

Junius Benjamin Reimensnyder

Doom Eternal

**The Bible and Church Doctrine of
Everlasting Punishment**



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Doom Eternal

*The Bible and Church Doctrine of
Everlasting Punishment*

By Junius Benjamin Reimensnyder

With an Introduction by Charles Porter-
field Krauth

NORTON PROFESSOR OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY, AND VICE PROVOST OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia
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Preface by Lutheran Librarian

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A Note about Typos [Typographical Errors]

Please have patience with us when you come across typos. Over time we are revising the books to make them better and better. If you would like to send the errors you come across to us, we'll make sure they are corrected.

Preface.

WE ARE CHARGED in Scripture to "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." 1 Tim. 4:16. As a vigilant care for pure doctrine, and a steadfast continuance therein, are here made the conditions upon which the salvation of teacher and taught depends, the defense of the integrity of Scripture becomes one of the most imperative and solemn duties of Christian teachers. In all ages, accordingly, apologetics have wielded a vital part in the history and progress of the Christian Church. It cannot but be expected that the faith of old will encounter new assaults. Skeptical onsets from without, and secret blows from false friends within, will come as long as the Church is in its state militant. And although these errors be as old as they are intrinsically weak, and although they have been met and vanquished a hundred times, still they will come again disguised in the latest garb worn by unbelief; and it is requisite, therefore, that the truth have a new presentation and defense, adapted to the peculiar conditions of the age.

These facts are now receiving a fresh illustration in the Scriptural doctrine of Eternal Punishment. It has been selected as the chief point of attack by those restive under "a form of sound words." Almost every one "weak in the faith" finds this a convenient outlet for his tendencies, and joins the outcry. The orthodox ministry, in general, have deemed the doctrine in question so secure that they have given the matter little attention. Meanwhile, books advocating the heretical view multiply, and it is vigorously circulated in papers and pamphlets, while scarcely anything, and at least no thorough work, has appeared in defense. This is all the more dangerous, when we consider the superficial character of too much of the Christianity of this age of hurry and business, when there is neither time nor mood for meditation upon, or "searching the deep things of God," and when truth is rather taken second-hand from the religious teacher than grasped and assimilated by deep personal experience.

It was this very fact — the increasing number of publications on the one side, and the almost absolute dearth of them on the other — that has called forth the present attempt. The time has again come when the pure doctrine of Christianity must be defended, or the seeds of fatal error will be sown in the hearts of the present generation, and while the tares will continue to bear their harvest of mischief to those who come after us, we, for our apathy, will be held accountable.

In his method of treatment, the aim which the author has kept steadily in view has been to strengthen every position by authority. In every word, in every view, in every assertion — instead of parading a merely private opinion — he has sought to feel the great heart of the universal Church of Christ beating in unison with, supporting, and confirming him. Consequently, the Christian centuries, the representative teachers of every age, are here summoned to speak *in propriâ personâ*, and to give their concurrent testimony as to the true signification of Scripture, and the faith resulting therefrom. A force of conviction, otherwise unattainable, is thus imparted to the conclusions reached upon the question at issue.

And now, in humble reliance upon the Divine guidance and blessing, this volume is sent forth upon its mission.

February 24, 1880.

Introduction By Charles Porterfield Krauth.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT, to which this book is devoted, is beyond all dispute. The Questions touching the future life, no matter what may be assumed to be the right answer to them, are of vast significance. The Questions are not, indeed, equally important on every assumption as to what is the true answer; yet in any case they are full of import; the lowest level to which they can be reduced is frightfully high.

“If a man die, shall he live again?” If the answer to this question be, He shall live no more; Death is to all an eternal sleep; and if men become assured that this is an answer in which it is safe to trust, the bonds of our human life will all be broken, and the undisputed, practical motto of the world will be, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” The refined speculation, which attempts to show that man as mere mortal has the same moral forces to control him as if he were immortal, would be understood by few, and would be accepted as convincing by none.

If the answer be, Man shall live again; but whatever may have been the character of his present life, his future is to be one of bliss, the result will be yet more appalling than that produced by the belief that in death the conscious being forever ebbs away. To live the life of the senses here, and to enter on eternal raptures hereafter, would, indeed, be a super-Epicurean construction of the two lives.

Or to say, The wicked will be punished for a time, and afterwards have endless happiness, will very little change the practical position of men. In the light of present allurements, temporary punishment will look very little over against the eternal joy which is to follow it. Present pleasures, on the one side, and final, eternal bliss, on the other, will press into very narrow space what will seem the little interval of retribution to which they form the boundaries. In fact, the robust assertion of eternal death alone seems to rouse the soul from its torpid reluctance to grasp, in a living way, any doc-

trine in regard to the future of bad men. As a rule, where this is rejected all is rejected — this dispossessed, nothing takes its place. Limited retribution, whether individual or bounded by a vast Restoration, is, to most men, as a moral force, no retribution at all.

Or, if the position be taken, There is indeed a doom eternal, but it will only come on those who refuse to conform to another probation, which is to be given beyond the grave to those who refuse to use the probation they had here, most men will push off everything to that second probation.

If the answer be, There is immortal life for the good, annihilation for the evil; in the pressure of present temptation, in the heat of aroused passions, annihilation will have no more terror than a dreamless sleep to which there comes no waking. Annihilation is a thought least dreadful to those who most need curbing. If the firm belief, which is the common belief of Christendom, that the eternal world is a fixed state, that the finally godless are wretched there hopelessly and forever, has not, in many cases, moral force to restrain men from wrong, any dread short of this is clearly inadequate. What men believe of the future is the most abiding force of the present, and wrong views of the future injure all that is good and aid all that is evil in the world.

Thoughtful and wise discussions, therefore, of the Questions of the future life are always useful, but, perhaps, HAVE NEVER BEEN MORE NEEDED THAN AT THE PRESENT TIME. Never has there been a more widely extended effort to undermine the long-established convictions of the Christian world on this subject. The crudities of the crudest patristic era, and the errors of the darkest periods in the history of the Church, the confused speculation of traditional Judaism, and even the dreams and dreary guesses of paganism, have been, in our day, revived. It is for our time, with its boasts of science, to see the most degrading superstitions of the most degraded races systematized into a sort of religionism, under the name of Spiritualism, which is the direct product of the infidelity of the age. Men have been turned away from the living source of a pure faith in immortality, and yet, craving the assurance which they will not accept at God's hand, they seek for it in the thinly-veiled tricks of fraud, or in the testimony of weak, or ignorant, or perverted minds, or of incautious scholars.

All of these errors have been supported with a show, at least, of learning, and the defenders of some of the most dangerous views have been men of high standing in great Christian bodies, whose personal ability and distin-

guished official position have given a weight to their opinions, to which nothing in the opinions themselves entitled them. Though the new types of unbelief are, in general, mere revivals of long-exploded heresies, and are sustained by the old style of argument, they are yet, to some extent, fresh in their combination, and in the proportions in which certain aspects are urged, and are novel in some of their modes of statement. The standard works of a former time have ceased to be entirely adapted to the common wants of readers. New discussions, by able men, are, therefore, needed; and there is no ground for fear that, on the whole, the multitude of books will obscure the few that are really good. The floods soon subside, but the river glides on in its channel. Competition in book production is also in the law of life, and no theme, of a general nature, is likely to be represented in able books, which will not also possess sufficient attraction to call forth many bad books, and no few indifferent ones.

