, "whosoever believeth not shall be damned." Misapprehension as to the correct interpretation of the original, has rendered "damnation," and "eternal existence in torment," almost convertible expressions, but without the slightest warrant,

unless it is assumed that eternal existence in torment is, in fact, the punishment of the lost.

The same word translated "damnation," is also rendered "judgment" and "condemnation." It implies the judicial expression of disapprobation, and not the result which, in consequence, follows. The term in no case can intimate the nature of the particular punishment imposed, but merely, that judicial declaration which renders the person affected by it obnoxious to punishment. When it is stated therefore, "whose damnation is just," the meaning simply is, that such persons are justly condemned. The punishment, its nature, duration, or kind, is altogether a different matter; and the mistake lies in introducing an additional element into consideration, viz., the special circumstances of the punishment, as it is believed, from other sources of knowledge, it shall in fact be. Thus it comes to pass that, passages which, in reality, throw no light upon the matter at issue, are constantly referred to, and regarded as proofs of the particular form of belief.*

The question suggested by the passages in which "damnation" is spoken of, is the very question at issue; what is the result intimated as the consequence of "damnation" to the lost? Those who hold the popular opinion will have it to be, continued existence for ever in torment. Those who adopt the views contended for, will hold it to intimate "everlasting destruction," and also, that the latter interpretation, amply justifies the language applied in Scripture to the day of judgment as a day of wrath and fiery indignation—a day after which there shall be no more death, neither sorrow or crying, even for the condemned.

The argument has now been brought to this stage; namely, that regarding the special language of Scripture relied on

* St. Paul speaks of young widows who marry, as having "damnation," because they cast off their first faith; and in another place he states, in regard to the eating of meats offered in sacrifice to idols—"He that doubteth is damned if he eats."

as proving the correctness of the popular belief, there is no *necessity* to conclude from *them alone*, that the souls of the wicked must for ever exist in torment, in blasphemy, and in sin.

It has been shown that the language commonly relied on may be understood and interpreted consistently with the reality of the soul's final destruction, provided there is nothing in the nature of the soul itself which prevents such a result following.

It is submitted further, that there are many considerations based upon the special nature of the language used, which leads to the above conclusion, even were other parts of Scripture silent; for it has been shown in former chapters that the soul cannot possess in itself an independent or essential principle of immortality.

But Scripture is not silent. There are assertions ample, distinct, and cogent, which reduces what may be admitted as undetermined, so far as the argument up to the present is concerned, into positive certainty. The object of the present chapter has been to disabuse the mind of the reader as far as possible from preconceived notions, and to call his attention to the insufficiency of what he has been in the habit of regarding as the chief support of his creed. In the next chapter attention will be directed to the positive and plain assertions of God's word, upon the warrant and authority of which the reader is called upon to abandon his former belief; and to admire the full measure of that love which commended itself by the world, by the Father sending his only beloved Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not *perish* but have everlasting life.

CHAPTER VII.

SCRIPTURAL ASPECT OF THE INQUIRY—GROUNDS FOR BELIEVING THAT THE PUNISHMENT OF THE LOST SHALL BE THE DEATH AND EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION OF THE SOUL.

“It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.” This is the assurance of St. Paul speaking by the Divine Spirit. To save them from what? From the penalty incurred by Adam’s transgression; from that which St. Paul, speaking by the same Spirit, asserts to be the “wages of sin,”—from DEATH.*

If the conclusions arrived at in the foregoing chapters, which treated of the lessons taught by natural religion and the inspired narrative of the creation and fall, be correct, the “*death*” which passed upon all men through the offence of Adam, was the death of man’s soul, the *πνευμα*, and not merely the death of his animal life. Consistently with this, the Gospel revelation announces salvation as a redemption of the soul from “death unto life,” for all those who shall be made partakers of the inheritance of the saints in glory. This is the teaching of the gospel of Christ who has brought life and immortality to light; and while Natural religion and the Old Testament Scriptures afforded shadows of those truths which were afterwards to be made known, it was reserved for the new and fuller revelation, to elucidate and confirm truths previously

* Of course sinners are saved from the power as well as the consequences of sin; but it is unnecessary for the purpose of the present inquiry to dwell upon this result which flows, from the renewing power of the Spirit in the soul.

taught, although not so expressly revealed. The gospel, dealing with man in a state of death, announces salvation to those who are reconciled by the blood of Christ,—“His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save *his* people from their sins,”—and leaves the rest of the human race subject to the original penalty of sin, to be pronounced at the judgment, as its wages, which, in unmistakable language, it declares to be eternal “death.”

The Mosaic narrative teaches, as already pointed out, that man, as a being having animal life, was subject to the pre-existing and universal law of physical death; that there was conferred upon him a spiritual entity or soul which distinguished him from all other animal creation; that the result of man’s disobedience was, in a special, though not exclusive sense, the death of that spiritual entity or *πνευμα*; and finally, that an everlasting existence, guaranteed by God’s immutability, should, in due time, be purchased for and conferred, of his free grace, upon his people. The latter truth announced in prophecy, and typified by the ceremonies of the law, burst into noontday splendour when the Lord of heaven and earth lay as an infant in the manger of Bethlehem. The “Life” was then manifested, and became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey him.

The manner in which the great truths referred to, vivid though they once were, and impressed upon man’s inmost nature,—written so to speak by the finger of God upon the fleshy tables of the human heart—became in the progress of time, effaced and distorted by the vain imaginations of man’s corrupted nature, has been pointed out; and it has been shown that, the dogmas of belief which took their place, though bearing a resemblance sufficient to indicate their origin, were the result of grievous error and misapprehension regarding the character and design of the Deity. It is not, perhaps, so much a matter of surprise that, in the absence of the new Revelation, the soul should

have been alleged to be essentially immortal, when its immaterial nature is considered, when it is recollected that, at the first it was free from condemnation to death, that its present condition is abnormal, and that a promise was early given which told of an immortality to be enjoyed; but that a dogma which renders absolutely necessary the existence of the lost for ever, "writhing in tortures body never felt," should be *still clung to*, when the clear light of the Christian Revelation announces that the wicked shall be "punished with everlasting destruction," is indeed a matter difficult to understand.

If the state of ignorance and darkness which prevailed, concerning the nature and destiny of the soul, previous to the appearing of the Messiah, be considered, the narrative of that great event, and the circumstances under which the announcement of his arrival was made, cannot fail to strike the reader as presenting a remarkable coincidence. It was night, and certain shepherds kept watch over their flocks in the fields of Bethlehem. A bright light shone through the darkness, for the glory of the Lord was revealed. The shepherds were troubled and alarmed, but an angel addressing them said, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Such was the announcement given of the realization of that long course of prophecy regarding the Christ, which commenced with the promise that, the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head; and then, began to be made manifest that mystery which had been hid from ages, and from generations, but which was destined to give light to those who sat in darkness and the shadow of death, and deliverance from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. It was night; darkness covered the earth, but the darkness which prevailed was not alone that which results from the absence of the luminary which rules the

day and gives light to the material world, it was the darkness of death which embraced the soul ; darkness so great that the presence of the life-giving Son of God failed to be recognised. The curse of sin had folded in its dark mantle the human soul, and the consequence of sin reigned in its absolute power ; as yet no sacrifice had been offered, no atonement had been made, to satisfy the offended justice of God ; but as the light from heaven shone among the shepherds in the darkness and gloom of night, and the glory of the Lord was visibly revealed, so too, in a higher sense, was *then* made known the advent of the light of the world and the life of men—Jesus the Son of God. “In him was life, and the life was the light of men,” who, in fulfilment of the promises made unto the fathers, came to bruise the serpent’s head.

Is it possible to contemplate this wonderful manifestation of the love of God, without realising in some measure the truth of St. Paul’s exclamation, “Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness : God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” It is impossible to recognise the existence of a Deity, to confess him the creator of all material and spiritual being, to admit that by his permission Adam fell and involved the human race in ruin ; to acknowledge that a vicarious atonement was necessary to meet the requirements of God’s justice ; that such an atonement could only be made by a spotless victim untainted by sin, and yet, of man’s nature ; that the Deity himself condescended to be the spotless Lamb, became incarnate, and laid down his life for his people,—it is impossible to reflect upon such truths without being lost in wonder at that marvellous manifestation which the Deity has given of himself in the face of his Anointed, and the merciful declarations of his purpose which he has revealed to mankind. That God has done so, can alone be attributed to his infinite love ; why he did so, is a mystery

into which man in his present state can never fully penetrate, and must fail adequately to understand.

The revelation of "good news" then, makes known to man "the means of grace and the hope of glory." It announces reconciliation between God and man. It tells how that reconciliation has been effected, and sets forth eternal life as a gift to be conferred upon all who believe. This is the essence of the gospel news,—salvation from condemnation,—life, in place of death. This message of mercy is, no doubt, hid from those who are lost; but it does not set forth a destiny for those who reject the glad tidings, different to that which had previously existed, and which had been announced to Adam as the penalty for transgression. Life and immortality have been brought to light. Death had been previously made known as the punishment of sin; and as the salvation provided, applies to that in man which concerns the next world, namely, his soul, and confers upon it eternal life; so the penalty which told of death, in like manner, had reference, in a special sense, to that entity which man alone possesses.

It is important, then, to observe that life in Christ for the saved, is the prominent topic of the gospel, rather than the setting forth of the punishment of the lost. Regarding the subject treated of, the great topic of revelation considered subjectively, is the death of man's soul and the restoration of the saved to immortality: the great and prominent topic considered objectively, is the Lord Jesus Christ, as the giver of life,—the source whence immortality, if to be enjoyed, is to be derived. Eternal life, how lost, how again regained—how forfeited through Adam, how bestowed again upon God's people through Christ, embraces, if not the whole, the greater part of the subject matter of revelation.

The destiny of those who know not God and obey not the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is treated of, throughout Scripture, incidentally, rather than prominently, as a truth already revealed in the announcement to Adam—

“thou shalt surely die.”* The wages of sin is spoken of, the righteous outpouring of God’s wrath upon the unbelieving, is pointed out—consistently with natural religion, consistently with what must be allowed to be the attributes of God, and consistently with the whole scheme of the creation, fall, and redemption—in plain language, admitting of no question, and in figurative language, admitting an interpretation consistent with the plain language,—to be the eternal death and destruction of the soul. The manifestation of God’s love in the incarnation and sacrifice of Christ was that mystery which was kept secret from the foundation of the world. The early promise given in the garden foretold the coming Saviour; so likewise the typical ordinances of the law; but when Christ, once for all, offered himself as a sacrifice, eternal life was purchased, and now it rests with him “who only hath immortality” to confer it on whom he will. The believer looks forward to the realization of the promise in himself personally, by an actual participation in the gift of life, but not in the same manner as Abraham and the prophets of old. They looked *forward* to the procurement of the gift and to sharing in the purchased crown of life. The believer now looks *back* to the victory of the Cross, and forward to the enjoyment of eternal life as a sure inheritance through Christ. At the time the promises were made, life and immortality existed in hope of the fulfilment of the promise,—“for hope that is seen is not hope, for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for,” but that expectation received its answer in the Lord Jesus Christ, who, in the fulness of time, came, and by his triumph over death removed its sting; and now life and immortality are stored in the treasury of God ready to be conferred judicially when he shall come the second time without sin offering unto salvation. Thus Abraham re-

* It is the “way” that has been provided, whereby man may pass from “death” to “life,” which forms the prominent subject of revelation from first to last.

joyed to see His day, and he saw it and was glad. This aspect of revelation is very important, and is as simple as it is true. The gospel scheme was not a new one, as regards the obtaining and conferring eternal life upon sinners according to God's elective sovereignty and grace—it had always existed as a grand portion of God's plan in the creation of man. The *revelation of redemption* through Christ, was, however, new so far as man was concerned. It was, before the coming of Christ, unrevealed in its fullness; but *now* God commands men everywhere to repent. Still, it leaves unaffected the penalty incurred by Adam's transgression, which has remained unaltered and unaggravated by the fact of Christ's atonement, "for Christ came not into the world to condemn the world,"—that had already taken place,—“but that the world through him might be saved.” And thus, as the penalty imposed upon Adam was the death of his moral entity or soul—for he was driven from the garden, lest he should eat of the tree of life and live for ever,—that penalty remains unremoved, save for those who shall be adopted into God's family, and be made “partakers of the *divine nature*,” (2 Pet. i. 4.) and joint heirs with Christ.

The purport, then, of the succeeding observations is to show, from the nature of that gift which is promised, from the fact that it is *a gift* of what is not possessed by man as such, and from the express language used in each respect, that, the Divine purpose in regard to man's destiny in the future state, is that of LIFE for the saved, and DEATH for the lost; that the punishment in which the whole race, through Adam, is involved, is the death of the soul—a punishment, which still rests upon those who will not come to Christ that they may have life,—a penalty for them unremoved, a sentence for them uncancelled.

Christ is emphatically THE life. He is so, because as God, he possesses life in himself as an attribute or quality without which he could not be what he is. He is so, be-

cause he is the source of life to the soul, without whom the soul cannot exist—"for by him all things subsist." None will deny that this is the truth, but the full force and consequences involved in the acknowledgment, are not perhaps at first sight fully appreciated, although of the highest importance.

Christ is the *sole possessor and source of life*, in a sense which no created being can claim. Man, *in himself*, is not possessed of either life or immortality *as of right*, and can alone be said to enjoy the one or the other, so far as they are given by, or derived from Him. If this be the case, it is impossible to assert with truth that, man possesses in himself an immortal entity, unless God has in respect thereof placed man on a level with himself; that God has not done so, is to be concluded from the reasoning urged in former chapters, and from the express assertion that, Christ "*only hath immortality*," (1 *Tim.* vi. 16), by virtue of his Divinity. Unless, therefore, Scripture asserts that, eternal life or immortality shall be conferred upon all the lost, as well as upon all the redeemed, there can be no warrant for believing that the former must pass an eternal existence in misery and woe.

The statement to the effect, that Christ alone possesses by virtue of his Divine nature and perfections, absolute immortality, are ample in number, and distinct and plain as language can be. Thus, it is written: "In him was life, and the life was the light of men;"* that is, in him pre-eminently and exclusively was life; in him, in a sense peculiar to himself; and as none else possess it. Again, "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself."† The life which the Father hath in himself, and the Son in himself, is immortality in its true sense,—necessary, absolute, and essential. The popular creed confers upon all men, immortal

* John, i. 4.