Divine truth lives in the world by two powers. The first is the utterance of God in the direct testimony of his Word. The second is the confession of the lovers and defenders of the truth, their attestation that for themselves they receive it. Authority and testimony, divine authority and human testimony, are the two great factors which in their harmony keep truth alive among men. The primary treatment of a divine doctrine involves, therefore, first the establishing of it from the Holy Scriptures, and second the tracing it as it flows out from the source into the history of the race. Pure systematic theology is the outgrowth of divine doctrine under historical conditions — the doctrine of God in the providence of God. Whether a theological writer shall present his theme in both these aspects with the greatest completeness in his power, or presenting both shall subordinate one of them, or shall confine himself to one, is to be determined by the nature of the case, by the features of the providence, or of the vocation which has impelled him to write. The author of the treatise which the reader holds in his hand was first moved to vindicate the true doctrine in the face of assertions which claimed for error the support of the Ancient Church. To this is due the fact that the witness of the Church is the first topic of discussion. But discovering, as he could not fail to do, that to give this testimony alone is to detach it from its deepest roots, he has wisely extended his plan, and completed the circle of direct illustration by giving the teaching of Scripture. But, as the real ground of the error is not in statements of the Scripture which even seem in harmony with it, but draws its life from the arrogance of a self-reliant rea-

son, which makes its own postulates the actual standard, and tries to force the divine testimony to its support, the author in his third Division meets the objections which claim to be the voice of Reason. The true voice of Reason, as he shows, is not against the divine truth in the most artless construction of its meaning, but is with it. But one thing more is needed. To the illumined mind, delivered now from the bondage of error, there should come practical conviction, a deep sense of the value of the truth in which it has become established, and of the utter hollowness and danger of the falsehood which has been uncovered. This want is met in the last part, the Fourth, in which are exposed the fallacies and evils of Restorationism or Universalism. This fairly closes the circle. Nothing then could be more complete or satisfying as to method than the plan on which this discussion is constructed.

The EXECUTION OF THIS PLAN, we think, will be pronounced worthy of it. The arrangement of the matter is systematic, the statements are lucid, the citations are numerous, and very carefully and fairly given from every conceivable source, Christian and secular. The patient industry of the collection, were there nothing more, would entitle the book to very high praise. The citations are so presented to the eye that, with all their richness, they never become confusing. The witness of the Church, as it is here presented, is placed beyond all successful contradiction. This part of the book is simply unanswerable.

The teaching of Scripture is handled in the same cautious, painstaking manner. The internal evidence is well presented, and is sustained by the completest exegetical authority. So ample is the collection of testimonies that the book forms a sort of Library in little for its theme.

The "Voice of Reason" is presented in the same prevailing historical mode, but with a freer movement of the author's own mind. In this part, and even more conspicuously in the last division, he reveals mental acuteness and strength, embodied in a style of no ordinary force and richness. He brings home the truth as a power of life, and the impressiveness of his handling rises to the very close. We do not know of any other single volume, covering all parts of the great theme, so likely as this, to be read with interest and thorough profit by those who are in danger of being seduced by error, by those who wish to be grounded more deeply in their convictions, and by those who are to be the guides of others. It is a timely and needed work;

it is on a theme of transcendent importance; it is in plan admirable, in execution excellent.

Letter From Theodore D. Woolsey, Ex-President Of Yale College.

CORNWALL, CT., AUG. 21, 1879.

Rev. Junius B. Reimensnyder.

Rev. and Dear Sir: I send you enclosed a few words respecting αἰώνιος, and the general subject of the condition of the impenitent in a future life.

I am away from almost all books, yet what I write is in a good degree the result of study within the last year. It is, of course, brief, ... yet do with it as you see fit. Truly yours,

THEODORE D. WOOLSEY.

The word αἰών, which originally had the digamma (αἰφωv), and answered, as well in sense as in origin, to the Latin *oevum* (Old Latin *aivom*), denotes age, age of human life, duration; and gives rise to the adjective form, of similar meaning, *aeviternus*; (compare *sempiternus*, from *semper*, *diuturnus* from *diu*), which is shortened into *aeternus*, as *aevitas* is shortened into *aetas*.

Αἰώνιος denotes durable, lasting, perpetual, eternal. The sense eternal is not necessary to it, but is often found with it, in the modification of eternal *a parte ante*, in that of eternal *a parte post*, and in the sense of eternal without beginning and without end. It may also be used like our everlasting, endless, in a hyperbolical sense, with which we have no special concern here. The true way of determining whether Αἰώνιος is used in the strictly metaphysical sense is to examine passages and similar uses of kindred words. Thus it is used of God in the widest sense in Rom. 16:26 (= from ev-

erlasting to everlasting in Ps. 90). It is often used of eternal life = durable or endless, life which is thus eternal *a parte post*. It is used of God's purposes, which are thus eternal *a parte ante*.

The question is, when it is spoken of the wicked after death, whether αἰώνιος is used in one of these precise senses, or in the vague sense of lasting, exceedingly long, enduring. I do not deny the possibility of this, but I think that honest exegesis must put just the same sense into the word when used of the future state of those who reject Christ and of the future state of those who believe in Christ. Thus in the *locus classicus*, Matt. 25:46, χόλασις, punishment, has the same duration exactly that ζωῆ, life, has; both being denoted by αἰώνιος.

This conclusion is fortified by places Where there is an absolute denial of blessedness, by the side of the absolute affirmation of it; as in John 3:36, “He that believeth on the Son hath ζωὴν αἰώνιον (‘everlasting life’), but ὁ ἀπειδὼν τῷ υἱῷ οὐχ ὀφεται ζωὴν” (“he that believeth not the Son shall not see life”). Here “shall not see life” is an absolute expression, requiring the sense of perpetual exclusion from life or blessedness. If one should affirm that the state of those who do not see life is a state of death or insensibility (instead of moral and spiritual death answering to ζωῆ, or spiritual life and its accompanying blessedness), he is met by the last phrase of the verse ἄλλ ἢ ὀζυγὴ τοῦ θεοῦ μένει ἐπ αὐτόν (“but the wrath of God abideth on him”). God's displeasure here is abiding, and prevents the unbeliever from seeing life or blessedness.

We conclude these remarks by saying-

1. That αἰώνιος must have reference to duration of some length or other, either that which will end, or that which will not end. This sense is in the word essentially, and cannot be explained or theorized out of it. Mr. F. D. Maurice conceived that there was in the word no idea of time, that it has nothing to do with duration, and so he would not say “how long anyone may remain in eternal death, because [he does] not know.” But this is the notion of a vague thinker, not of an interpreter. Probably no one ever held the opinion before; that some conception of time, limited or unlimited, was contained in the word cannot be questioned.
2. Again, αἰώνιος cannot denote pertaining to an aeon or world period. The word αἰών or age, not in classical Greek, but in the later, espe-

cially Alexandrian and philosophical Jewish writers, acquired the sense of world periods, and from this sense passed into that found in the Gnostic philosophy. But I know of no evidence that αἰώνιος ever had its sense so modified, or such a new notion put into it, that it came to mean belonging to a world period, or, so to speak, of aeonian length. In no passage of the New Testament can that idea be fairly or plausibly intruded.