† John, v. 26.

souls; *they*, are in truth and fact asserted to possess, by virtue of their creation, *life in themselves*, for they *must*, it is said, exist throughout eternity; but if the lost possess an immortality, by reason of which they cannot die, how can it be with truth asserted that, Christ *alone* possesses it? Christ says, "I am the resurrection, and *the life*:"* and the life of the believer is stated to be "hid with Christ in God."† "Your life," that is, your eternal life or immortality,—the end of your hope and faith, the crown of glory,—is hid with Christ in God; not yet possessed in actual enjoyment, but ready to be conferred "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear."‡ If Christ *alone* possesses immortality, none else can be immortal, until they become "partakers of the Divine nature," and see him as he is.§ What then becomes of the assertion that the soul *must of necessity exist for ever*, either in a state of happiness or in a state of misery?

The Epistles of St. John contain very express statements to the like purport. Thus, "For the life was manifested, and we have seen it," "and this life is in his Son."|| Christ is thus designated as *the life*, and the apostle proceeds:—and we "show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father," referring to Christ by the name of that quality which He exclusively possesses. Man cannot possess eternal life without possessing Christ; and can it be for a moment contended that, the lost, who are alleged to be immortal in endless misery, possess the Christ, apart from whom there can be no existence. If the lost are without Christ, they are without the only source of life, and cannot be immortal in their wretchedness.

* John, xi. 25.

† Col. iii. 3.

‡ Col. iii. 4.

§ Moses represents Jehovah as saying emphatically—"For I lift up my hand to Heaven, and say, I live for ever." (*Deut.* xxxii. 40.) Immortality as an attribute is alone ascribed in Scripture to the Deity. "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible" (*1 Tim.* i. 17)—never to a *created* being; while on the other hand it is held forth as the object of man's desire, "to those who seek for immortality, eternal life."

|| 1 John, i. 2, v. 11.

“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might *live* through him.” (1 *John*, iv. 9.) If *through* Him the saved live, the lost *without* Him must die. The statement can alone have reference to that future state which is treated of—the soul’s life or the soul’s death in the next world. How can the soul that dies be immortal?

But again, this “life” for the soul, which is the gift of God, springs from his absolute and perfect love. His *love* has been manifested by sending his Son into the world that sinners might be saved from death hereafter. And though, for argument sake, it might be admitted to be in accordance with God’s justice, to permit the lost to suffer an eternal existence in pain, it would not be true to assert that, such a result flows from *love*—divine and infinite. When the apostle assures his readers that, eternal life flows from the love of God, eternal life must, of necessity, have reference to those alone to whom it shall be a subject of endless praise, and not to those whose torment and whose sin would be but aggravated by immortality.

“And this is the record, that God hath *given to us* eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” (1 *John*, v. 11.) The observation is addressed to those whose fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ; to such, eternal life or immortality is said to be *given*, and so it is written in the next verse, “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God *hath not* life.” The entire purport and force of the several assurances of the inspired apostle, consists in asserting that Christ is exclusively the possessor and the giver of life. No created being hath immortality *in himself*, nor ever shall; for the eternal life to be enjoyed by the saved must ever depend upon God’s will for continuance, and be constantly derived from Him.

Mankind is exhorted to come to Christ. What is the purpose and inducement? That they may escape eternal misery in the next world? No; Christ himself replies, “ye

will not come to me, that ye might have *life*" (*John* v. 40)—ye will not come to me who am willing and able to confer upon, and secure to, your souls an undying existence in the future state. Far different must the paraphrase be if the ordinary opinion is adopted as a Divine truth. The passage would then run somewhat thus:—There is an eternal existence in misery, awaiting your immortal souls; ye will not come to me, that, the eternal life which your souls possess and must continue to possess, may be passed in union with me and in glory, rather than in hostility, sin, and wretchedness. This is the language of the orthodox; but it is not the language of Christ, whose words are, "ye will not come to me, that ye might have life;"—a very different truth, indeed.

Can it be said,—the Bible authorises the assertion that, God has *willed* the lost soul to be immortal, as he has promised that the saved soul shall be? Does not the language of Scripture establish, that immortality or eternal life will be conferred through Jesus Christ, upon the saved *alone*, and not upon the lost? As, on the one side, the language used in reference to Christ—the possessor and giver of eternal life—is of peculiar force and significance; so, on the other, the language used in relation to man, speaks of him as dependent upon God for life, not only in this world but also in that which is to come. Christ not only, alone hath immortality in the sense already noticed, but he is also the author and giver of eternal life, to whom he wills. He is the author, because, until He came and atoned for sin by the sacrifice of himself, the curse of death lay upon the soul; and mankind, through fear of death, continued in bondage. It is commonly asserted that Christianity *confirms* the alleged doctrine of the immortality of the soul. There never was a greater mistake: Christianity points out how eternal life or immortality, has been purchased, and is bestowed; how the soul, subject to death, is released from the wages of sin, and receives eternal life as the gift of God. Life and immor-

tality have certainly been brought to light by the Gospel, for it sets forth with noon-day clearness, eternal life as conferred through Christ, upon *all who come to God* through him. Not only is this so; not only has light been thrown on what was before obscure, but *the Life* has been manifested to mankind, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the author of eternal salvation, to all who obey him; the giver of that eternal life, which mankind ever since the fall has yearned after and sought to possess. It is important to observe the emphatic sense in which Christ is spoken of as "THE LIFE." The language signifies the originator or author of life, in a special sense, and not merely a teacher or setter-forth of the doctrine of life or way of salvation. In other words, if the gospel alone throws light upon a doctrine which before was but obscure, Christ could not have been designated "THE LIFE;" but as such, he at his coming brought life from heaven to earth, as a gift to be hereafter conferred through himself, upon all who believe; and thus, immortality has been brought to light through the Gospel.

The full import of the original, illustrates and confirms the opinion urged regarding the present position and future destiny of the soul, for the verity of which Scripture is now appealed to. Let the reader bear in mind that if the soul, notwithstanding the fall, continued immortal, it could not be alleged in the forcible language already quoted, that Jesus Christ is, *the life*; that, he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life; that, the life of the believer is hid with Christ, in God. If man was created essentially immortal, then the soul possesses, and ever must possess life, by virtue of its original creation, and not through Christ, or with Christ, or in Christ; and the question is at once reduced to that which is the only one admitted by those who advocate the popular view,—shall that life which the soul must possess for ever, be passed in a state of happiness or in a state of unmitigated misery? On

the other hand, if the soul forfeited its right to immortality, or eternal life, upon the fall, all is plain and consistent. Sin having entered into the world, and death by sin, the soul became subject to death,—for sin when it is finished bringeth forth death; the bondage of corruption prevailed, and the whole creation groaned and travailed, waiting for the adoption through Jesus Christ. Then followed the Gospel revelation, making known that mystery which was kept secret since the world began, and which at the coming of Christ, was made manifest for the obedience of faith,—“To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them :”^{*} not, that, all mankind will enjoy or share in the adoption of sons, for the inheritance of life is alone conferred upon those, “to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles.”[†]

Having thus observed that Christ is emphatically **THE LIFE**; that he was manifested as such in the world, and, that by his sacrifice, he secured to himself the power to confer eternal life upon as many as the Father should give him, (*John*, xvii. 2), it is important in the next place, to call attention to the language which sets before the believer that which is promised, as the “crown,” the “hope,” and the “prize” of his high calling.

The “promise,” the “crown,” the “prize,” the “hope,” and the “gift” which the believer regards as the end of his faith, is—**ETERNAL LIFE**. This eternal life involves all the consequences which flow from presence with God, and union with the Lord Jesus Christ. This eternal life must, of necessity, be a happy life, a holy life, a life of praise, a life of pure enjoyment far beyond conception; but, while all these blessings are to be looked forward to, and shall be enjoyed by the redeemed, the promise is simply and expressly “eternal life,” and not merely life in happiness.

* 2 Cor. v. 19.

† Col. i. 27.

The distinction is manifest and the inference plain. If a happy life was promised, it might justly be inferred that there existed also a wretched one; but by setting forth "eternal life" simply as the promise, the inference is, that there shall be no life for those who come short of the promise. It is as though the announcement of "eternal life" was in itself sufficient; as if "eternal life" in any other condition than that of supreme happiness, where that eternal life shall be passed in fellowship with God, could not be contemplated. If this were not so, the "eternal life" which was held forth to the redeemed as the prize of their high calling, would have been qualified by expressions denoting that, the condition of *their* life should be one of supreme felicity. It is a fact worthy of deep consideration that, "eternal life" or immortality is constantly set forth as sufficient to express what God has prepared for his people. No passage is to be found in the New Testament where happiness is announced in *express terms* to be the promised possession. The young man who inquired, "what shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?"* seems to have had immortality simply, before his mind as the object to be secured. He does not ask, how shall I act so as to secure for my immortal soul a happy existence in the future state; how shall I avoid eternal misery and woe? His inquiry is limited to the possession of "eternal life" alone. Life was the object he coveted. The circumstances attending life in the future state, created no doubt or difficulty. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," was the response; and when the young man departed, dissatisfied with the exhortation addressed to him, Christ, speaking to his disciples and dwelling on the folly of clinging to worldly wealth and things of but time and sense, points out the propriety of abandoning everything which interfered with his calling,— "come and follow me." The young man departed dissatisfied with the answer; he was unwilling to submit to

* Matt. xix. 16, and parallel passages in Mark, x. 17, and Luke, x. 25.

so great a sacrifice, for he had great possessions. Neither the inquiry nor the reply suggests that, it was not alone happiness which might be gained, but endless misery which might be avoided. It is remarkable that Christ did not present this alternative to the young man hesitating in his choice, if such an alternative in fact existed. If the eternal existence of the young man's soul in misery was at stake, is it possible that, so strong an inducement to choose the better way would have been omitted, or the opportunity lost of inculcating so great a truth? While the narrative shows that, the reality of a future state in life for those who are accepted of God, was brought prominently forward; it, at the same time, even more strongly manifests a denial of the reality of an endless life *in torment*.

The following passages are some of those which set forth "life everlasting," or "life" simply, as the promise and gift of God to his people:—

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into *life eternal*."—*Matt.* xxv. 46.

"Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come, *life everlasting*."—*Luke*, xviii. 30.

"The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into *everlasting life*."—*John*, iv. 14.

"He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto *life eternal*."—*John*, iv. 36.

"He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath *everlasting life*, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto *life*."—*John*, v. 24.

"The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall *live*."—*John*, v. 25.

"Ye will not come to me, that ye might have *life*."—*John*, v. 40.

"The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth *life* unto the world."—*John*, vi. 33.

"This is the will of him that sent me, that every one

which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have *everlasting life*.”—(*John*, vi. 40.)

“ Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath *everlasting life*.”—(*John*, vi. 47.)

“ If any man eat of this bread, he shall *live for ever*.”—(*John*, vi. 51.)

“ Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath *eternal life*.”—(*John*, vi. 54.)

“ He that eateth of this bread shall *live for ever*.”—(*John*, vi. 58.)

“ To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of *eternal life*.”—(*John*, vi. 68.)

“ I give unto them *eternal life*, and they shall *never perish*.”—(*John*, x. 28.)

“ That he should give *eternal life* to as many as thou hast given him.”—(*John*, xvii. 2.)

“ And this is *life eternal*, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”—(*John*, xvii. 3.)

“ These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have *life* through his name.”—(*John*, xx. 31.)

“ Seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of *everlasting life*, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.”—(*Acts*, xiii. 46.)

“ To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and *immortality, eternal life*.”—(*Rom.* ii. 7.)

“ If by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign *in life* by one, Jesus Christ.”—(*Rom.* v. 17.)

“ That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto *eternal life*.”—(*Rom.* v. 21.)

“Ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end *everlasting life*. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is *eternal life* through Jesus Christ our Lord.”—(*Rom.* vi. 22, 23.)

“To be spiritually minded is *life* and peace.”—(*Rom.* viii. 6.)

“For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that *perish*: to the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of *life unto life*.”—(*2 Cor.* ii. 15, 16.)

“If there had been a law given which could have given *life*.”—(*Gal.* iii. 21.)

“He that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap *life everlasting*.”—(*Gal.* vi. 8.)

“To them which should hereafter believe on him to *life everlasting*.”—(*1 Tim.* i. 16.)

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on *eternal life*.”—(*1 Tim.* vi. 12.)

“According to the promise of *life* which is in Christ Jesus.”—(*2 Tim.* i. 1.)

“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of *eternal life*.”—(*Tit.* iii. 7.)

“Shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and *live*.”—(*Heb.* xii. 9.)

“He shall receive the *crown of life*, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”—(*James*, i. 12.)

“Being heirs together of the grace of *life*.”—(*1 Pet.* iii. 7.)

“And shew unto you that *eternal life*, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.”—(*1 John*, i. 2.)

“And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even *eternal life*.”—(*1 John*, ii. 25.)

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us *eternal life*.”—(*1 John*, v. 11.)

“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of *life*.”—(*Rev.* ii. 7.)

“I will give thee a crown of *life*.”—(*Rev.* ii. 10.)

Other passages, in which the promise of eternal life *simply*, is held before the believer as the end and fruition of his faith and hope, will occur to the reader. The object in extracting so many quotations of like import (and they might be multiplied), is to present an accumulation and weight of testimony which may *force* conviction upon the mind. The argument is this: If an eternal life of happiness was, in express terms, promised to the redeemed, a strong presumption would be thereby afforded that, an eternal life of misery remained for those who shall not be redeemed. The condition—namely, happiness or wretchedness in a future state—of each class, would then be the essence of the gift; but inasmuch as “eternal life” simply, is that which is set forth as the object of the believer’s expectation,—promised in terms which in no case are accompanied by an adjective qualifying its circumstances, the presumption is obviously the other way.

There is nothing to detract from the force of the foregoing argument, in the fact that, the “eternal life” promised shall be a happy one. As before stated, happiness must follow as a necessary accompaniment of the gift. It is impossible to conceive an existence in God’s presence, and in communion with him who is the “happy God,” as otherwise than one of perfect joy. St. Paul, in addressing the Church at Corinth, describes how he was caught up to the third heaven, and heard unspeakable words, which it was not lawful for a man to utter;* and adopts in another place the language of the Prophet Isaiah, “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”† In the Book of the Revelation‡ also, it is promised to the saved that, “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;” and the Psalmist§ speaks of the pleasures which are at God’s right hand for evermore. Such is the language used in describ-

* 2 Cor. xii. 2.

† 1 Cor. ii. 9.

‡ Rev. vii. 17.

§ Ps. xvi. 11.

ing the blessings which accompany God's gift of "eternal life"—language which affords joy and comfort to those who have already passed from dead works to serve the living God. The passages referred to, are like the bright touches which adorn a painting, while the truth—ETERNAL LIFE—the gift of God to sinners, stands forth upon the canvass, prominent, distinct, and emphatic.

Immortality, or life, *is nowhere* applied in Scripture to the lost; yet the doctrine of eternal existence in torment requires that the lost sinner should possess eternal life. If every human soul born into the world was of necessity immortal, *then* happiness would have been the gift of God, and misery the condemnation; but the declarations of revealed truth are otherwise. LIFE is procured and promised as the one, DEATH is asserted to be the other.