3. Death cannot be intended to mean extinction of being, non-existence, when the opposite of eternal life, or, as it is called, the second death, is intended. It is the Opposite of life, or of the soul's higher life, and pertains to men who are yet living the life of this world. And this is in conformity with a deep use of the words to die and dead, as when a person is said to be dead in trespasses and sins.

I say nothing of objections drawn from divine love and divine power, which are not scriptural but theologico-philosophical. If they could have any force against clear declarations of the New Testament, shown to be such by sound exegesis, they could reach the point of showing that Christ was not sent from God into the world.

I have confined myself to the single point required for αἰώνιος, and not gone into the general doctrines of eschatology. The same result must be reached on examining passages referring to the last things, where the word in question does not appear.

From the above letter it will be seen that the views of the writer coincide substantially with the positions advocated in the present volume. For his conclusions are that, both from a critical study of the individual Scriptural words and from an inquiry into the "general doctrines of eschatology," "the same result must be reached," viz., the "abiding" and eternal doom of those dying impenitent.

Part One. The Witness Of The Church.

1. Articles Or Faith Universally Held Are Fundamental.

IT IS A POINT which no Christian will dispute, that there must be some Articles of Faith, at least, which are settled, indisputably fixed, acknowledged by all. If this is not the case, if there is nothing absolutely determined, if everything is open to question, this is tantamount to the admission that there is no Christian faith. For, just as a building having no foundations to support it is inconceivable, so would it be absurd to call that system a Faith in which there were no fundamental principles, no definitely ascertained and universally confessed beliefs, underlying and upholding the superstructure.

And Christianity, indeed, is open to no such reproach. While it allows ample scope for liberty of thought, development and progress, yet these, of course, must be within the range of those truths which are essential to its existence. Hence the terms orthodoxy and heresy. To reject a fundamental Christian doctrine, with which is bound up the integrity of the Faith itself, constitutes one a heretic.

But how shall we distinguish whether an article of faith be not indifferent and accidental, but primary, fundamental, and essential? One of the most important and decisive tests is that of universal reception. That which has been received and held *semper, ubique, et ab omnibus* (always, everywhere, and by all) is of universal obligation, i.e., binding upon all. It is in the identity of the truth she confesses — that truth which is “the same yesterday, today, and forever” — that we discern the true Church of all time,

whether it be in the ancient or modern age. LUTHER used this criterion with wonderful effect in the Reformation era, in the process of subjecting the Romish mass of commingled truth and error to that evangelical crucible whence arose the Gospel in the brightness of unalloyed purity, eliminated from the defiling superstitions that enswathed it. And he thus forcibly characterizes its authority: “Moreover, this article has been unanimously believed and held from the beginning of the Christian Church to the present hour, as may be shown from the books and writings of the fathers, both in the Greek and Latin languages; which testimony of the entire holy Christian Church ought to be sufficient for us.”¹

DR. HODGE, in his recent great work, has applied this very principle to the point under dispute, viz.: “It is an almost invincible presumption that the Bible does teach the unending punishment of the finally impenitent, that all Christian Churches have so understood it. Any man, therefore, assumes a fearful responsibility who sets himself in opposition to the faith of the Church universal.”²

And the REV. PHILLIPS BROOKS, more lately still, thus reaffirms the same truth: “This conception... puts us into right relations with all historic Christianity. It is the same message which the Church has told in all the ages. He who tells it today is backed by all the multitude who have told it in the past... The identity of the Church in all times consists in the identity of the message which she has always had to carry from the Lord to men. The heretic in all times has been... the man who taking his ideas, not as a message from God, but as his own discoveries, has cut himself off from the message-bearing Church of all the ages.”³

If any truths then, whatever, in the Christian faith are indisputably settled and fixed, as having passed out of the sphere of controversy into that of fundamental obligation and authority, then those are so which have been dutifully and confidently held by Christians everywhere and in all ages. It is altogether just and proper, therefore, that in the discussion of the vital question we are now to consider, the resort to this argument derived from universal acceptance should wield so prominent a part as it has done, and be looked upon by all parties as conclusive.

We propose accordingly to apply this test in a critical and impartial manner and to ascertain the result. What has been and What is the faith of Christendom, — i.e., What is THE WITNESS OF THE CHURCH, — in regard to Eternal Punishment? Has this tenet always and universally been held and

affirmed to be an integral part of Christian doctrine? In other words, Is it an open or a closed question among Christians? Is it secondary and indifferent, or primary and fundamental? And is it, therefore, a requisite of orthodoxy to receive it, and a mark of heresy to reject it? To decide this is very simple. It can be ascertained with mathematical precision. It is a matter of fact, a question of history, and only requires a fair, frank, and honest appeal to the testimony of the Church.

1. Luther to Albert of Prussia, 1532.↩
2. *Systematic Theology*, vol. iii. part iv., Eschatology, pp. 820, 871.↩
3. *Yale Lectures on Preaching*, pp. 18, 19.↩

2. Church Historians And Students Of Christian Antiquities.

WE PROCEED then to inquire into the belief and teaching of the Church of all times, but more especially during the first three centuries, or primitive Church, i.e., the era of the fathers, when the teachings of Christ and the Apostles were yet fresh in memory. We will first, as the most impartial and satisfactory method, produce the conclusions of eminent scholars who have traversed the field, and whose competency as authoritative witnesses cannot be questioned, and then examine the original sources, the writings of the fathers themselves.

GERHARD, *Loci Theologici* (“that grandest repository of the ante-Reformation age”), vol. ix. p. 256:

“The pious fathers describe the eternity of the punishments of the lost in emphatic words.”

GIESELER, *History of Doctrines*, p. 248:

After quoting from a number, as representative, he says:

“All these Church fathers are unanimous that after death there is no more reconciliation for sin, and therefore the godless will never be freed from their pains.”

NEANDER, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. ii. p. 676:

“The doctrine of Eternal Punishment continued, as in the preceding period, to be dominant in the creed of the Church.”

ALGER, *Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life*, p. 402:

“The Fathers expected that Christ would return from heaven, hold a general day of judgment, and consummate all things. The saved were then to be transported bodily to the eternal bliss of heaven; the damned, in like manner, were to be banished forever to a fiery hell, there to endure uncomprehended agonies, without any respite, without any end. Such was undeniably the prevailing view, the orthodox doctrine, of the patristic Church.”

TAYLOR, *Ancient Christianity*:

Commenting on this doctrine, as propounded by Christ in Luke 12:5, he says:

“It is a matter of history, out of question, that the Apostolic Church and the Church of later times, took it word for word in the whole of its apparent value.”

HERZOG'S *REAL-ENCYCLOPEDIA* (German), vol. vi. p. 183:

“The Church and the overwhelming majority of her representative speakers (*Die Kirche und die weit überwiegende Mehrzahl ihrer Stimmführer*) have from of old viewed with disapprobation the opinion opposed [to the doctrine of the eternity of the punishments of hell]. Compare Augsburg Confession, Art. XVII, and Helvetic Confession, Art. II. Our theologians readily add also that the never-ending destruction of the wicked is requisite to the glory of the divine justice, truth, and power.”

MCCLINTOCK AND STRONG'S *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, article “Future Punishment,” vol. viii. p. 790:

“The doctrine of Origen (restorationism) was condemned by the Fourth Council of Carthage, A.D. 398, and afterwards by many other councils, and the doctrine of the eternity of Future Punishment was established as the faith of the Church.” (Knapp's Theology, § 158.)

EDWARDS, *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, article “Future Retribution.”

“That all sinners who do not repent and take refuge in the Saviour in the present life, shall in the future state, suffer everlasting punishment cannot be denied to have been believed by the fathers of the third, second, and first centuries.”

CHAMBERS' *Encyclopedia*, article " Hell:"

“This doctrine of the final restoration of all to the enjoyment of happiness... was rejected by the common judgment of antiquity, and was formally condemned by the Second Council of Constantinople — a condemnation founded on the literal sense of many passages of Scripture (see Matt. 18:8, 25:41, 46; Mark 9:43; Luke 3:7; 2 Thess. 1:9; Rev. 20:10, etc.); and in the controversies between the Eastern and Western Churches on the subject of the punishments of hell, the belief of their eternity, in the most strict sense of the word, was always recognized as a common doctrine of both.”

JOHNSON’S *New Universal Cyclopaedia*, article “Hell:”

“The place of punishment (the present meaning of Hell) is described in the Bible as a place of torment or everlasting punishment. The Church has almost always and universally held to the future, eternal punishment of the wicked.”

HAGENBACH, *History of Doctrines*, vol. i. p. 379:

After citing testimonies from writers of the primitive age, showing that the penalties of the lost were deemed eternal, he adds the significant sentence:

“It is superfluous to quote passages from the other fathers, as they almost all agree.”

Vol. ii. p. 138, he further says:

“The Catholic Church, however, simply retained the doctrine of the eternity of the punishments of hell.”

SHEDD, *History of Christian Doctrine*, vol. ii. p. 414:

“The punishment inflicted upon the lost was regarded by the fathers of the ancient Church, with very few exceptions, as endless.”

SCHAFF, *History of the Christian Church from the Birth of Christ to the Reign of Constantine*, p. 298:

“Origen singularly extends the virtue of this redemption to the whole spirit world, in connection with his hypothesis of a final restoration. The only one of the fathers who accompanies him in this is Gregory of Nyssa.”

KAHNIS, *History of German Protestantism*, chap ii. p. 108:

“As long as we shall take in Scripture the words as they stand, we shall be obliged to confess, with the whole visible Church, the eternity” of the punishments of hell.”

LECKY, *History of Rationalism*, vol. i. p. 316:

“Origen and his disciple Gregory of Nyssa, in a somewhat hesitating manner, diverged from the prevailing opinion. But they were alone in their opinion. With these two exceptions, all the fathers proclaimed the eternity of torments.”

STUART, *American Biblical Repository*, July, 1840, article, “Future Punishment.”

“He who peruses with attention all these works can never doubt what was the common belief of the primitive age on the subject of endless punishment. A belief in endless punishment in the primitive age of Christianity was general and usual. Those who thought of retribution at all and believed in it, seem to have adopted the belief that it was to have no end.”

RIESDER, (German) *Summary of the Most Ancient Christian Doctrine*, vol. iv. §34, p. 430:

The primitive faith in regard to future punishment was that “the judgment shall condemn the godless to hell, to everlasting pain and punishment.” This statement is fortified by reference to many fathers.

HODGE, *Systematic Theology*, vol. iii. part iv. Eschatology, p. 869:

“The common doctrine is, that there is no repentance or reformation in the future world; that those who depart this life unreconciled to God, remain forever in this state of alienation, and, therefore, are forever sinful and miserable. This is the doctrine of the whole Christian Church, of the Greeks, of the Latins, and of all the great historical Protestant bodies.”

DAVIDSON, *Exegetical Essays: Philological Library*, vol. xxxvii. p. 7:

“At an early period the eternity of future punishment was known and believed. The doctrine is not of late origin in the Christian Church, as some would represent. It was generally received when the book of Enoch was written” [latter half of first century]. ’

TOWNSEND, *Lost Forever*, p. 424:

“How strongly the doctrine in question is fortified by the faith of the Church through the ages! The apostolic and patristic periods present a comparatively clean record. Nothing is clearer than the attitude of the early Christian Church upon this subject. Beginning with Clemens Romanus, who was a fellow-laborer with the apostle Paul, and following down to the middle of the third century, there is not a syllable respecting immediate universal salvation, but much respecting endless misery.”

GIBBON, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. ii. p. 142:

In that famous fifteenth chapter in which he casts his skeptical leer upon the miraculous progress of Christianity, he yet must bear his witness to the orthodox faith on this point, as follows:

“The primitive Church, whose faith was of a much firmer consistence, delivered over, without hesitation, to eternal torture, the far greater part of the human species... And whatever may be the language of individuals, it is still the public doctrine of all the Christian Churches.”

OXENHAM (Roman Catholic), *Eschatology*, p. 80:

“Of the real mind of the Church as evidenced by the consent of her representative fathers, there cannot be a shadow of doubt. The entire weight of Christian tradition, with the solitary and discredited exception of the Origenists, is dead against them” [i.e. against the opponents of eternal punishment].

WORDSWORTH, *Duration of Future Punishment*:

“The Fathers of the Church in Origen’s time, and in the following centuries (among whom were many to whom the original language of the New Testament was their mother tongue, and who could not be misled by translations), were unanimous in teaching that the joys of the righteous and the punishments of the wicked will not be temporary, but everlasting. The general consent of Christendom for a thousand years was as I have described, and the first persons who disturbed that unanimity, and revived the exploded opinions of Origen, together with some other strange doctrines, were the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century, who were therefore censured in a special article by the learned Lutherans who framed the Augsburg Confession of Faith.”

Such is an altogether sufficient selection from the views of eminent historians and thinkers, representing various schools of thought, and various shades of religious belief, as to what was the teaching of the primitive Church on this tenet. As the writers cited are only such as have made a specialty of patristic studies, and as are perfectly at home on this field, their verdict is of the first importance. And it is, that with a unanimity almost absolute, and in fact almost unexampled by that upon any other of the vital doctrines, the pious fathers of the first three centuries held as a fundamental, fixed, and settled article of the Christian faith, to deny which was a conclusive mark of heresy, the endless duration of the future punishment of the wicked. It is easy, indeed, to make light and flippant and unhistorical assertions that this doctrine was not so held by the early Church, as is done by some of late with an altogether reckless boldness, but, as we here see, it is quite another thing when resort is made to the stubborn and incontestable facts.

Let us, however, now go directly to the original sources — the identical words of the fathers themselves, — the examination of which has induced so remarkable a unanimity among these distinguished students of antiquity. What is their language in treating of Future Punishment?

3. The *Apostolical Fathers*.

(Fathers of the first century — coteremporaries of the Apostles.)