If the language of Christ and his Apostles was understood by those to whom it was addressed, in the natural and ordinary sense, his disciples must have concluded, unless instructed to the contrary, that the ungodly shall in the end be destroyed. It is the gift of life on the one hand, and the loss of life on the other, rather than the circumstances in which existence in the future state must be passed, that is continually advanced in the pages of the everlasting Gospel, which teaches mankind to look forward to the period when mortality shall be swallowed up of life.

Christ then alone possesses life, and life in a future state is the substance of that inheritance which the believer looks for, and shall receive in Christ, through union with him.

The reader is now requested to regard the plain and unfigurative language which is applied to the destiny of the lost? In the several passages about to be quoted, "death" is in unequivocal language announced as the penalty; and as life is set forth on the one side, death is set forth in contrast on the other. The passages are both numerous and express.

“Behold, all souls are mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall *die*.”—(*Ezek. xviii. 4, 20.*)

“But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed * * * he shall surely live, he shall not *die*.”—(*Ezek. xviii. 21.*)

“Why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the *death* of him that *dieth*, said the Lord God.”—(*Ezek. xviii. 31, 32.*)

“As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the *death* of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.”—(*Ezek. xxxiii. 11.*)

“Neither can they *die any more*: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God.”—(*Luke, xx. 36.*)

“Is passed from *death* unto life.”—(*John, v. 24.*)

“This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not *die*.”—(*John, vi. 50.*)

“Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have *no* life in you.”—(*John, vi. 53.*)

“If a man keep my saying, he shall *never see death*.”—(*John, viii. 51, 52.*)

“I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he *were dead*, yet shall he live.”—(*John, xi. 25.*)

“Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall *never die*.”—(*John, xi. 26.*)

“Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of *death*.”—(*Rom. i. 32.*)

“If by one man’s offence *death* reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.”—(*Rom. v. 17.*)

“That as sin hath reigned unto *death*, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life.”—(*Rom. v. 21.*)

“His servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto *death*, or of obedience unto righteousness?”—(*Rom. vi. 16.*)

“The end of those things is *death*.”—(*Rom.* vi. 21.)

“For the wages of sin is *death*; but the gift of God is eternal life.”—(*Rom.* vi. 23.)

“The motions of sin, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto *death*.”—(*Rom.* vii. 5.)

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and *death*.”—(*Rom.* viii. 2.)

“For to be carnally minded is *death*; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”—(*Rom.* viii. 6.)

“If ye live after the flesh, ye shall *die*: but if ye through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”—(*Rom.* viii. 13.)

“To the one we are the savour of *death* unto *death*; and to the other, the savour of life unto life.”—(*2 Cor.* ii. 16.)

“But if the ministration of *death*, written and engraven in stones, was glorious.”—(*2 Cor.* iii. 7.)

“The sorrow of the world worketh *death*.”—(*2 Cor.* vii. 10.)

“And you, being *dead* in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him.”—(*Col.* ii. 13.)

“For ye are *dead*, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”—(*Col.* iii. 3.)

“Who hath abolished *death*.”—(*2 Tim.* i. 10.)

“Melchisedec; when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from *death*.”—(*Heb.* v. 7.)

“Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth *death*.”—(*James*, i. 15.)

“We know that we have passed from *death* unto *life*.”—(*John*, iii. 14.)

“If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto *death*.” * * * There is a sin unto *death*.—(*John*, v. 16.)

The foregoing passages speak for themselves. They in the most distinct manner, set forth DEATH in contrast to LIFE, as the destiny of every soul, whose sins shall not have been pardoned through the blood of Christ.

Death in the future state is contrasted with life in the future state; and from the expressive language used, as well as from the contrast afforded, it is manifest that, the withholding of the gift of life, and the re-announcement of the penalty of "death," then to be imposed, is that punishment which at the final judgment awaits all mankind except those who are deemed worthy of everlasting life. Upon what principle of construction should a non-natural signification be demanded for the expressions found in the verses just extracted. To give an interpretation consistent with the popular dogma, the passages should be paraphrased somewhat after this manner. The statement, "neither can they die any more," should be read, "neither can they exist any more in everlasting torment." The passage which declares that the believer "is passed from *death* unto *life*," should be read, "is passed from an endless life in misery, unto life in happiness." For the statement, "a man may eat thereof and not die," read, "a man may eat thereof and not live for ever in wretchedness." The passage from the eighth of John, should be read, "if a man keep my saying, he shall never endure everlasting torment." For, "the wages of sin is death," read "the wages of sin is eternal existence in torment." For, "to be carnally minded is death," read, "to be carnally minded is to exist in agony for ever and ever." For, "if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die," read, "ye shall exist in perpetual torment hereafter." Sin when it is finished bringeth forth—not death, as the Scripture has it, but an endurance of everlasting misery; and so on. Is such a paraphrase justifiable? Can such an interpretation be the true one? What shall be said of an interpretation which requires the use of language, of directly opposite import to that found in the text? It is alone by

asserting that the term "death" signifies "life in torment," that the popular opinion can be justified; but surely it was as easy for the apostles as their expositors, to have expounded their meaning. It ought to be enough in all common honesty, to point out that, those who speak as they were moved by the Divine Spirit, used language which, in its ordinary signification, is in direct opposition to the sense demanded by those who adopt the popular dogma of belief.

It may perhaps be said that, the death spoken of in the above passages, is physical death, which, it is said, through Adam's transgression passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. A moment's reflection will shew that this cannot be so. The Christian Revelation deals with the salvation of man's soul. Christ's kingdom was not of this world. If in this life only, his disciples have hope, of all men they are most miserable. It is with the soul pre-eminently that Revelation, so far as man is concerned, deals. How can language such as that in the Gospel of St. John already referred to, by any possibility apply to physical death? "If a man keep my saying he shall never see death," are the words of Christ. Never die! Why the bare statement is sufficient to refute the objection. The discourse in which the above language occurs plainly shows that the Jews fell into the very mistake which suggests the objection. "Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death."* Were not the Jews in error? Christ spoke of that, of which those who keep his saying shall never taste,—the death of the soul. Again, the Scriptures assert that "the wages of sin is death." This can alone apply to the future death of the soul, otherwise those upon whom the gift of God is conferred would be free from physical death. All mankind are concluded under the curse of sin, all deserve death as its penalty. All die and

* John viii. 52. "The *death of the body* is not reckoned as death any more than the *life of the body* is life in our Lord's discourses. Both words have a deeper meaning." Alf. G. T.

their place is nowhere found, yet all will not "die eternally;" and as all pass through the valley of the shadow of death, that event known as physical death cannot be the result indicated as the fruit and wages of sin. Christ hath abolished death for his people, yet he has not relieved them from the necessity of passing through the valley. Sin which works in the flesh, induces the inevitable consequence of death to the soul. The law was a law unto death, but through Christ Jesus the believer is made free from the law,—not of temporal but of eternal death, and receives the gift of eternal life.

It is worthy of observation that, physical death, which is but the separation of the soul from the body by the ceasing of animal life, is generally spoken of in the New Testament as a state of sleep; death in its proper sense being applied to that which awaits the lost after the final judgment. Thus, "David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep.* Christ, in announcing to his disciples the decease of Lazarus, says: "our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep."† The maiden whom Christ raised from the dead "slept," and they laughed him to scorn,‡ knowing that she was dead. Stephen, when stoned, is stated to have fallen asleep.§ Again, St. Paul writes, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."|| Those who are asleep shall not be proceeded by those who are alive and remain.¶

The term "death," whenever spoken of as that from which God's people shall be saved, cannot signify either physical death, or an eternal existence, which is the reverse of death. Death in its Scriptural signification is the result which, having been incurred by Adam's transgression, would have

* Acts, xiii. 36. † John, xi. 11. ‡ Matt. ix. 24. § Acts, vii. 60.
 || 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14. ¶ 1 Thess. iv. 15.

awaited all, but for the purchased gift of life which God is prepared to confer upon his people. Death and destruction, is the result which awaits the world itself together with those who know not God, when, at the end, all things shall have passed away, and a new heaven and a new earth shall be formed, in which death shall find no place—for God will “make all things new.”*

But again, it may perhaps be urged that, “death,” when used in Scripture, in connection with the unredeemed, is applied in a general sense, and does not indicate what the term naturally conveys ; on the contrary it may be said that, as physical death is recognised to be but the separation of soul and body and does not signify the end of being, so also, the “death” which is announced to be the destiny of the lost soul, need not be the termination of the soul’s existence. In this manner it is attempted to escape from a conclusion which, if the statement is taken in its obvious sense, must of necessity follow. The attempt thus made is to be attributed to the fact that, the supporters of the popular creed have *assumed* the essential immortality of the soul,—a dogma which they cannot bring themselves to question, although it is incapable of proof, and hence they are driven to attach to the term “death” in regard to the soul, a non-natural signification. The true sense and meaning may, it is submitted, be clearly learned from other expressions found in the pages of God’s word, which are applied to the wicked, and all of which expressly denote *termination of existence*. Attention will presently be directed to the passages referred to, which may be termed Scriptural definitions of the word “death;” but it is plain that, the signification, when applied to man, is one thing, the signification when applied to that in man which is the subject of existence in the Future state—the soul—is another. The error arises from confounding the result of death when applied to man in his complex

* Rev. xxi. 5.

nature, with the result of death to the soul,—a simple entity. Death in its proper and obvious sense denotes, cessation of life. Applied to man, when it has been once acknowledged that the soul may exist after this life, death is properly recognised as but the separation of soul and body, the termination of animal life, but not necessarily the termination of existence. This signification of the term, though correct when used in regard to man's being as it now exists, is inapplicable when applied to the soul, which is a simple substance, so to speak, and which, if it dies, must cease to exist. Consequently the *obvious* signification of the term must be the correct one when applied to the soul; and thus while death applied to man implies the termination of his animal life, death applied to the soul signifies the termination of that simple entity which survives the first, or physical, death.

This conclusion is a fair and reasonable one, but its correctness appears to be established beyond dispute, when other terms in Scripture, which describe the "death" that awaits the ungodly, are brought under consideration. They are varied and numerous. It would almost seem as if inspired writers, by the frequency and peculiar force of the expressions, were anxious to prevent any misapprehension upon the subject. Thus the death of the lost is their *destruction*; the announcement is, that they shall *perish*; their condition is spoken of as being one of *corruption*. Various illustrations are also given, all of which exclude the idea that the "death" which is announced as the wages of sin, affects alone the soul's happiness, as alleged in the ordinary creed. On the contrary they can alone be understood as denoting the termination of the soul's existence.

The following passages are those which announce the end of the wicked to be *destruction*.*

* "Destroy"—1st. To demolish; to pull down; to separate the parts of an edifice, the union of which is necessary to constitute the thing; 2nd.

“The wicked is reserved to the day of *destruction*, they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.”—(*Job*, xxi. 30.)

“Is not *destruction* to the wicked? and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity?”—(*Job*, xxxi. 3.)

“When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be *destroyed for ever*.”—(*Psa.* xcii. 7.)

“All the wicked will he *destroy*.”—(*Psa.* cxlv. 20.)

“Bring upon them the day of evil, and *destroy* them with *double destruction*.”—(*Jer.* xvii. 18.)

“Broad is the way that leadeth to *destruction*.”—(*Matt.* vii. 13.)

“Endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to *destruction*.”—(*Rom.* ix. 22.)

“If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God *destroy*.”—(*1 Cor.* iii. 17.)

“God shall *destroy* both it and them.”—(*1 Cor.* vi. 13.)

“Who shall be *punished with everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.”—(*2 Thess.* i. 9.)

This passage, already quoted more than once, is one of great force and distinctness. The preceding verse speaks of the day when the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God. Such persons shall be *punished*. If the question is asked of those who hold

To ruin; to annihilate a thing by demolishing; 3rd. To ruin; to bring to naught; to annihilate. 6th. To take away; to cause to cease; to put an end to. 8th. In general, to put an end to, to annihilate a thing, or the form in which it exists.—*Webster's Dictionary*.

“Destroy”—To pull down any building or structure, anything built or constructed; to demolish, to overthrow, to subvert, to lay waste, to ruin, to put to death, to kill.—*Richardson's English Dictionary*.

“Destroy”—1. To overturn a city; to raze a building; to ruin; 2. To lay waste, to make desolate; 4. To kill; 5. To put an end to, to bring to naught.—*Johnson's Dictionary*, by Todd.

the ordinary dogma: How shall the wicked be punished? the answer given is,—the wicked will be punished with an endless existence in woe and anguish; but the inspired apostle gives a far different reply—they “shall be punished with everlasting *destruction* from the presence of the Lord.” Do the words, “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord,” denote that they shall *exist* for ever in torment when removed? Does not this interpretation fail to give any force to the word *destruction*? Is not the plain meaning rather, that the wicked shall be—not, punished with banishment from God’s presence, but, as it were, blotted out from his creation by an everlasting destruction? If no other passage was found in Scripture, there would be enough in this single statement to justify the conclusion that, the souls of lost sinners cannot exist for ever in the future state, whatever difficulties may suggest themselves in the interpretation of other passages which relate to their condition.

“Whose end is *destruction*.”—(*Phil.* iii. 19.)

“Then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall *destroy* with the brightness of his coming.”—(*2 Thess.* ii. 8.)

“Which drown men in *destruction* and perdition.”—(*1 Tim.* vi. 9.)

It would appear, from the foregoing verse from 2 Thess. ii. 8, that the Devil himself shall be destroyed,—consumed with the spirit of the Lord’s mouth, and destroyed with the brightness of his coming. If, then, the end of the Evil One shall be destruction, it is unreasonable to suppose that the final doom of those of mortal race, who have fallen captive to his will, shall be one far exceeding that imposed upon the arch-fiend himself.

“There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to *destroy*.”—(*James*, iv. 12.)

“Which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own *destruction*.”—(*2 Peter*, iii. 16.)

“I will kill her children with *death*.”—(*Rev.* ii. 23.)

Another interpretation of the sense, in which the term “death” is to be understood, when applied to the condition of the lost, is afforded by the language which announces that, the ungodly shall *perish*, as in the following passages :

“The way of the ungodly shall *perish*.”*—(*Ps.* i. 6.)

“It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should *perish*.”—(*Matt.* xviii. 14.)

“That whosoever believeth in him should not *perish*, but have everlasting life.”—(*John*, iii. 16.)

“And they shall never *perish*.”—(*John*, x. 28.)

“As many as have sinned without law shall also *perish* without law.”—(*Rom.* ii. 12.)

“The preaching of the cross is to them that *perish* foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God.”—(*1 Cor.* i. 18.)