BARNABAS.

The companion and fellow-laborer of Paul, frequently mentioned in the Acts. His epistle is cited and deemed genuine by Clement, Origen, Eusebius, and Jerome, and at least must be considered as a venerable authority to the faith of the apostolic age. “The genuineness of the Epistle of Barnabas has been disputed, but upon insufficient grounds.”¹

Catholic Epistle of St. Barnabas, Chap. xx.:²

“But the way of darkness is also the way of everlasting death (θανάτου αἰώνιου) with punishment, in which way are the things that destroy the soul.”

Chap. xxi.:

“For he who keepeth these [statutes] shall be glorified in the kingdom of God, but he who chooseth other things shall be destroyed with his works.”

CLEMENT OF ROME.

Declared by Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, and others to be that intimate friend of Paul whose “name” is said, in Phil. 4:3, to be “in the book of life.” Tertullian says that he was appointed by the apostle Peter to be teacher and overseer of the Church at Rome, and Eusebius (himself of 4th century) says that his epistles “were publicly read for common edification in most of the churches, both in former times and in our own.”³

Second Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, chap. viii.:⁴

“Just as the potter, if he make a vessel, and it be broken or distorted in his hands, refashions, it again; but, if he have before this sent it to the furnace, he will not then again remodel it; so we, as long as we are in this world, may exercise repentance to the end that we may be saved. But after that we have departed from the world, we shall no longer be able there to confess, or to exercise repentance (οἷχέ τι Θουνάμεδα ἔχεῖ ἔξομολογήσασσαι ἠ μετανοεῖν ἔ τι).”

Chap. vi.:

“For if we do the will of Christ, we shall find rest, otherwise nothing shall deliver us from eternal punishment (ἀ ὠνίου χολάσεως).”

IGNATIUS.

Bishop of Antioch at destruction of Jerusalem, 70 A.D., and thrown to lions in the amphitheater at Rome, by order of Trajan, A.D. 107.

Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians, chap. xvi.:⁵

“If anyone corrupt the faith of God by impure doctrine, such an one shall go into inextinguishable fire (ἔ ις τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον).”

HERMAS.

“*The Pastor of Hermas* was one of the most popular books, if not the most popular book, in the Christian Church during the second, third, and fourth centuries. It occupied a position analogous in some respects to that of Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* in modern times. The most widely spread opinion in ancient times in regard to, its authority was, that it was the production of the Hermas mentioned in the Epistle to the Romans (16:14).”⁶ Another Opinion is that the Pastor was the work of the brother of the Roman bishop, Pius I., about 150 A.D. Irenaeus quotes the writings of Hermas the same as Scripture, and Origen calls him “divinely inspired.”

The Pastor, book iii., Similitud. iv.:⁷

"That future era shall be summer to the just, but desolation to the transgressor. And they shall be burned therefore, because they have sinned, and did not choose repentance of their sins (_comburentur, quia... peccatorum suorum non egerunt poenitentiam)."

Similitud. vi. chap. ii.:

“Those which you see have torn themselves away from God forever (*in perpetuum*). Among them there is no return through repentance.”

Similitud. viii. chap. vii.:

“And as many as do not repent at all, but abide in their deeds will utterly perish.”

1. Guericke’s *Ancient Church*, p. 211.↵
2. Hefele’s *Apostolical Fathers*, p. 49.↵
3. *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. iii. Chap. xvi. p. 101.↵
4. Hefele’s *Apostolical Fathers*, p. 143.↵
5. Hefele’s *Apostolical Fathers*, p. 166.↵
6. *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, vol. i. p. 319.↵
7. Hefele’s *Apostolical Fathers*, pp. 380, 392, 406.↵

4. The Ante-Nicene Fathers.

(Fathers from close of first century to the era of the Council of Nice, A.D. 325.)

POLYCARP.

For eighty years bishop of Smyrna, and the intimate friend and disciple of St. John. He suffered martyrdom at the stake, A.D. 166. The testimony of this venerable Christian hero, of whom Irenaeus says “that he had been instructed by, and had intercourse with, many who had seen Christ,” is in the highest degree significant. When the proconsul of Asia, having failed in his threat of the wild beasts, said, “If you despise the wild beasts, I will cause you to be burnt to ashes,” the martyr answered, — giving an invaluable testimony to that faith he had learned by word of mouth from the disciple whom Jesus loved — “I fear not the fire you threaten me with, which burns for a little while, and then goes out; you are yourself ignorant of the judgment to come, and the fire of everlasting punishment (αἰῶνιου χολᾶσεως)” prepared for the wicked.¹

JUSTIN MARTYR.

A celebrated Platonic philosopher, who, having embraced Christianity, composed two learned treatises in its behalf, which he presented to the Roman emperors, Antoninus and Marcus Aurelius, to stay the tide of persecution; beheaded at Rome, A.D. 165.

Trypho, xlv.:

“The wicked shall be sent to the judgment, and to condemnation to fire to be punished unceasingly (ἀπαυστος).”

Apology, i. viii.:

“Plato used to say that Rhadamanthus and Minos would punish the wicked who came before them for a thousand years; but we say that the souls of the wicked, being reunited to the same bodies, shall be consigned over to eternal (αἰώνιος) torment, and not, as Plato will have it, to the period of a thousand years only; but, if you will affirm this to be incredible or impossible, there is no help for you, but you must fall from error to error, till the day of judgment convinces you we are right.”

TATIAN.

This father flourished about the middle of the second century. “He seems to have embraced Christianity at Rome, where he became acquainted with Justin Martyr, and enjoyed the instructions of that eminent teacher of the Gospel.”² He died about A.D. 170.

Tatian’s *Address to the Greeks*, chap. xiii.:

“The soul is not in itself immortal, O Greeks, but mortal. Yet it is possible for it not to die. If, indeed, it knows not the truth, it dies and is dissolved with the body, but rises again at last at the end of the world with the body, receiving death by punishment in immortality.”

Chap. xiv.:

“And as we, to whom it now happens easily to die, afterwards receive the immortal with enjoyment, or the painful with immortality, so the demons who abuse the present life to purposes of wrongdoing, dying continually even while they live, will have hereafter the same immortality.”

Chap. xvii.:

“But as he who gave the name to the city, a friend of Hercules as it is said, was devoured by the horse of Diomedes, so he who boasted of the Magian Ostanes, will be delivered up in the day of consummation as fuel for the eternal fire.”

THEOPHILUS.

Eusebius³ states that Theophilus “was well known as the sixth bishop of Antioch in succession from the Apostles.” The same Church historian further specifies his era as beginning under the reign of Marcus Aurelius in A.D. 168. His death is variously assigned to the year 181 or 188. Theophilus “evidently had a profound acquaintance with the inspired writings, and he powerfully exhibits their immense superiority in every respect

over the heathen poetry and philosophy. The whole treatise was well fitted to lead an intelligent pagan to the cordial acceptance of Christianity.”⁴

Theophilus’ *First Book to Autolycus*:

"Hereby [through the writings of the prophets] I. have become certain in the matter, and .have learned to put faith in them in reference to things yet to be fulfilled. So now do thou believe, my friend, so that thou mayest not at last be compelled to believe amid everlasting torments (ἐν αἰώνιοις τιμωρίαις)?

Twentieth Book to Autolycus:

“Yet read thou the prophets themselves, they can teach thee how thou canst avoid the everlasting pain.”

IRENAEUS, Bishop of Lyons, A.D. 130-202.

“The champion of Catholic orthodoxy in the latter half of the second century; and the mediator between the Eastern and Western Churches.”⁵ Massuetus, in his standard edition of this father, by abundant citations refutes the attempts to represent him as teaching annihilation, and proves him by specific quotations to have been an advocate of eternal punishment.

Alger⁶ similarly says of these assertions of Irenaeus, “that they cannot be figuratively explained.”

Irenaeus against Heresies, book iv. chap. xxviii. sec. ii.:

“Thus also the punishment of those who do not believe the Word of God is not merely temporal, but is rendered also eternal. For, to whomsoever the Lord shall say, ‘Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire’ (*ignem perpetuum*), these shall be damned forever (*semper damnati*).”

Book v. chap. xxvii.:

“Now good things are eternal and without end with God, and, therefore the loss of these is also eternal and without end (*aeterna et sine fine*).”

Book iv. chap. xxviii. sec. iii.:

“The Lord, who judges for eternity those whom he doth judge, and lets go for eternity those whom he does let go free.”

Sec. i.:

“Inasmuch, then, as in both Testaments there is the same righteousness of God, and in the one case, indeed (i.e., the Old), when God takes vengeance he does it typically, temporarily, and more moderately; but in the other (the New), he does it really, enduringly, and more rigidly, for the fire is eternal... those men are devoid of sense, therefore, [Irenaeus is here rather severe upon our modern exaggerators of divine mercy who wish to quote him as on their side — Author] who endeavor to bring in another Father, setting over against these punishments what great things the Lord had done at his coming to save those who receive Him; while they keep silence with regard to his judgment, and all those things which shall come upon such as have heard His words, but done them not, and that it were better for them if they had not been born (Matt. 26:24), and that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the judgment than for that city which did not receive the word of his disciples (Matt. 1:15).”

TERTULLIAN, 166—240 A.D.

“The first and greatest teacher of North Africa. While a pagan he distinguished himself as an advocate and rhetorician. His writings evince a glowing enthusiasm for the Gospel. He originated the Latin ecclesiastical language.”⁷

De judic. Dom. (Concerning the judgment of the Lord), chap. ix.:

“God appoints the wicked to go down to everlasting punishment (*aeternae poenae*) under the fierceness of a raging hell-fire without end... The damned burn eternally without consuming, as the volcanoes burn forever without wasting.” The works of Tertullian abound in similar statements.

HIPPOLYTUS, Bishop of Port of Rome, 235 A.D.

One of the foremost scholars and theologians of his time. His mastery of the Greek language would render him peculiarly fit to be a “bishop of the nations who frequented the harbor of Rome in multitudes.”⁸

Discourse against the Greeks:

“The fire which is unquenchable and without end awaits these latter, and a certain fiery worm which dieth not, and which does not waste the body, but continues bursting forth from the body with unending pain. No sleep will give them rest; no night soothe them; no death will deliver them from punishment, nor shall any voice of interceding friends profit them.”

MINUCIUS FELIX, about 200 A.D.

An eminent Roman jurist, who, after his conversion, to Christianity, became one of its most gifted champions.

Octavius, c. xxxv.:

“As the fires of Etna and Vesuvius rage, but do not waste, thus that primitive fire nourishes the inconsumable torment (*inexesa laceratione*) of the sufferers...” “Nor will there be any bounds or termination (*nec modus ullus aut terminus*) to their torments.”

Origen (185-254).

Origen, in an introduction to his theological works, gives an epitome of the cardinal doctrines held by the Church, in which he includes the eternity of future punishment. *Proaem. Op. περί ἄρχῶν* (*interprete Rufino*).

“Every soul going out of this world shall either enjoy the inheritance of life and bliss, if his deeds have rendered him fit for bliss; or, be delivered up to eternal fire and punishment (igne aeterno ac suppliciis — Gr. αἰώνιος), if his sins have deserved that state.”

So in his xix. *Hom. on Jer.* (Opp. iii. p. 24), he speaks of “an eternal condemnation, and of the impossibility of being converted in the world to come.” But elsewhere he was led, in connection with his hypothesis of a preexistence of souls, to advocate the comfortless theory of a constant interchange between fall and redemption in the future state — the saved lapsing, and the lost being restored — so that the history of the universe from everlasting to everlasting would but present the spectacle of alternate apostasy and recovery. On account of these errors he was refused a place among the fathers by the Church, and was repeatedly stigmatized, both by local and general councils, as a heretic. So that Jerome, in his tract against Rufinus, l. ii. c. v., says that Origen for his adulterations of Christianity was not only degraded from the priesthood, but was also excluded from the Church. Dr. Schaff likewise says of him that “he can by no means be called orthodox, either in the Catholic or Protestant sense.” He was betrayed into these errors by his pernicious principle of allegorizing Scripture, so that he says, *Stromata*, Book x.: “The source of many evils lies in adhering to the literal text of Scripture;” and again: “The Scriptures are of little use to those who understand them as written.” With all this, however, Origen had too much reverence for Scripture to attempt, with his modern followers, to discard eternal punishment from the text. But he especially admits that the gram-

matical sense of the scriptural terms teaches an everlasting and inextinguishable fire; but considers this an intentional and gracious deceit on the part of God to deter men from sinning. He, therefore, declaims sharply against the public preaching of universal restoration as fostering immorality.

Origen, therefore, is an important witness to three great facts relating to this controversy: First, that the letter of Scripture teaches eternal punishment. Second, that the denial of this doctrine in the ante-Nicene era was regarded positively heretical. And third, that to publicly preach against it was, even in his own opinion, a stimulant to immoral license, and deserving of the severest censure. And yet it is upon this same Origen that the present opponents of eternal punishment build their chief support! While, in view of his services to Christianity, we would charitably make allowance for his failings, yet how utterly inexcusable is that studious concealment, by Farrar, *et id genus*, of all these indisputable historical facts, which not only utterly invalidate Origen's testimony as a witness for their fallacies, but even make it tell strongly upon the evangelical side.

CYPRIAN, 200—258 A.D., Bishop of Carthage.

Suffered martyrdom 258. "Cyprian was the impersonation of the Catholic Church of the third century. He was born to be a prince in the Church."⁹ Augustine calls him by eminence "the Catholic Bishop," and "Catholic martyr," and Vincentius, of Lisinum, calls him "the light of all saints, all martyrs, and all bishops."

Liber ad Demetrianus, c. xxiv.:

"An ever (*semper*) burning Gehenna will burn up the condemned, and a punishment devouring with living flames; nor will there be at any time whence they may have either rest or end (*vel requiem, vel finem*) to their torments. The pain of punishment will be without the fruit of penitence; weeping will be useless, and prayers ineffectual. Too late they will believe in eternal punishment (*aeternam poenam*) who would not believe in eternal life."

LAOTANTIUS, died 330 A.D.