How true is this statement! Man in his unregenerate state cannot understand the simplicity of the Gospel. To the carnal mind it is but foolishness to suppose that, God should grant salvation of his free and unmerited grace. Let man have but something to do or leave undone, some mighty deed to achieve, some special sin to avoid, as the ground whence he may claim acceptance with God, and all will be thought reasonable: but to receive eternal life as a free gift,—of grace and not of works,—is far too simple to please the natural mind. The conduct of such persons is like that of Naaman the Syrian, when directed to wash in Jordan—“Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?”† But what says God? “I will destroy the wisdom of the

* “Perish, from *pereo*, to go; literally, to depart wholly, to come to nothing.”

“As in him perish all men, so in thee

As from a second root shall be restor'd,

As many as are restor'd, without thee none.”—*Paradise Lost*.

† 2 Kings, v. 12.

wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."

"Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are *perished*."—(1 *Cor.* xv. 18.)

"In them that are saved, and in them that *perish*."—(2 *Cor.* ii. 15.)

"With all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that *perish*."—(2 *Thess.* ii. 10.)

"Shall utterly *perish* in their own *corruption*."—(2 *Peter*, ii. 12.)

Again, in application to the destiny of the lost, the term *perdition* is frequently used :

"Which is to them an evident token of *perdition*."—(*Phil.* i. 28.)

"That man of sin be revealed, the son of *perdition*."—(2 *Thess.* ii. 3.)

"Which drown men in destruction and *perdition*."—(1 *Tim.* vi. 9.)

"Who draw back unto *perdition*."—(*Heb.* x. 39.)

"The heavens are reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and *perdition* of ungodly men."—(2 *Peter*, iii. 7.)

The same agent of destruction by which God will destroy the world, will also involve in destruction the unredeemed at the day of judgment.

Other phraseology occurs, which though less direct, is yet not less significant as to the end of the unredeemed—thus, "He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap *corruption*." Now, it is not that the flesh shall reap corruption, but that the *soul* shall be subjected thereunto, in a sense similar to that in which "life everlasting," shall be the fruition of a "sowing to the spirit." As corruption of the flesh is induced by physical death, so the soul of the lost sinner will be subjected to an analogous result ; as the animal body of flesh when dissolved by corruption has ceased any longer to be flesh, so too the soul shall after a similar manner be dissolved.

Illustrations without number are also afforded, which testify to the like conclusion. Thus—"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. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. *Even thus shall it be* in the day when the Son of man is revealed."* Again, in Matthew,† and in the corresponding passages in Mark and Luke, intimations are given by the Lord himself, as to the punishment to be inflicted upon those who reject his authority and kingship. When the nobleman spoken of in the parable, sent forth his armies, it was to *destroy* his enemies, and burn their city; and the king, directed that his rebellious subjects should be brought forth and slain before him. Thus as the former were destroyed, and the latter were brought forth and slain, so, too, those who reject Christ shall in like manner perish. It cannot be supposed that the idea gathered by those who listened to the words of Christ, when he presented to them the foregoing illustrations, was that the enemies of the king continued to exist after they had been destroyed and slain.

Another striking illustration is afforded by the passage, "Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will *grind him to powder*."‡ That stone was Christ,—the Rock, the corner stone;—and the passage has, doubtless, a spiritual signification. The illustration of a heavy stone falling on a material substance, and grinding it to powder, denotes the utter destruction of that subjected to the crushing weight. The result to the soul will be analogous: it is unreasonable to urge that, because the

* Luke, xvii. 20—30. † Matt. xxii. 7; Mark, xii. 9; Luke, xix. 27; xx. 16.

‡ Luke, xx. 18.

particles of the natural substance remain in the condition of powder, therefore, the soul upon which that stone shall fall, shall continue in conscious existence. The metaphor does not warrant such an inference; the substantial idea conveyed is plain, and the force of the illustration, as applied to the punishment of the lost, is distinct and certain. It would be difficult to select an illustration which so powerfully conveys the idea of total destruction.

The unredeemed are again spoken of as the "lost," in contradistinction to the "saved." The loss of life is placed in contrast with the promise of life. Thus, in Matthew, and the parallel passages in Luke,* it is written, "He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it;"—he who alone regards life in this world shall lose life in the next. The "loss" of life hereafter is wholly inconsistent with the fact, that future punishment shall be, not *loss of life*, but a continuance of life in endless misery. Christ came to seek and to save the "lost;" if the Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are "lost," and, "what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and *lose* his own soul?"†

The several passages quoted are distinct and unambiguous; "death," the wages of sin; "destruction," the punishment of the wicked; "perdition," the final end of the ungodly, is the testimony rendered alike by all. Such is the plain language of Scripture, and what can be urged on the opposite side? The language of allegory, of parable, and of figure,—language which ought not, *by its very nature*, to be construed according to the letter; and which admits, as has been shown in the last chapter, a plain and reasonable interpretation consistent with the simple declarations, to which attention has been called.

Admitting that difficulties arise in the interpretation of allegory, parable, and figure; must the *plain* assertions of Scripture, on that account, be forced from their natural and obvious import? Surely not; no such *necessity* exists, for the

* Matt. x. 39. Luke, ix. 24; xvii. 33; xix. 10. † Mark, viii. 36.

figurative language relied on admits of explanation in accordance with the declarations of God's word, without violating a single rule of construction or refusing to give to each its due weight and significance; and thus the truth contended for in these pages—that the destiny of the soul after the final judgment, is one, either of life or death, is forced upon the conviction in a manner and with a force which cannot be resisted.

Other considerations are not wanting, which supply direct and positive arguments in favour of, and which strongly confirm the reasonableness of, the truth contended for.

First—That which God confers upon his people is a *gift*. Eternal life is as unpurchasable as it is unmerited on the part of man. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."* "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the *gift* of God."† Now what does a gift imply? It signifies not only that, that which is bestowed is conferred without consideration or merit on the part of the recipient, but also that it has not been before possessed. If, then, eternal life is the *gift* of God, it must fulfil the above requisites. As it is *conferred* of grace, it cannot be *possessed* by man in his unregenerate state, or by virtue of his creation. If man was created so that in himself he possesses a soul which cannot die, then immortality cannot be the gift of God to man. Happiness would be a gift, but happiness is not the essence of that which is promised. But if eternal life be, as it is in truth, a *gift*; then receiving that gift, the soul becomes immortal. It must otherwise remain in its normal condition, subject to death.

Secondly—"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."‡ The sinner in becoming the child of God, must be born again,—born not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible; begotten in Christ Jesus unto a lively hope; born not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Every

* Rom. ix. 16.

† Eph. ii. 8.

‡ John iii. 3.

believer then, in his present state of being has, a double sonship, a sonship in Adam, and a sonship in Christ, with whom he is constituted a joint heir of eternal life. Immortality for the soul is the property of every believer, acquired by virtue of his spiritual birth. Death is the inheritance derived through Adam; life that inheritance of the soul which is incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away. Thus, as in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive, or according to a more correct rendering, * “so all who are in Christ shall be made alive.” A new birth implies a new existence—a new life; and those who shall not be born again, can have no title to immortality. It has been well remarked that God “imparted to man the Divine image before He united to man the Divine nature.”† This was the order of God’s work in the creation and redemption of man. God created man imparting a moral entity or soul formed after the Divine image; but it is through Christ, the second Adam, that the Deity unites to man the Divine nature,—bestowing thereby that immortality which He alone possesses, commencing in this life in the case of every sinner who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, and received in its fullness and completeness, when the new heaven, and the new earth, from which all sin is excluded, shall have been formed, and when the course of this age or dispensation shall have wholly passed away. The victory of God over Satan, will then be exemplified in the utter failure of the latter to involve, as he believed he had succeeded in doing, a race of beings in an endless existence of misery and woe.

It may be asked, what reasonable object can be suggested, if the views insisted on are correct, for the resurrection of the wicked? why should they arise, if it is God’s purpose that they shall, at the judgment day, be condemned to eternal death? Why should not the soul be permitted by God

* Dodwell on the Soul.

† Miller’s Testimony of the Rocks, 218.

to die immediately upon physical death, and why reserve this result for the day of judgment? No certain answer can, perhaps, be given to this objection; but it is suggested that there are reasonable grounds why the wicked should arise, and with the saved *together* stand before God and receive the announcement of their righteous doom. In the first place, there is thereby secured that conscious existence in the intermediate state, in which the wicked shall endure the expectation of their coming judgment and the wages of their sin; but further, and chiefly, it is for God's glory that *all* should appear before his throne to testify to his sovereignty, and to be convinced of his truth and justice. If it were not so, those who depart this life in ignorance of God, and in persistent refusal to acknowledge his existence and authority, would never be able to appreciate or understand the full nature of the punishment they shall receive, in being everlastingly destroyed. The sin of the wicked in rejecting Christ must be manifested even to themselves. They must, at the last, be brought to a consciousness of the reality of that eternal life they have fallen short of and disregarded.

Thirdly—The doctrine of the resurrection, as it is set forth in Scripture, confirms the correctness of the statement that, Adam was created subject to physical death, and enforces the conclusion that the curse or penalty for sin had reference to his spiritual entity, or soul. It will be remembered that the proposition asserted to be true, is that, the animal body conferred upon Adam was never intended or adapted by God to the enjoyment of an immortal existence; and consequently, that the penalty of "death" had reference to, and took effect upon, that entity which distinguished him from pre-existing animal creation. On the other hand, it is alleged by those who hold the popular opinion, that but for the fall, Adam would have enjoyed a physical immortality, and that then, for the first time, were introduced into his physical constitution the seeds of decay and death,

while the soul continued to preserve its essential immortality.

In judging between the two statements it is important to consider what the Scriptures teach concerning the resurrection. It is commonly alleged that the "resurrection of the body," meaning thereby the corporeal frame—the physical body which has passed through the various phases of this mortal life—is taught in Scripture. This is an error, but it is one which follows of necessity from the preceding error, of supposing man's animal body to have been free from the natural law of dissolution and death *before* the fall. It is asserted that, the *very body* will arise, because it has been concluded that the body was at first created to enjoy immortal existence: with this result the fall having interfered by introducing physical death into the world, the body, it is alleged, at the resurrection will arise and again be endowed with immortal functions.

The mistake consists in supposing that *the* body will arise, —in supposing that the body, and not the soul is that which constitutes the true person. The body no more constitutes the person, than the dress a man wears constitutes the man; but in addition, and what is of more importance, the resurrection of *the* body is nowhere asserted in Scripture, that is, if the body is to be regarded as identical with that tabernacle which the soul may be said to inhabit in its present sphere of existence. The resurrection of *the* body is one thing—a resurrection body is quite a different thing, and it is the latter which is spoken of in Scripture, and not the former. That each individual will arise, that each will possess his individual personality, and that the soul will possess *a* body is assuredly taught in God's word. The animal body is for ever taken leave of when cast off in physical death, and the believer rises to be clothed upon with a heavenly body, suited to the soul's new inheritance. If this view is authorised by Scripture, then there is additional reason for holding that the penalty of death announced to Adam had no

reference to the animal nature conferred upon man at creation, and that it must have had direct application to the soul.

The expression, "resurrection of *the* body," has been adopted in one of the creeds; and hence the belief that *the* body shall arise and be reunited to the soul, has received the assent of so many persons. Archbishop Whately remarks: "Throughout the Scriptures, the phrase 'resurrection of the body,' or 'resurrection of the flesh,' nowhere occurs. The Scriptures only speak of man's resurrection from the dead:"* and he adds, the phrase was introduced to meet the assertions of those who attempted to explain away the resurrection as a mere figure—those of whom the apostle writes, "Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is passed already."† It is by no means necessary to the reality of a future state, or to the fulness of the believer's joy, to maintain that *the* body must arise. The truth of a personal resurrection by no means requires that, the animal body, the tabernacle of flesh, shall again be united to the soul. The resurrection of *the dead* is the great fact; and the language of Scripture precludes the belief that, the soul will be reunited to a body of similar constitution, or of a like kind, to that abandoned in death.

The learned writer above mentioned, refers to the heresy which at a very early period crept into the Church, and to counteract which, the language used in the Apostles' Creed was adopted; and it may be remarked that, the language of the Nicene Creed is different from that of the former on this very subject, and is more correct. The heresy itself is noticed and controverted in the fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, a chapter from which the believer loves to draw consolation, and by which the spirit is elevated above and beyond the cares and anxieties of a transitory life. There were many in St. Paul's day professing themselves to be Christians, who maintained that there was no resurrection,

* *Scripture Revelations concerning a Future State*, p. 118. † 2 Tim. ii. 18.

or that it had already passed. It may well be imagined how the hearts and hopes of believers,—of those who, at that period in the Church's history are stated to have been in this life of all men most miserable, were depressed and troubled by so serious an error; and with what gladness and joy they must have read the clear and distinct assurance of the apostle,—as in Adam all die, so all who are in Christ shall be made alive.

It will be observed that, there are three subjects treated of in this chapter:* First—The fact of a resurrection, “how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?” Secondly—The power by which the dead are raised, “how are the dead raised up?” And thirdly—The body in which they shall arise, “with what body do they come?” Now, the denial of the first was equivalent to a denial of the whole scheme of Christianity. If the objection was well founded, the preaching of the apostles was vain, the believer's faith was vain, he was yet in his sins, and further, they—the apostles—were found to be false witnesses of God. The second and third topics treated of, are those which chiefly concern the question in hand; and certainly there is nothing in the language or argument of the apostle to lead to the conclusion that the animal body shall be re-united to the soul,—quite the reverse. St. Paul points out to his readers that, the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is not without an analogy in their every-day experience; that physical death did not involve extinction, but, on the contrary, is a necessary step to life, in a higher and better state; and this truth he illustrates by the familiar example of the seed of corn which must die in order to germinate. This was the direct aim St. Paul had in view, and the truth he sought to illustrate before he proceeded to the inquiry—“with what body do they come?” and the entire force of the argument is lost sight of, if it be concluded that, because a seed of corn produces a seed of

* 1 Cor. xv.

corn after the plant has fructified, and become mature ; so man's soul, upon his resurrection, must be reunited to that very body it occupied while on earth. Not only will the analogy be carried beyond what the circumstances warrant, but the succeeding observations of the apostle prove the impossibility of such a result taking place, and establish that the body with which the soul shall be clothed, is a body quite distinct in its nature from that which man now possesses. Thus, the apostle remarks, there are various kinds of bodies, there are bodies terrestrial, and bodies celestial, which are perfectly distinct ; and it is for a body celestial, and not *the* body terrestrial, that the believer looks forward, "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Beyond the fact that, the body shall be a "*celestial body*," the apostle does not pretend to describe ; indeed St. John states : "It doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is,"* a statement which is quite irreconcilable with a belief that the *very body* which is sown in death shall be re-united to the soul at the resurrection. But although it doth not yet appear what the body shall be, the apostle shows plainly enough, what it shall not be. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." "It is sown a natural body ; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." Whately observes on this passage that, "the sense here is obscured by the word '*natural*,' which unfortunately is found in our version ; for it quite disguises the connection of thought between this and the next verse, where Adam is spoken of as a 'living soul.' The real sense would be much better expressed in modern English by saying, instead of '*natural body*,' animal body ; that is, a body possessed of animal life."† The expression, it is raised "*a spiritual body*," plainly shews

* 1 John, iii. 2.

† *Scripture Revelations*, App. 398.

that the body to be conferred at the resurrection, is a body altogether different from the natural or animal body, "for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

The following note upon this subject is taken from Conybeare and Howson's *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*,* and is deserving of attention:—The importance of the subject justifies our quoting at some length the admirable remarks of Dr. Burton (formerly Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford) on this passage, in the hope that his high reputation for learning and for unblemished orthodoxy may lead some persons to reconsider the loose and unscriptural language which they are in the habit of using. After regretting that some of the early Fathers have (when treating of the *Resurrection of the Body*) appeared to contradict those words of St. Paul, Dr. Burton continues as follows:—It is nowhere asserted in the New Testament that we shall rise again *with our bodies*. Unless a man will say that the stalk, the blade, and the ear of corn are actually the same thing with the single grain which is put into the ground, he cannot quote St. Paul as saying that we shall rise again with the same bodies; or at least he must allow that the future body may only be like to the present one, inasmuch as both come under the same genus; *i.e.* we speak of human *bodies*, and we speak of heavenly *bodies*. But St. Paul's words do not warrant us in saying that the resemblance between the present and future body will be greater than between a man and a star, or between a bird and a fish. Nothing can be plainer than the expression which he uses in the first of these two analogies. *Thou sowest not that body that shall be* (xv. 37). He says also, with equal plainness, of the body, *it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body: there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body* (ver. 44.) These words require to be examined

* Vol. ii. p. 66.

closely, and involve remotely a deep metaphysical question. In common language, the terms *Body* and *Spirit* are accustomed to be opposed, and are used to represent two things, which are totally distinct. But St. Paul here brings the two expressions together, and speaks of a *spiritual body*. St. Paul, therefore, did not oppose *Body* to *Spirit*; and though the looseness of modern language may allow us to do so, and yet to be correct in our ideas, it may save some confusion if we consider *Spirit* as opposed to *Matter*, and if we take *Body* to be a generic term which comprises both. A *body*, therefore, in the language of St. Paul, is something which has a distinct individual existence. St. Paul tells us that every individual, when he rises again, will have a spiritual body: but the remarks which I have made may show how different is the idea conveyed by these words, from the notions which some persons entertain, that we shall rise again with *the same identical body*. St. Paul appears effectually to preclude this notion, when he says, "*Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.*"

As, then, believers have possessed in their humanity a body after the image of the earthy, so shall they possess in that kingdom prepared for them, from before the foundation of the world, a body after the image of the heavenly. Each is derived from a different source. The fifth chapter of the second Epistle to the Corinthians contains language entirely consistent with what has been just urged. The animal body is there spoken of as the "earthly house of this tabernacle;" and that with which the soul is to be clothed is spoken of "as a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." In *this*, the believer groans, not that he would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life, or superseded by the possession of a *body* adapted to the soul, newly gifted with immortality.

Some persons may suggest, however, that the dead shall be raised in their animal bodies, and that subsequently

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a great change or transformation will take place into that spiritual body in which the saved shall enjoy the eternal inheritance prepared for them. Those who advocate this opinion overlook the express statement—"it is raised a spiritual body;" nor is there any intimation given of such a change as is suggested, in the case of those who shall be "*raised*." It is true that a change shall take place in the case of those, who shall "be alive and remain" at the coming of the Lord. The dead shall be raised incorruptible,* and those who are then alive shall be "*changed*;"† as in 1 Thess. iv. 17, "The dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds," and as in Phil. iii. 21, Christ "shall change our *vile* body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body."

The earth may be regarded as one vast garden during the period of seed time. Death sows the seed; and around on every side are planted beneath earth's surface, those whose bodies shall return to dust in accordance with the announcement made to man, "dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." But they are planted in the hope of a glorious resurrection, and when the spring time comes, the garden shall bloom with forms of surpassing loveliness, whose fragrance shall ever offer homage to God the Creator and Redeemer. The forms committed to earth shall bear no further resemblance to the forms which shall then adorn the new heaven and the new earth, than the bulbous root bears to the matchless lily. The dead shall rise with a spiritual body and those of the redeemed who shall be then on earth, shall be changed.

But it may be objected that Christ arose from the dead with his natural body, or in a body similar to that which he before possessed, and by which he had been previously known on earth; that He departed unto heaven in the same

* This language is addressed, and applies to believers alone.

† 1 Cor. xv. 51.

body; that angels announced that He should come again in like manner; and finally, that the apostle declares that when Christ "shall appear we shall be like him." Now this objection is not of the value which at first sight may appear. Christ, no doubt, after his resurrection, appeared to his disciples in a body which was handled and felt; but while this was so, the manner in which Christ revealed himself from time to time after his resurrection, warrants the belief that, while by virtue of Divine power, he assumed his human body, as on the occasion referred to, in order to convince Thomas, yet such is not the glorified body which He possesses at the Father's right hand, and which his saints shall yet enjoy. No light is thrown by Scripture upon the manner or form in which Christ *actually* arose. The earliest intimation afforded was that of the angel to Mary Magdalene—"He is risen; he is not here; behold the place where they laid him."* A little reflection will show the absolute necessity which existed, that Christ *after* his resurrection should have appeared in that human form in which he was previously known to his disciples. If He had shown himself in a purely spiritual form, or in a body different to that in which he had ministered on earth, there would have been absolutely no evidence upon which his disciples could have relied, that "the man" Christ Jesus had arisen from the dead, and was in truth, as he professed himself to be, the Son of God. It was necessary that Christ should assume, when he rose from the dead, that *very body* which had suffered upon the cross, if the fact of his resurrection was to be attested, and if those who associated with him on earth, were to be constituted as witnesses upon whose testimony succeeding ages might rely. Hence he showed himself to Thomas, and pointed out the print of the nails and the wound in his side. In the absence of such evidence, so cogent and overwhelming, the

* Mark, xvi. 6.

reality of Christ's revelation, could never have claimed the belief of mankind. That great event upon the certainty and reality of which the whole Christian religion turns,—that event which proves the Divine nature of Christ, would have remained unattested; and the chief source of the believer's confidence would have been removed—“for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.*

There is, then, it is submitted, no warrant for concluding that the body which Christ assumed upon his resurrection is that glorified one which he now possesses, in which he shall again appear, and to which his people shall be made like. He ascended into heaven with his natural body, for the same reason that he showed himself to his disciples in it, after he had risen from the dead; viz., to certify the fact of the ascension, as he had certified the fact of the resurrection: and though it was announced that, as he ascended, so, in like manner, he shall come again, the language may be fairly regarded as applicable rather to the *manner* than to the *form* in which Christ shall appear†—as he departed visibly, so also he shall return in visible form as the Lord Jesus Christ, when he comes “to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.”

Do the observations just made, appear to remove from the believer the prospect of meeting and recognising in heaven those he loved on earth? Assuredly not. Is it not forming a low estimate of what the child of God *shall* be, to conclude that physical resemblance must be retained to enable the redeemed to recognise one another. May not the soul be so

* 1 Thess. iv. 14.

† After His resurrection “He appeared suddenly, and vanished suddenly, when He pleased:—when it pleased Him, He eat, He spoke, He walked; but His body was the body of the resurrection;—only not yet his *Body of Glory* (Phil. iii. 21), because he had *not yet assumed* that Glory; but that He could assume it, and did assume it at His Ascension will be granted by all who believe in Him as the Son of God.”—Alford, G. T., Luke, xxiv. 53.

endowed with qualities and attributes, that each will recognise the other, apart from earthly form, and though clothed in the heavenly garments: nay, must it not be so? Physical resemblances are limited by time and circumstances, and powers of recognition depending on any such basis, must of necessity be uncertain and unsatisfactory.

But what bearing has the question of the resurrection of the body upon the general subject? Simply this, that if when the dead arise, the soul is re-united to the body, as generally asserted, it might reasonably be presumed that the animal body was at the first created free from the law of decay and death, and that one of the principal results of Adam's transgression was physical death. Whereas, if Scripture warrants the allegation, that the animal body returns for ever to that dust of which it was formed, and that the soul will possess a celestial body distinct from the former; then the proposition that the animal body was created subject to dissolution, is confirmed, and the full weight of the punishment announced by God as the consequence of sin can alone be deemed, with propriety, to have fallen upon that entity or soul which distinguished man from all other animals.

In judging between the doctrine of "eternal existence in torment," and the doctrine of "eternal death," and weighing the claims of each for acceptance, it is most important to note the language used by the apostles in the preaching of the Gospel, and the course adopted by them in their missionary labours. In the many instances left on record in the Acts of the Apostles, where the truth is earnestly pressed, and the Gospel is made known as the power of God unto salvation, there is a total absence of appeal to the doctrine of *eternal existence of the lost in torment*; while on the contrary, the sole inducement invariably held out, is the attainment of everlasting life. Surely this fact is a striking one, and affords a contrast to the course pursued by many at the present day, who love to

present to their congregations, "piercing sights" of endless woe, in the agonising torment of an everlasting hell.

When, upon the day of Pentecost, the apostles were endowed with power from on high, and began for the first time (for they were commanded to abide at Jerusalem until then) to preach the Gospel in its fulness, and the true character of the Christian revelation was made known; then it was, that a plain exposition of this terrible dogma—if a *divine truth*—a dogma so well calculated to stir up the mind, and compel men through fear of the consequences to embrace Christ, might have been expected. Christianity was in its infancy. It had to struggle with, and overcome the systems of Paganism by which it was surrounded and to which it was opposed; *then* it was that miraculous gifts were conferred for the purpose of attesting its Divine origin; and *then* equally well as now, it would have been advisable to excite the attention of mankind, not alone with the joys of heaven but with the agonies of hell. Yet in the missionary record of the primitive Church, there is a total absence of any reference to such a motive;—so much so, that not even the happiness of the blessed is expressly set forth in Sacred Writ, lest it might be suggested that the eternal wretchedness of the lost, was by implication asserted. Eternal life through Christ was the Alpha and Omega of the apostles' teaching. The terrible dogma of an everlasting existence in sin and woe, was never relied on; and why? Can it be supposed that the apostles and early missionaries of the Cross overlooked the power, or were ignorant of the efficiency, of such a truth—if truth it was—to induce men to come to Jesus? Is it not a reasonable conclusion, that the doctrine was not held *by them*, as one of Divine truth; that the opinion so earnestly contended for by the world at the present day, had then no existence? Examples are abundant in which the apostles' advocacy is founded on the constraining power of Christ's love, but instances will be in vain sought, where St. Paul or any other apostle, addressing the

unconverted, exhorts them to embrace the Gospel in order to ensure escape from an endless existence in misery. Eternal life through Christ, the righteous indignation of God, and judgment to come, are set forth ; but in no instance is the rejection of the truth represented as followed by an eternal existence of the soul in agony. The opportunities were not a few, when such a doctrine might have been urged with effect, if only it had been authorised by the teaching of the Divine Spirit.

The earliest address on record, after the ascension of Christ, was that delivered by Peter on the day of Pentecost. It was the first occasion, as has been remarked, upon which the doctrines of the new religion were publicly taught. A vast multitude had collected to the place where the disciples were assembled, attracted by the announcement of the miraculous gift of tongues. There were men present of every nation under heaven, filled with wonder at what they saw and heard. Peter seized upon the occasion, and proved to the multitude that, that same Jesus who had been so recently crucified, had risen from the dead, and was in truth and fact THE Christ. He quotes the language of the prophet, "that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved," and with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation."* No allusion is here made to the eternal existence of the lost, no display of unalterable anguish to be for ever endured by impenitent sinners. Again, at Antioch, Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and indignantly addressing the opposing Jews, exclaimed, "It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you ; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."† The language indicates that Paul spoke under the influence of warm and excited feelings. The occasion was such as would have justified, not merely

* Acts, ii. 21, 40.

† Acts, xiii. 46

expressions which convey, that the Jews judged themselves unworthy of eternal life, but that they righteously incurred the inevitable consequence of everlasting misery, by their rejection of the Gospel. A like opportunity was afforded at Corinth; yet when the Jews and Gentiles blasphemed and opposed themselves, Paul shook his raiment, and said unto them—"Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles."* And again, on another occasion, when at Rome, Paul unsuccessfully argued with the Jews, his words were, "Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it."†

The language referred to, having regard to the circumstances under which it was spoken, and to the occasions upon which it was used, is, it is submitted, quite incompatible with the belief by St. Paul of the opinion ordinarily held. It is not contended that, positive proof is afforded, by the absence of any reference to the everlasting existence in torment of those who reject the Gospel, that the doctrine is untrue; but, doubtless, when the many direct statements of God's word, already noticed in the present chapter, are borne in mind, such language when used by the inspired apostles on the occasions above mentioned, affords ample ground for concluding that no such doctrine as the popular one, was revealed.

When St. Paul spoke to Felix of the coming judgment, the latter trembled. The judgment will be such as may well make men tremble. The doom of everlasting destruction and death is well calculated to strike awe into the guilty; but no inspired writer, in treating of the end of those who know not God, has ever adopted the sentiments or used the language, which frail and erring man is in the habit of indulging, when in the ear of the impenitent sinner he shouts "his righteous doom." Was not salvation to

* Acts, xviii. 6.

† Acts, xxviii. 28.

eternal life through the sacrifice of Christ, the Alpha and Omega of the apostles' teaching—the gift held forth to a dying world? The passages in which the glorious nature of that gift is referred to, its happiness, its purity, and its joy; in which sanctification and holiness are enforced, are passages addressed alone to those who profess themselves disciples of the great Redeemer. To those who have not yet believed, the simple exhortation is to come to Christ that they might have life, and possess it more abundantly. This is just the reverse of what man's wisdom would have devised, and has in fact adopted. It is a proof that the Gospel has a higher origin than the suggestions of man's heart. If the Gospel scheme of life had been cunningly devised by human ingenuity, what so natural as to dwell upon the joys and felicities which await those who shall be saved; what so likely, as to enlarge on that eternal existence in torment which must await the lost; what so probable as that, the circumstances of a happy life, and the circumstances of a wretched existence, should have been described in detail and carefully contrasted, as inducements, for the sake of which the religion of Christ should be embraced. Thus it was with the religion of Mahomet. If the apostles had been taught of man, and not of God, they would, no doubt, have thus acted; but while eternal life is promised to all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the declaration concerning the lost is explicit—they "*shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.*"

The popular dogma never formed a portion of that Gospel scheme which, springing from infinite Love, breathes mercy, peace, and good-will towards men. It is a dogma based on the speculations of Pagan philosophy; raised to the dignity of alleged truth, by an adulterous alliance between Paganism and Christianity, and fostered by an unscrupulous priesthood—a class which has ever sought to lead captive the mind of man for the sake of gain. It is not of God. It

bears no stamp upon it of the Divine mind or character: it may have the name, but not the power of godliness.