Tutor of the son of Constantine, and called, from the classic elegance of his Latin style, the Christian Cicero.

Instit. Div. vii. 21:

“Nevertheless, that flesh (of the lost) will not be like that terrestrial which God has put upon men, but indestructible and enduring through eternity, that it may be able to undergo anguish and everlasting fire (*igni sempiterno*).”

ATHANASIUS, 296—373 A.D.

The celebrated patriarch of Constantinople, called by preeminence the “*pater orthodoxiae*,” and the leading character of the fourth century. With a lofty Christian heroism. he withstood the command of the Emperor Constantine to receive the heretic Arius into the Church, and became the instrument of establishing for the whole Church the fundamental article of the Trinity. “Athanasius¹⁰ was one of the greatest men of whom the Church can boast.”

Third Festal (Easter) Epistle:

“Therefore the divine word doth not allow them to have peace. For there is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord, working the work of anguish and sorrow. But such men have the due reward of their folly, since their hope will be vain; for there is no hope whatever to the ungrateful; the last fire prepared for the devil and his angels awaits those who disregard divine light. Such, then, is the end of the unthankful.”

Fourth Festal Epistle:

“Those who conspire against the Lord die, having rejoiced a very little in these temporal things, and then falling away from those which are eternal. For through many tribulations the righteous enter the kingdom of heaven; but when he arrives where sorrow, and distress, and sighing shall flee away, he shall thenceforward enjoy rest. But the lover of pleasures, rejoicing here for a little while, afterwards undergoes a wretched existence.”

CYRIL, 315-386 A.D., Patriarch of Jerusalem.

Catech. c. xviii.:

“If he be a sinner, he will receive an eternal (*aeternum*) body, whereby he may be able to suffer the punishment of sins, that he may perpetually (*perpetuo*) burn in the fire, so that it never will be dissolved.”

BASIL THE GREAT, Bishop of Caesarea, 329-379 A.D.

“His name stands high among the fathers of the church as one of the most eloquent, energetic, and spiritual of their number.” “Truly a royal per-

sonage in history.” “Basil¹¹ proclaims endless punishment to warn and arouse delaying sinners.”

Ex. Ascet. de Fide, § 4:

“Sinners shall be condemned to everlasting punishment (χόλασιν αἰώνιον), where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched.”

Gregory of Nyssa, his younger brother, is the only father of prominence who was a disciple of Origenistic opinions.

GREGORY NAZIANZEN, 328—389 A.D.

After having displayed rare theological talents, this father was raised by the Emperor Theodosius, in the year 380, to the archiepiscopal throne of Constantinople.

He writes:

“For those who have departed from this life there will no more be in hell confession or amendment of ways (*non est in inferno confessio nec morum correctio*). As God has appointed this state for life and action, so has he fixed that sphere for the retribution of our deeds.”

AMBROSE, 340—398 A.D., Archbishop of Milan for a quarter of a century.

“He was the chief pillar of the Nicene orthodoxy in the west.”¹²

Lib. vi. in Rev. chap. 14:

“Those whom justice has once for all borne down to perdition, mercy shall nevermore restore to pardon (*ulterius ad veniam non reducit*).”

Idiota de innoe. perdit. chap. 6:

“There will no more be any way of escape to the lost, but they will burn in everlasting fire (*in igne aeterno ardebunt*).”

JEROME, 331—420 A.D.

The distinguished author of the Vulgate, the Latin translation of the Old Testament, in use for a thousand years by the whole Western Church as the only current edition, and still the authorized text of the Roman Catholic

Church. “Jerome was the most distinguished exegete of the times, and the most learned of the then living Western theologians.”¹³

In Cap. 66 Esa.:

“We believe in the endless sufferings (*aeterna tormenta*) of the devil and all the wicked. He who once enters into that place is not permitted any more to pass out. This the truth itself in the Gospel declares.”

CHRYSOSTOM, 344—407 A.D.

Chrysostom (literally the golden-mouthed) was the Christian Demosthenes of the early Church. His brilliant oratory elevated him to the patriarchal see of Constantinople. Along with Athanasius he may be ranked as the most eloquent of the Greek Fathers.

Epis. 5 ad Theodor. lapsum:

“It is necessary that those who have sinned shall put on immortality, not however for any honor to themselves, but in order that the path of that punishment may survive unceasingly (*continuum*). Neither will any severity of torment destroy the soul, nor will the body be able, in that time, to be consumed by burnings, but distressed it will survive with the soul, nor will there be any end (*nec finis ullus erit*).”

AUGUSTINE, Bishop of Hippo, 354-430 A.D.

The most original, profound, and far reaching in influence of the Christian Fathers; whose writings burst forth again with living power as a prime agency in the Reformation, and whose pure fame has filled the Christian world, Protestant and Catholic alike doing him honor. “St. Augustine¹⁴ is one of the most extraordinary lights in the Church. In importance he takes rank behind no teacher who has labored in her since the days of the Apostles. It may well be said that the first place among the Church-Fathers is due to him; and at the time of the Reformation, only a Luther, by reason of the fulness and depth of his spirit, was worthy to stand by his side. He is the highest point of the development of the Western Church before the Middle Ages.”

Euchiridion ad Laurentium, c. cxiii.:

“That perpetual (*perpetua mors*) death of the damned will remain without an end (*sine fine*). And, however men according to their human feelings imagine concerning a relief of the pains, or an intermission, this death will be common to all, just as the eternal life of all the saints will remain in common.”

De Civitate Dei, c. xxiii.:

“Christ in one and the same place, and in one and the same sentence, said, The wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal. If both are eternal, verily either both ought to be understood as long-continuing with an end, or both as perpetual without an end (*aut utrumque cum fine diuturnum, aut utrumque sine fine perpetuum debet intelligi*). For they are related as equal to equal, and to say in this one and the same sense, life eternal will be without end, but punishment eternal will have an end, is absurd.”

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1. Similarly also the Christian maiden of Lyons, who, approaching the agony of martyrdom, overcame her shrinking fears when “reminded by the temporal punishment of the eternal fire of hell.”↵
 2. *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, vol. iii. p. 4.↵
 3. *Ecclesiastical History*, book iv. chap. xx.↵
 4. *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, vol. iii. p. 52.↵
 5. Schaff’s *Primitive Church*, p. 488.↵
 6. *Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life*, p. 511.↵
 7. Kurtz’s *Church History*, vol. i. 140.↵
 8. Kitt’s *Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature*, article Hippolytus.↵
 9. Schaff’s *Primitive Church*, pp. 519-522.↵
 10. *Encyclopedia Americana*.↵
 11. Dr. Beecher’s *History of Scriptural Doctrine of Retribution*.↵
 12. Hagenbach, vol. i. p. 235.↵
 13. Guericke’s *Manual of Ancient Church History*, p. 337.↵
 14. *Der heilige Augustinus* — Charles Bindemann, Prof. in University at Greifswald.↵

5. The Clementine Homilies And Recognitions, Apostolical Con- stitutions, And Apocryphal Gospels.

Section I. — The Clementine Homilies.