Jesus Christ the Saviour of sinners; eternal life the gift of God, and everlasting destruction the punishment of the wicked; was the message of Good News preached by the early missionaries of the Cross. Man should have a care in departing from their example, and preaching another gospel (which is not another) than they preached; and thereby subject themselves to the anathema denounced against those who take away from, or add to, the words of the Book of this Life. "It is certain," writes Archbishop Whately, in his view of the Scripture Revelations concerning a Future State, "It is certain that the words 'life,' 'eternal life,' 'immortality,' &c., are always applied to the condition of those, and of those only, who shall, at the last day be approved as 'good and faithful servants,' who are to 'enter into the joy of their Lord.'"

CHAPTER VIII.

RELATION OF THE TRUTH CONTENDED FOR TO OTHER TRUTHS SET FORTH IN THE GOSPEL—CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

It is submitted, from what has been already urged, that no reasonable doubt can any longer exist that LIFE or DEATH after the final judgment, is the destiny of the soul ; that this conclusion is in strict accordance with the whole tenor of natural and revealed religion, and is expressly authorised by the language of the New Testament.

It remains to consider shortly the relation which the conclusion arrived at, bears to other truths set forth in Scripture, and to call attention to some considerations which tend to confirm its correctness, but which, until now, could not be properly entertained.

It is proposed, then, to contrast the two opinions—that of the soul's eternal existence in torment, and that of the soul's eternal death, in connection with the excellencies of God's attributes as they are revealed in his word, and to point out the many respects in which the latter opinion harmonises with Divine love, and that moral sense of man which is derived from the Deity himself, and to which God, in his word, again and again appeals.

It is particularly desired that no misapprehension should prevail in regard to the use of such a line of argument—one which, in its proper place, is unobjectionable, and in many respects of great value. It may, perhaps, be urged that it is presumptuous to measure any alleged purpose or

act of God, by human conceptions of what is right and just, inasmuch as God's thoughts are not as man's thoughts, nor are God's ways, man's ways. This is undoubtedly true. When once God has announced his will, and when that which he declares has been once ascertained with certainty, whatever be the aspect in which it presents itself to the mind, it must be accepted as in complete harmony with all the attributes of his perfect nature; and to question God's intentions thus revealed or discovered, on the ground that they do not accord with what man may think proper, would indeed be an act of pride and impiety. Accordingly, if God has, in truth, revealed that man possesses an immortal soul, and that the destiny of the lost shall be eternal existence in torment, in such case, notwithstanding all that may be written or said to the contrary, it must needs be accepted as perfectly consistent with absolute justice and infinite love. But on the other hand, if a *doubt* is cast upon the *alleged* revelation of God's will—not the book, but the dogma; if the intimations afforded of his intentions are capable of an interpretation different to that alleged; if there be strong grounds in his word, whence it may be concluded that that, which is said to be truth, may be, in point of fact, a misconception of what God has announced as his purpose; then, indeed, that line of argument which, in the former case would have been presumptuous, becomes justifiable; and further still, if the result operates to establish a beautiful harmony, and removes from the infidel and sceptic all excuse for casting reproach upon the Deity, it is manifest that God's glory and honour imperatively demand this very course of investigation. It is because no sympathy is extended to those who seek to force the teaching of Revelation into consistency with what is agreeable to their feelings, that particular reference to such considerations has hitherto been carefully avoided. No argument was relied on, so long as the ordinary dogma of belief was under discussion upon the authority of God's word, that it presented

objections which were difficult to reconcile with the revealed declarations of his grace ; but when once a conclusion has been arrived at, supported by a great preponderance of testimony, then it must be deemed a matter of no small importance that the result thus accredited, is at once agreeable to man's moral nature, and calculated to elevate his conceptions of those attributes which the Deity must possess, and by virtue of which he demands the adoration and worship of all intelligent creation.

The duty is a plain one, and the right to adopt the course indicated is indisputable, for God can only claim man's worship and love through the exercise of those faculties with which, as Creator, he has endowed the creatures of his power. It is thus that, man's responsibility to God arises, and the right of private judgment is vindicated. Whatever, therefore, is *contrary* to reason must of necessity be untrue, nor can the inspired Word, consistently with the reality of its inspiration, contain a single statement *opposed* to reason, however it may comprise much that is *beyond* it. In like manner in regard to the qualities of love and justice, a similar conclusion must be adopted ; for just as God in his word deals with man as a reasoning being, so he deals in the same word with man through the affections, representing Himself as perfect in those very attributes in respect of which he claims man's homage. God's language is, "Give me thy whole heart;" and if the conclusion arrived at upon the subject treated of, commends itself to the *judgment* as at all warranted by Scripture, with how much greater force does it come home to the conscience, when God is regarded as the embodiment of perfect and ineffable love ?

It is submitted, that the opinion advanced in these pages as being the truth set forth in Scripture upon this important subject, exalts the Divine character ; displays in a high degree the Divine benevolence ; vindicates God's justice ; and elicits the sentiments of admiration, gratitude, and devotion. If this be so, and if the conclusion can be sup-

ported with *substantial* reasons, even though not *absolutely proved*; there is ample warrant to assert that, it is for God's glory, it should be known and accepted. It is with this intent that the investigation has been pursued.

Few will be bold enough to deny that, the opinion which maintains the eternal death of the wicked, harmonises *more perfectly* with human conceptions of Divine goodness, and is *more consistent* with the Divine nature, than that which requires an endless state of suffering for the lost. The harmony is more perfect, the principle of action more consistent upon the former assumption, than it is upon the latter. Not only is this the case, when the Deity is regarded apart from revelation; but it is especially so, when God's character is viewed, as declared and manifested in the person of his only begotten Son "which is in the bosom of the Father." Man though corrupt and sin stained, is nevertheless conscious that, he possesses a capacity to recognise and admire, justice, mercy, benevolence, and love. From this consciousness man rightly infers that the Deity he is *bound* to worship, must possess the like qualities, though necessarily infinite in degree. The faculty to appreciate, and the power to experimentally experience the value and effect of such qualities, were imparted by God to man at the period of his creation; and so far as they exist, they owe their origin to the Divine agency and partake of the very essence of the like attributes possessed by God himself.

There is then the strongest presumption that the dealings of the Divine Being with the human race, must accord with the moral excellencies referred to; but when in addition, it is found that, God has exhibited himself with regard to mankind in relationships suggesting the most intimate ties; when He has so manifested his love to the world, as to give his only begotten Son to work out man's redemption consistently with Divine justice, the inference becomes irresistible that, God's purposes concerning man's future destiny shall be in complete accordance with those attributes in the

maintenance of which the Divine glory and honour are involved in a paramount degree. It is not too much to say that, an opinion which magnifies God's grace and love, and elevates man's conceptions of the Divine goodness, has an infinitely greater claim for acceptance than one which tends to darken the cloudless splendour of his majesty, and interferes in a *greater or less* degree with the homage of man's heart. If man loves God, because God first loved man; if the Almighty requires man to love him with the whole heart and soul, what can be said of those who attribute too willingly to a Being unfettered in action, save by the excellencies of his own nature, a purpose in regard to the majority of the human race which requires an eternal existence in unmitigated torment?

Let the full measure of the result be contemplated for a moment; let those precious declarations of God's love with which the Bible abounds, for the present be put aside; forget the relationships by reference to which He illustrates his regard to man; consider the subject simply with reference to God, as the Creator of the universe, possessed of sovereign power, and forming all things according to his will, and the dictates of his pleasure. What are the facts? God creates man; he confers upon him, as it is said, an undying soul; he places him in a garden—free, frail, and immortal. Surely the Divine Creator foreknew that man, possessing unrestricted freedom of will, *could* never, unaided, stand upright in His presence? Surely he was aware that Satan would tempt, and man would yield and become corrupt? *Yet, it is alleged, that with this knowledge God gave to man a soul which *can never* be subjected to death, which having become corrupt, must of necessity drag along a wretched existence in sin, through countless ages; a possession which will prove to myriads, if the popular opinion be correct, at once the source and subject of their greatest curse! It will be replied, God also planned a redemption, and perfected it by giving his Son to be a sacrifice. This is true, but

unless the benefit of this redemption is co-extensive, *not alone in its efficacy, but in its results*, with the evil it was provided to meet; unless *every man* born into the world is liberated from the curse, and is freed from the taint of transgression; the difficulty remains unaffected save in degree.

None can call in question the fact that a remnant alone, according to the election of grace, is saved; that broad is the way which leadeth to destruction, and many there be which enter in thereat, and that narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. It involves terrible thoughts of God to follow such considerations to their legitimate result, and to estimate the extent to which the popular opinion must carry those who adopt it. The mind must be led to reflect upon the vast number of human beings born into this world since Adam sinned, the inheritors of his nature and his curse; and to contemplate that, of this multitude whom no man can number, most of whom have never heard the name of Christ, not one of whom was a party to his own existence, and each of whom has been subjected to the dominant influence of evil in his own nature, and through external circumstances;—to contemplate that, the greater proportion of them, at all events, must retain the possession of an immortal soul in hopeless misery.* It is impossible to estimate this result without either calling in question the truthfulness of the popular creed, or

* If instead of the "glad tidings" that there exists a Being in whom all the excellencies which the highest human mind can conceive, exist in a degree inconceivable to us, I am informed that the world is ruled by a Being whose attributes are infinite, but what they are we cannot learn, nor what are the principles of his government, except that "the highest human morality which we are capable of conceiving," does not sanction them; convince me of it, and I will bear my fate as I may. But when I am told that I must believe this, and at the same time call this Being by the names which express and affirm the highest human morality, I say, in plain terms, that I will not.—*Examination of Sir W. Hamilton's Philosophy*, by J. S. Mill, p. 109.

doubting the exceeding riches of God's grace and love. If either alternative must be had recourse to, it is the former; doubt in regard to the latter cannot be admitted for a moment. It cannot be that God's justice demands, as a punishment, eternal existence in torment, for numberless beings born into this world, independently of their own control, burdened with an inheritance of sin, and assailed by potent lusts and temptations, as the just retribution for the transgressions of their first parent and the offences of their corrupted nature. Mankind can never, intelligently, accept the justice of such a condemnation, or admit its consistency with infinite love; and, if forced to yield an assent on the alleged authority of God's word, must, with difficulty, be brought to regard the Deity with sentiments other than those of dread and fear. The dogma, which asserts or involves the *necessity* of such a punishment, plucks from the diadem of God its brightest jewel, and deprives him of his most glorious attribute. How differently must the Deity be regarded, how exalted must His nature appear, when it is discovered that, while the sinner receives his well-merited punishment—eternal death in the loss of his soul, or being cast away—God confers the gift of eternal life upon those whom he hath given to his Son Jesus Christ?

Intimately connected with the foregoing considerations, is the important doctrine of Election—that doctrine which sets forth the Deity of his sovereign grace choosing whom he wills, as the objects of his favour unto life eternal. The love of God to man is manifested, not merely in providing the sacrifice for sin in the person and death of Christ, but in the new birth through the Spirit. It was *one* act of love to provide the sacrificial Lamb and accomplish the atonement; but as man by reason of his rebellion and sin, could never willingly profit by the sacrifice, or of himself come to Christ, *another* miracle of love was necessary to create the new heart, and to sow the seed of eternal life in the, as yet, unregenerate soul. This is the work of the Spirit. Marvel

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not, says Christ, "marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." Can man have any active part in this new birth? Can he merit salvation, or insist on regeneration as an act of justice in consideration of his own deservings? If so, the gift of life would cease to be a gift; it would be of debt and not of grace. Thus the benefit of Christ's death must be applied to the soul by the Divine Spirit, before the sinner can come to Christ and be made, through union with him, an heir of immortality. It was this great truth which seemed so strange to Nicodemus; and a truth it undoubtedly is, that the Spirit must directly dispose the heart of man to accept the proffered way of salvation. Experience abundantly proves the fact. Upon what other principle can it be explained that those who are found so earnest in the affairs of this world, so devoted to their advancement and success in life turn away with indifference from the great realities of a future state—from the message of "life unto life" given in the Gospel? Christ has died upon the cross; the way to glory has been manifested; the word is preached; but unless the Spirit *vitalises* the soul, it continues dead in trespasses and sins. The words of the Lord himself are,—“For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.”* Man has, however, no right to question the free exercise of God's grace in the salvation of whom he wills. He is the sole giver of Life eternal. He has the right to withhold it also. He has the undoubted power and authority to do what he likes with his own. Is man's eye evil because He is good? Hath not the potter power over the clay? Who art thou, oh man, that repliest against God? Does not the wind blow where it listeth. Is it not so, with each one born of the Spirit? These great truths are set forth in the words of Christ, when he says, “No man can come to me

* Mat. xiii. 15.

except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.”* In obedience to this drawing power exerted upon man’s heart, the sinner is led to Christ, and comes, not by an act of pure volition, but by the actual, though hidden power of the Divine Spirit.

There is that in man’s nature which supplies him with the power to *resist* the working of the Spirit ; and the rejection of the Messiah as a Saviour is the necessary consequence,—a result which cannot be otherwise, unless and until the natural man is vanquished, and the soul becomes regenerate. As well expect the lifeless corpse to arise, and take from the hand of the physician the healing draught. Man’s power is to *resist* and *reject* ; it is God’s prerogative to overcome the hostility of the sinner, to stop the progress of decay in those who are, so to speak, dead in trespasses and sins, and to regenerate the soul. He, and he alone, can supply that well of water which springeth up into life everlasting, and the newborn child of God can thus with entire truth exclaim, “Thou hast delivered *my soul* from death.”†

This aspect of the Divine sovereignty which gives to God the entire glory of redemption in the gift of his Son, as “the way, the truth, and the life”—not alone in a general sense applicable to the human race at large, but as regards the individual through the Spirit working on the heart—is in no way inconsistent with the invitations, which in the Gospel are addressed to all to come to Christ for life ; or with the assurance that *all* who come through Him, God will in no wise cast out. God is not willing that any should perish, and so he announces his gracious will ; and it is only requisite to bear in mind that, the latter statements must be taken in connection with other statements of equal authority, and to recognise the distinct office of the Spirit in the plan of salvation ; to understand that, while the Three Persons of the Godhead unite according to their peculiar offices in the salvation of each of the redeemed, yet in publishing the

* John, vi. 44.

† Ps. lvi. 13.

Gospel, by the aid of human instrumentality as the ordained means whereby the revelation of God's mercy is to be made known to sinners, it is man's duty simply to point to Christ crucified; to set forth Him who, as the Son of God perfected a sacrifice once for all, without determining the hidden work of the Spirit, which brings the Word with efficacy to the heart, confers the power to come to Christ, and sanctifies the new born soul.

It is not the object of the present inquiry to enter into a discussion upon the doctrine of election, and without further insisting on the views just expressed, it is enough to say that, whatever may be alleged as to the power of man of his free will and choice to accept the Gospel of salvation when brought under his notice by the preaching of God's word, it is an incontrovertible fact that, mankind *will not* or *cannot* accept the truth to their soul's salvation, unless and until there has been a direct operation of the Spirit upon the heart, or that which is equivalent to a new creation or birth.

This being so, salvation being God's work in accomplishing a redemption sufficient for mankind at large, and the individual sinner possessing no power in himself to come to Christ until he has been regenerated by the Spirit, the merits of the two opinions under discussion may be brought into contrast; and little question can be entertained as to the one which has the greater claim on man's acceptance. Either, the souls of *all*, possessing immortality by virtue of their creation *must* exist for ever, and the lost consequently must endure unlimited pain, and continue in endless sin; or, the soul not possessing in itself an undying principle, the gift of life is conferred upon such as shall be saved; while the lost,—the unregenerate—the unredeemed—receive the punishment of eternal death.

It may, perhaps, be objected, that the permission of moral evil by a Deity infinitely powerful and infinitely good, creates a difficulty *just as great* as that from which an escape is sought; and that *any* punishment is as much opposed to

infinite love and justice, under the circumstances in which man is placed, as the particular punishment which is controverted. There may be, and no doubt there are, great difficulties in regard to the presence of moral evil in creation. As a fact, evil undoubtedly exists; but is there any absolute *necessity* that it should be permitted to endure, through untold ages, throughout the vast and infinite future? There is no such necessity arising from the nature or reason of the thing. The argument is not, however, that because the popular dogma presents a difficulty it should therefore be rejected; but on the contrary, that that, which creates the difficulty, to wit, the popular dogma, has no real existence as a revealed truth. The fact, that a difficulty exists in regard to the acceptance of one opinion, affords no ground for maintaining a doctrine which creates a *further and a greater* difficulty: but besides, it is submitted that a sufficient cause may be with reason suggested, why moral evil should, in the wise purposes of God, have been permitted; while every principle in man's nature rebels against the conception that evil *must* be eternal, or that God *must* condemn the lost to everlasting existence in torment.

But for the existence of evil, man never would have fallen, and if man had not fallen, redemption would never have been accomplished. The Deity *might* have created man, destined to the immediate reception of the joys of heaven perfect in purity and holiness. Had he done so, God would have been known to man, as he had previously been known to the angelic host, infinitely great, powerful, and good. His quality of justice would have been also manifested, for he had cast from their high estate those existences who had despised his authority, and rebelled against his sovereignty; but the qualities of mercy and of love would have remained unfolded in the bosom of the Father. Had man not fallen and redemption not been perfected, God could never have manifested, as he has done, his love and mercy to wondering angels and to men. Love, as an attribute transcendent

in its glorious manifestation upon Calvary, would have been unknown, and it required, so to speak, man's transgression to draw forth into active energy the more lovely attributes of Deity. Thus Satan's malice and man's sin contributed to the glory of God; and each, from before the foundation of the world, had been predestined to that end.

The second objection, that any punishment is *as much* opposed to the nature of infinite love as the particular punishment of ever existing misery, is simply opposed to common sense, and is untrue. It is both absurd and untrue to assert that the punishment of eternal death is *as much* opposed to mercy and love, as never-ending pain and torment. The whole sense, and mind, and soul of man emphatically deny the assertion. God may rightly punish for sin, and does. His own people are frequently visited with punishment in this life, that they may not be condemned with the world. None can stand forth against God and assert that a punishment has not been deserved, or that He who has given life may not withhold it also, and suffer the soul to perish; but it is equally true that the punishment of eternal existence in torment is *more* difficult to accept as consistent with the Divine nature, than the punishment of eternal death. None can pretend that, the difficulty is not *lessened* by holding that the punishment is one, which does not offer violence to the moral conscience of mankind.

THE MANY LOST, THE FEW SAVED! Can it be that God has determined for those whom it hath not pleased him to call from death unto life—those whom the Spirit leaves unregenerate—those whose souls have not been sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb—those who possess not the power, or let it be, the will, to accept the Christ of the Gospel; can it be, that God has determined that all such—the majority of the human race—shall live for ever in torment? That He who willeth not even the *death* of a single sinner, can tolerate the everlasting agony of a single soul! Such an idea ought not to be entertained, much less should such

a doctrine be accepted, unless man is coerced by overwhelming proof,—proof which does not admit of the shadow of a doubt,—that the result has been thus announced by God: unless He has declared the fact to be so, as distinctly as He has manifested forth his own existence. Such proof will be sought for in vain. It is impossible that God can deny himself; and if some lingering doubt—the shadow of early impressions—should still find a place in the mind of any timid believer in the Lord of LIFE, it is earnestly hoped that the glorious light of God's love may dispel the illusion, and permit the full splendour of the Divine attributes to penetrate the heart, and fill the soul with peace and gladness.

The infliction of pain or torment as a punishment can never be justified in the abstract, except upon the ground that it operates to improve the person subjected to the discipline; or that a greater amount of good is attained for others by the example thus afforded, than the amount of evil which is endured by the suffering imposed. This is a recognised principle, which must commend itself to the moral sense of all; for it is impossible to conceive the Creator of the universe, for whose *pleasure* all things are made, whether in heaven or in earth, visible, or invisible, permitting the existence of misery in his creation, except on either of the grounds stated. Human passion and a nature subjected to fiendish influence may, and unhappily too often has, devised and inflicted the greatest agony on individuals: it has been, however, an agony incomparably less than that, which it is contended the righteous God—the God of Love—inflicts upon the lost hereafter, less in duration, less in intensity, and less in the number of its objects. Mankind abhors the perpetrator of cruelty; and shall it be said that, the Deity—one hesitates to even mention his name in such a connection, even for the purpose of repudiating the thought—can award a punishment which transcends in degree and continuance, all the torment that the vilest have inflicted on their fellowman?

Most assuredly not. God can never inflict one pang more than is necessary, or which shall continue in duration longer than is essential. That God may punish for sin is allowed, and that he will punish, is insisted on. To deprive of life is punishment, and unless there be restoration to life, it is an eternal one. If continued and perpetual existence in torment be a reality, it must be imposed with either of the objects mentioned; to reform the sinner himself, or to attain for others an amount of good greater in the aggregate than the evil endured by the pain inflicted. It can be with no other intent. God's glory cannot require the perpetual existence of pain and sin, for his glory would be exalted by its termination. God's love cannot require it, for his love is magnified by its finality; God's justice cannot require it, for examples without number may be suggested in which such a punishment must excite the abhorrence of even human nature, corrupt though it be, and which would degrade the character of the Allwise and Good.

The punishment of eternal torment can alone be justified, on either or both of the grounds suggested. The alleged justification is one, which each individual should bring to the test of his own moral sense, in his own proper person. Is it possible that, God will or can consign *my* soul to everlasting torment, with a view to my good and reformation; or, is it possible that, God will or can consign *me* to everlasting torment, after the final judgment and consummation of this dynasty of man, in order that celestial beings perfect in bliss, or glorified man the subject of eternal redemption, may witness my agony through eternity, and thereby be led to keep their high estate? Such are the questions which must be answered. In regard to the former it would appear sufficient to state the proposition, to ensure an emphatic denial of its truth. If the torment shall last for ever; if the soul must exist throughout eternity enduring the agonies of the unquenchable flame and the undying worm, there can be no room for repentance, no object

in reformation; for the pain and the agony must still for ever be endured. Can it be that, the soul by reason of the torment it endures, will, in time, expiate its sin; that a change will be wrought in its moral nature and the sinner become penitent and contrite? If this end was to be attained by the endurance of the torment, good, no doubt, would be effected, in respect of the soul's reformation; but notwithstanding, the wretchedness of that soul, must continue, for the inevitable decree has irrevocably passed—Eternal Torment. It is impossible to contemplate repentant, reformed, and purified souls existing in everlasting misery, under the eye of a Deity, merciful and supreme. The common creed will not admit of any cessation or remission of the agony to be endured, and cannot therefore claim to be for the *benefit* of those who are exercised thereby. It sets up a state of existence in which sin shall revel and blasphemy abound, as long as God himself shall exist. It asserts the presence of a foul blot indelibly stained upon creation. Nothing can exist but by God's permission, yet upon that which God hates, is conferred a co-eternal existence with himself.

Rejecting, then, the suggestion that God will inflict such a punishment as is alleged for the profit of the lost soul itself, is there any reason to suppose that the punishment may be inflicted, for the sake of others? If the latter be the object in view, it can alone be for the sake of mankind in the present state, or for the sake of mankind in the glorified state, or for the sake of celestial beings. So far as man in his *present state* is concerned, the reasons cannot apply, for the punishment does not commence until the sentence is pronounced at the final judgment, when the present dispensation shall have been brought to a close; while if regarded simply as a deterrent,—as a punishment to be endured by the guilty in the future state, in order to induce a virtuous life in this world—it proves perfectly inadequate for the purpose, as all experience proves; and even if efficacious for such a purpose, would fail to secure the

salvation of men, unless, indeed, salvation be of works and not of grace. The sinner, though perhaps restrained from indulgence in grosser sins, would still remain subject to eternal torment, unless saved by the grace of God, through Christ Jesus. The *exhibition* of souls enduring everlasting torment cannot deter mankind, in the present state, from sin, or cause them to abandon their evil ways, for the destiny of the race is determined just as the *exhibition* begins. In fact, the object for which the punishment might be inflicted in this respect, if salvation was of works, no longer would exist; for the redeemed will have passed into the joy of their Lord, and will have received the kingdom, while the lost will have departed into everlasting punishment, and received their righteous doom—destruction.

But can it be, that the punishment of eternal existence in torment is essential to man glorified,—is necessary for the sake of those who shall be saved? What are the consequences involved in this suggestion? It implies the possibility of those who shall have been redeemed falling away from a state of bliss—which is, at all events, as unauthorised, and far more unlikely, than the restoration of the lost. It is equivalent to a denial that the redemption effected by Christ is an eternal redemption. It throws doubt upon the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice, and the eternal redemption wrought by him. It implies that those who are declared to be joint heirs with Christ, who are conformed to his likeness, and are made partakers of his nature, have *absolute need* of the spectacle of the majority of the human race suffering eternal torment, to the end that they themselves may enjoy eternal life. It suggests the probability that, but for the example thus afforded, the glorified would depart from God, and that they are alone kept in allegiance by their fears.

This is not the aspect in which the believer is taught by revelation to regard the crown of Life. Perfect security is essential to the enjoyment of perfect happiness. The

exhibition of lost souls writhing in anguish, must be either present to the knowledge and consciousness of the redeemed, or unknown to them. If present, what becomes of that happiness which must be perfect and complete; if not present, the anguish of the lost would fail to secure the end suggested?

The only alternative, then, which remains to be considered is, that which supposes the everlasting misery of the wicked to be designed as an example to created existences, other than man. For this suggestion there is manifestly no direct warrant. It is a mere speculation,—a pure and gratuitous assumption. So far from Scripture affording any ground for the inference, there appears sufficient reason in the word of God itself, whence it may be reasonably concluded that such a suggestion cannot be well founded, apart altogether from any moral objection which may be raised, and which might be considered inapplicable under the circumstances. There can be little doubt that, analogy does not justify the infliction of the punishment alleged, if imposed for the reason lastly suggested. The supposed conditions violate every moral principle upon which God's government rests and is maintained against the assaults of Atheism. God has not, in dealing with the human race, presented the spectacle of another order of created beings enduring eternal torment as a penalty for disobedience to his law. It is nowhere asserted that Satan and the fallen angels shall be subjected to eternal existence in torment, although they are reserved in everlasting chains unto the day of judgment to be punished; and as the Deity has not, for the benefit of mankind, displayed such an exhibition to their view, *in full and immediate force and effect*, there can be no *necessity* why the eternal torment of human souls should be exhibited, for the sake of a race of beings distinct from man, and placed in similar circumstances. To justify the supposition now controverted, it must be assumed, that in future ages, after this world's destruction shall have

been effected, after the wicked shall have been condemned to eternal existence in wretchedness, there shall be a race of created beings of similar constitution to mankind and placed in similar circumstances, so as to render them capable of profiting by the alleged example,—so circumstanced that the spectacle would be necessary for their welfare. If it were otherwise, the spectacle would fall short of its intent, and the supposed argument would lose its force. If the design thus aimed at be possible; having regard to God's dealings, it can only be so, because such beings are, or have been, created free, liable to fall, and likely to become degenerate and corrupt. Thus circumstanced, the fall of such beings would be almost a certainty; and having fallen, it may reasonably be concluded that God would provide a redemption similar to that provided in the behalf of mankind. This is, no doubt, mere speculation, and yet, speculation is as much authorised in pursuing the suggestion to its full limits, as it is in originating it. The entire, however, is at once overthrown by the statement, that Christ, "when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high"*—"angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."† Other races of created beings may have been redeemed *before* redemption was perfected for the human race, but the language of Scripture leaves little room for doubt that, when the curtain falls upon the final act in the great drama of this world's history, God shall be "all in all;" that *all* his enemies, among whom "sin" is surely one, shall be triumphed over, and when the second death shall have had its full measure of victims, death itself shall be blotted out from the universe of God's creation.

The infliction of eternal misery cannot, therefore, be justified on any of the foregoing grounds; it is contrary to analogy, if God's dealings with mankind be regarded: it is contrary to morality, if his nature and attributes be

* Heb. i. 3.

† 1 Pet. iii. 22.

contemplated; and, as has been already pointed out, it is contrary to Scripture when interpreted, as every book which assumes to be a Divine revelation must be interpreted, by the application of the judgment and moral sense of those to whom it is addressed.

Shall not the God of all the earth do right! All have come short of the glory of God, all deserve punishment; and while he condemns the soul that sinneth to eternal death, he confers eternal life on whom he wills, according to his sovereign grace and divine prerogative. The latter are as brands plucked from the burning. He has the right to do what he likes with his own. The impotent man at the pool of Bethesda was alone healed, though numbers crowded round its banks waiting for the moving of its waters. The healing was an act of mercy to the individual, not of injustice to the many.

It has been already remarked that, throughout the entire narrative of the apostles' missionary labours, whether among Jews or Gentiles, a single instance cannot be found in which the eternal existence of the lost in torment is alleged or hinted at, as an inducement to embrace that Gospel which is able to make those who accept it, wise unto salvation. The late Dr. Watts, judging from his expressed views, and, perhaps many of those who at the present day share his opinions, would adopt a different course to that taken by the divinely constituted ambassadors of Christ. They would, no doubt, seek to awaken their hearers by a more "piercing sight" of everlasting woe, and thus force them to accept the proffered mercies of God in the Gospel. In this respect they assert their wisdom to be superior to that of the apostles, whose example they would do well to follow. The early missionaries of the cross were content to set forth God's infinite love and mercy in Christ, as "*the power*" by means of which sinners can be drawn into willing obedience to the Saviour's commands, and cheerful submission to his law; by which their conduct and walk in

life should be regulated, their patience exercised, and their hope and joy confirmed. It is only necessary to mention the passages referred to in the note, in justification of this remark :* nor is it too much to conclude that, the apostles omitted to press the doctrine of eternal existence in torment for all those who reject the Gospel, upon the attention of the world and the Church, *simply because* it formed no part of that message of "good news" they were commissioned to publish, and because it would have been a false pretence to win souls to Christ.

Now, as regards the preaching of the Gospel among the heathen, it may be fairly asked, having regard to the future destiny of the lost, in what position is the Church placed in performing its undoubted duty to publish to all nations the message of God's love? If the popular dogma is true, the Church is, to say the least, placed in a most painful position. It is, no doubt, alleged that the future destiny of the heathen, living and dying in total ignorance of Christ, will be different to that of those who reject the Gospel. The proposition that, the heathen who have never heard of the Saviour should for ever exist in torment, is too startling to be maintained by the warmest advocates of the popular theory. The heathen are, however, assuredly corrupt by nature, and are included under the penalty pronounced upon Adam. Divine justice demands their condemnation; the word of God asserts their guilt. God's law, broken and dishonoured, requires the full measure of the penalty announced at the first for sin, whatever that penalty may be. St. Paul points out conclusively that the heathen are without excuse, and assures those who had become disciples, that they were at one time children of wrath even as others. The heathen are children of wrath, even though they have never heard of the atonement provided by the death of the

* Rom. viii. 35; xv. 30. 2 Cor. v. 14; vi. 6. Gal. v. 6, 22; Eph. iii. 19. 2 Tim. i. 7. 1 John, iv. 8, 16, 19.

Lord Jesus Christ, or listened to the message of peace and love, published in the Gospel. They must receive the inheritance of wrath—the full wages of sin. If, however, the wages of sin be the eternal death of the soul, the difficulty, if not avoided, will certainly not be aggravated. To those who reject the truth, the Gospel will be the “savour of death unto death;” to those who accept it, “the savour of life unto life.”

Uncovenanted mercies of God are spoken of, and those who adopt the popular belief are forced to fall back, in the case of the heathen, upon some such speculation. Uncovenanted mercies are, however, nowhere revealed. There is no name given under heaven whereby men can be saved but the one; and any reference to alleged uncovenanted mercies is a last resource on the part of those who feel compelled to vindicate, by some means, the character of God from the imputation of unrighteous judgment. It is in fact, an unwilling testimony to the inaccuracy of their avowed belief.

The preaching of the Gospel is a great trust conferred upon the Church, a great duty imposed upon all who profess to belong to it. It is a duty which the Church is bound to perform, for the commandment is express, and the performance must be discharged altogether regardless of the consequences. But while this is so, it is right to reflect upon the far different circumstances under which the duty may be performed, according as the opinion urged in these pages, and that commonly received as true, is adopted.

The preaching of love and mercy—the glad tidings of great joy to all nations—if the popular dogma is true, must affect the destiny of many sinners, and that most injuriously; for it alters, it is said, the law by which they shall be judged. This is indisputable, if so long as the heathen remain without the word of God, they come within the sanction of a milder law, and can claim the benefit of uncovenanted mercies. The preaching of the Cross is to those who reject it,—the language of Scripture must be altered to suit the popular

dogma—condemnation to eternal existence in torment; and thus, the high trust, the imperative duty, of making known the glad tidings of salvation, becomes the stepping stone which introduces to a perpetual existence in misery, an incalculable number of the human race, who, if left to perish in their ignorance would have been judged by a milder law and have received a less terrible condemnation. Take the case of any heathen race, among whom the missionaries of the Cross have laboured; mark the comparative fewness of those who embrace and hold fast the truth as it is in Jesus, with those who hear and reject the Gospel; and while the labourer may *console* himself with the reflection, that he performs a clear and distinct duty in the course to which he has committed himself, he cannot but be overwhelmed with the contemplation (if the popular opinion be in reality God's truth) that, while with the one hand he holds forth the message of Life, with the other he establishes those very conditions which of necessity must involve a vast number of immortal souls in endless misery, who but for him, would otherwise have probably escaped.

How different is the case, how plainly the duty becomes a labour of love, if the missionary can consistently with Scripture, adopt the view contended for—that the punishment of the lost is the eternal death of the soul? In preaching the Gospel he then becomes the instrument whereby God, according to his grace, calls some to eternal life; while the many, who hear the Word and who turn aside from the way of salvation—admittedly the greater portion—continue subject to that punishment of eternal death in which as descendants of Adam and partakers in his transgression, they are involved.

If the determination of the question so far as it rests on the interpretation of Scripture, is one of uncertainty and doubt, which, however, is far from being conceded, it is a matter of no little importance in making a choice between conflicting opinions, that so high and important a duty as that of making known to the heathen the grace of God and

the way of eternal life, should, in respect of each, occupy so different a position.

On every ground, therefore, whether the nature of the Deity be regarded apart from revelation, or the character in which He has, in a special manner, manifested himself as the GOD OF LOVE, be contemplated; a preference must be given to the opinion which *more perfectly* harmonises with the Divine perfections and the moral sense of mankind. This course is a plain duty: it is the common principle of action in every-day life, and while it *confirms* the opinion of those who believe they have discovered in Scripture, that eternal death is the punishment of the lost; it should likewise prove sufficient to *determine* the final decision of those who hesitate between the two opinions.

It is submitted with confidence to the judgment of the impartial reader, that the arguments produced, in their *united* and *consistent* application, are such as cannot be gainsayed or resisted; that the eternal death of the soul, as the punishment of those who shall not be redeemed, is supported by the most express declarations of Holy Writ—distinct and unfigurative; that the truth contended for, removes serious objections and difficulties in regard to the creation and fall of man, under the moral government of a God,—Holy, Just, and infinitely Wise; and that, while it undoubtedly displays in a much more adorable light, the Divine prerogatives, it at the same time magnifies the obligations under which mankind is placed to love Him, who is at once the just God, and the justifier of the ungodly. It is further submitted, that the ETERNAL DEATH OF THE SOUL as the punishment for disobedience and transgression, and ETERNAL LIFE as the gift of God, conferred through grace, upon those who are called from death unto life; establishes a harmony, far more perfect than the popular dogma can claim to do, between the legitimate deductions of reason, regarding man as an intelligent and moral being, the declarations of Scripture, the leading doctrines of Christianity, the course adopted by the

Lord Jesus Christ himself, and his divinely commissioned apostles, in making known the Gospel of salvation to the world, and the duty imposed on His people, to spread the glad tidings among all nations.

In conclusion, the following statement is presented as warranted by Divine truth, and as setting forth the revealed purposes of God in the wondrous plan of the creation, the fall, the redemption, and ultimate glorification, of man.

The Divine Being, when he planned the creation of this world, and man, long before the Almighty fiat went forth, had present to his mind and before his view, the entire future. One grand design pervaded the whole plan, and the entire was arranged with one grand object; namely, the final glorification, through union with Himself, in a new heaven and a new earth, of a vast multitude of intelligent beings, whom no man can number, so created and determined, that by their fall, and ultimate salvation, He might show forth the exceeding riches of his grace, his love, and his mercy, to the universe at large. The latter were attributes which had ever existed in the bosom of the Father, but they had not been manifested, as they have been in Redemption; nor could they have been ever known in their fulness, but for that sacrifice whereby God hath commended his love to mankind, in that while they were yet sinners Christ died for them. The gift of Christ, as an atonement for sin, necessitated the existence of sin to be forgiven, and the presence of sin thus became an essential element in God's general plan, having in view his own glory. Hence, the existence of evil was permitted to exercise an influence upon man, created not only innocent, but free.

To regard the design of God in the creation of man, as complete when Adam stood in the garden of Eden; and, that it was not until after he had fallen, that God devised redemption as the means whereby man might be brought back into reconciliation with Himself, is certainly contrary to Scripture; and is as inconsistent with the Divine attributes,

as it is derogatory to the Divine character and prerogatives. God proposed, at the very outset, that the dynasty of "glorified man," to adopt the language of the late Hugh Miller, "should succeed the dynasty of corrupt and fallen man;" and in accordance with this design, He established the first laws of nature, and the conditions of human existence. The fact that Satan would tempt, and the fact that man would fall, were assuredly known to God from the first, and must have been included in, and provided for, in the general scope of his arrangements, with a view to the end proposed. Little is known, or can be said, of those created existences who kept not their first estate. The history of their creation and rebellion is unrevealed, and why God did, in fact, permit them to exercise so important an influence upon mankind, does not fully appear. It was doubtless, however, for God's glory; and most probably, that he might manifest his redeeming grace, as has been suggested. However this may be, God from the very first regulated every act in the great drama—a drama which is still in progress, and as yet unconcluded. Miller, with great beauty of language, and with much truth, represents the Evil One, the father of lies, watching moodily and silently the progress of this world's creation, ignorant of God's final purpose, but eager to seize upon the earliest opportunity to mar God's work. A new being was created, formed in God's moral image, and gifted with an entity or soul, capable of a high and noble destiny, innocent and free. The penalty for disobedience had been announced—dying man should die. The Evil Spirit supposed, that now his opportunity had arrived. Let him but succeed in tempting man to sin, and then, the race—God's new creation and the special object of his regard—must, according to God's own decree, be utterly destroyed. With malicious joy Satan leaped at success, seduced man from his allegiance, corrupted his nature, and alienated him from the Divine fellowship he had enjoyed, and in which consisted his security. Satan believed, that now the penalty

of death, that punishment which was the wages of sin, must follow; that he had fully succeeded in blasting God's gracious purpose, and that the whole race being thus involved in transgression, must, of necessity also, be involved in death. Satan was, however, in truth and fact, but the instrument, unknown to himself, in fulfilling God's original design, to manifest his love in redemption, by the sacrifice of his Son. God had predetermined that Satan's malignity should work out, and contribute to the Divine glory; that an act of malevolence and sin, should conduce to the greater act of infinite love and mercy.

God designed this world, with its varied organisms of animal and vegetable life, as a temporary dwelling place for man. At the first, without form and void, it gradually progressed to its present condition, passing through various stages, each rising higher and higher in the scale of perfection, until it was finally adapted to the circumstances in which man was destined to be placed. Absolute perfection has not yet been attained; that will alone be secured, when God shall, in the new heaven and the new earth, receive into union with himself, reconciled and glorified man.

Throughout the entire course of nature, and from the earliest period, destruction and death prevailed as a general law. This law—subject to which the world was made, and from which, its temporary purpose in God's design may be inferred—prevailed throughout inorganic creation before even animal life was formed. This same law, operated in full force and effect upon the various classes of organic life, which, in successive periods existed and passed away, having contributed their part in preparing this earth as a dwelling-place for man; and further, included man himself, so far as his animal nature was concerned.

When God then created man, in His own image and conferred upon him a soul, man as to his animal nature was subject to the ever previously existing law of death. As to his soul,—the moral entity, the subject of that future perfect

and glorified state, which was the end and design of God in creation,—it existed dependent upon God's sustaining power, in fellowship with him, but subject to the penalty of death in the event of disobedience; which as the punishment for moral transgression, affected that which was moral in its nature. The animal constitution to which the soul was united, was intended merely as the temporary dwelling place or tabernacle for the soul. God's institute of marriage, established before the fall, provided for the circumstances in which man was thus placed, and secured according to natural laws the increase of the human race—an institute which is unknown in that final and perfect state which is the proper sphere of the soul's existence—its destined home. Thus, when Adam fell, he forfeited his claim to immortality; his soul became subject to the penalty of death. This penalty Christ removes from his people, having by his victory acquired the right to confer eternal life upon all who come unto God through him.

In the garden, God placed within the view of Adam and offered for his acceptance, the tree of life. Of one tree alone he was forbidden to partake; but when Adam yielded to the Tempter and became corrupt, and, consequently, subject to the penalty announced, *then* it was that God, in infinite mercy, removed him from Paradise, lest having become degenerate, his soul should in partaking of the tree of life, become immortal in its sin; and *then* it was that God made known to man that scheme, whereby he might be reconciled to God through the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world, and announced an eternal redemption to have been provided for the soul.

The world, thenceforth, lay in darkness and in the shadow of death. Satan—he who has the power of death, continued to exercise his influence for evil over the fallen race; but in the fulness of time Christ came, and by his sacrifice having made a full atonement for sin, delivers those “who, through fear of death, were all their life-time

subject to bondage," and waits to confer upon his people that ETERNAL LIFE OR IMMORTALITY, the claim to which had been forfeited; and in consequence, Adam was driven from Eden, and a Divine manifestation guarded the tree of life.

As yet the whole creation groaneth and travaileth, looking for that great day when the Saviour shall come to judge the world, and to confer upon his people the crown of life—the prize of their high calling. And when, at the end, the final scene of the great drama closes; when the New Jerusalem shall descend from heaven as a bride adorned for her husband; when Christ's victory shall realize its full fruition, and he shall have seen the travail of his soul; the wicked shall be punished with everlasting *destruction*, in accordance with the curse originally pronounced, and the penalty originally incurred. Then, shall "death" itself also be destroyed,—"there shall be no more death,"—for old things shall have then passed away, and all things shall be created new. Then, shall be brought to pass the saying which is written: "Oh death, where is thy sting? oh grave, where is thy victory?" and then, shall the saved unite in thanksgiving to God, who giveth them the victory, through Christ Jesus their Lord.

Thus is manifested the goodness and mercy of the Divine Being. The lost shall be involved in ever-enduring destruction. Their souls, having forfeited all claim to immortality through Adam's transgression, have no claim to immortality through Christ. They shall therefore receive the wages of sin—ETERNAL DEATH.

But those who shall be saved, shall possess in the New Jerusalem, the tree of life—even Christ, in the midst of the city, as their portion for ever; and united to a glorified body released from the law of death, shall ever join in ascribing blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

Such are, it is submitted, the revealed purposes of God towards mankind, whom He hath *so loved* as to give his only

begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE. Thus, the scheme of man's creation, fall, and redemption, may be intelligently understood; and thus, while the Divine character is exalted and the Divine benevolence displayed, the obligation on man's part is enforced, to love, to worship, and to obey Him, who is the Creator of the universe, the Judge of all the earth, and the Saviour of the soul.

THE END.