THESE were originally ascribed to the apostolic age and to the authorship of Clement of Rome, the companion of the apostles. “This work,” (the Clementine Homilies) says Guericke,¹ “is rich in traditional materials of the early Church. The substance of it belongs to the second century.” The Homilies are invaluable as a testimony to the prevailing faith of the primitive ages.

Hom. XI., chap. xi.:

“Immortality of the Soul.” “And though by the dissolution of the body, you shall escape punishment, how shall ye be able by corruption to flee from your soul, which is incorruptible? For the soul even of the wicked is immortal, for whom it were better not to have it incorruptible. For, being punished with endless torture under unquenchable fire, and never dying, it can receive no end of its misery.”

Numerous similar extracts could be cited.

Section II. — The Clementine Recognitions.

These, another work of the pseudo-Clement, are probably a version of the Homilies to bring them more in accord with a pure orthodoxy. They form ten books, and exist in a Latin translation, the original Greek having been lost. That they are quoted by Origen, and refer to the reign of Caracalla, 211 A.D., prove their very early date. “There is scarcely a single writing which is of so great importance for the history of Christianity in its first stage, and which has already given such brilliant disclosures at the hands of the most renowned critics in regard to the earliest history of the Christian Church, as the writings ascribed to the Roman Clement, the Recognitions and Homilies.”²

Book V. chap. xxviii. Eternity of Punishment:

“But if any persist in impiety till the end of life, then, as soon as the soul, which is immortal, departs, it shall pay the penalty of its persistence in impiety. For even the souls of the impious are immortal; though perhaps they themselves would wish them to end with their bodies. But it is not so; for they endure without end the torments of eternal fire. But perhaps you will say to me, You terrify us. And how then shall we speak to you the things which are in reality? Can we declare to you the truth by keeping silence? We cannot state the things which are otherwise than as they are. But if we are silent we shall make ourselves the cause of the ignorance that is ruinous to you, and should satisfy the serpent that lurks within you, and blocks up your senses, who cunningly suggests such things to you that he may make you always the enemies of God.”

Section III. — The Apostolical Constitutions.

These are a collection of Scriptural and moral canons professing to embody the counsels and instructions of the apostles. They are of very great antiquity and authority. The earlier Christian writers ascribe them to the apostles themselves. They clearly belong to the Ante-Nicene Period, and exerted a large influence upon the faith and practice of the Primitive Church. Bunsen³ says of them that we here “find ourselves unmistakably in the midst of the life of the Church of the second and third centuries.” “The apostolical constitutions is a collection of ecclesiastical laws and usages which grew up gradually during the first four centuries, and is valuable chiefly as a rich source of information concerning ancient Church government, worship, and practice.”⁴ “A collection of ecclesiastical statutes purporting to be the work of the apostolic age, but in reality formed gradually. in the second, third, and fourth centuries, and is of much value in reference to Christian archaeology”⁵ “These constitutions were more used and consulted in the East than any work of the fathers, and were taken as the rule. in matters of discipline, like the Holy Scriptures in matters of doctrine”⁶

Book V. sec. iv.:

“But he that denies himself to be a Christian, that he may not be hated of men, and so loves his own life more than he does the Lord, in whose hand his breath is, is wretched and miserable, having no longer his portion with the saints, but with those that are accursed; choosing, instead of the kingdom of the blessed, that eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels, being rejected by God, and cast out from his presence.”

Sec. vi.:

“But if we remit any part of our confession by the fear of a very short punishment, we not only deprive ourselves of everlasting glory, ... but come within the scope of eternal punishment, and go into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Section IV. — Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, and Revelations.

The greatest number of authorities assign, the body of the contents of the Apocryphal Gospels to the first four centuries. “The substance of this book is of great antiquity, and in its original [Greek] form it was held in great estimation. In the synopsis of Scripture ascribed to Athanasius it is placed along with the Acts of Peter, Acts of John, and other books, among the Antilegomena. St. Augustine in three passages refers to the book in such a way as to show that he had it in something very like its present form.”⁷ It is accordingly of signal value as a witness to the faith of ancient Christendom.

Acts of the Holy Apostle Thomas:

“And the apostle said to the multitudes standing by, These [descriptions of the dreadful sorrows of hell] are not the only punishments, but there are others worse than these; and if you do not turn to this God whom I proclaim, and refrain from your former works and deeds which you have done without knowledge, in these punishments you shall have your end. . . And let each of you put off the old man, and put on the new, and leave your former course of conduct and behavior; and let those that steal steal no more, but let them live laboring and working; and let the adulterers no more commit adultery, lest they give themselves up to everlasting punishment.”

We have thus had recourse to the original writings of all the more prominent Church fathers and authorities who gave voice and form to the Christian faith during the first four centuries — the era in which orthodox doctrine was evolved from the crucible of discussion, and firmly settled for all future generations. We have heard these great Christian thinkers, saints, heroes, and martyrs, “of whom the world was not worthy,” speak in their own identical words, so that there can be no possible mistaking or misrepresenting their meaning. And the conclusion to every impartial mind must be that, from the apostolical fathers BARNABAS and CLEMENT, the companions and colaborers of St. Paul, and from the venerable martyr POLYCARP, who had learned his faith from the Apostle John, down to the princely ATHANASIUS, the eloquent CHRYSOSTOM, and the profound AUGUSTINE — from Greeks and Latins, from the Orient, and from the West — there proceeds an unbroken testimony that THE FAITH OF THE EARLY CHURCH WAS DEFINITELY AND DECISIVELY

SETTLED UPON THE ARTICLE OF THE ENDLESSNESS OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT. So abundant, express, and emphatic are their utterances and enforcements of this truth as to be simply overwhelming. By every word, phrase, synonym, and simile that the Greek or Latin languages could provide, they minutely and specifically set it forth. And he who can pretend that they do not so teach, is either woefully ignorant of their writings, or is guilty of a willful distortion of them, which is utterly beyond the limits of all candid and fair-dealing controversy.

We find, then, that the venerable primitive fathers, who, from their immemorial thrones, haloed with the lingering rays of that great Sun of Truth which had just set beneath the horizon, yet sway their silent sceptres over Christian thought, and will continue to do so to the end of time, are UNANIMOUS in their teaching as to what is the true, orthodox faith on this point, which every Christian is bound to receive.

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1. *Ancient Church*, p. 212.↩
 2. *Die Clementischen Recognitionen and Homilien*, von Dr. Adolf Hilgenfeld, Jena, 1848, p. 1.↩
 3. Bunsen's *Christianity and Mankind*.↩
 4. McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia of Bib., Theol. and Eccles. Literature*, Art. Clementines.↩
 5. Guericke's *Ancient Church*, p. 212.↩
 6. Schaff's *Primitive Church*, p. 442.↩
 7. *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, vol. xvi. p. 18.↩

6. The Individual Creeds.

THE CURRENT FAITH of Christendom finds its formulated or ecclesiastical expression in creeds. We look there, then, also to find what is officially taught, and what is to be honestly received, so that there may be unity between the head and the members. This testimony is the more important because creeds are summaries of faith, i.e., they do not embrace every minute particular of doctrine, but only give the chief articles of faith, those primary and fundamental tenets which are essential to the integrity, and even the very existence, of the faith.

“A Creed, or Rule of Faith,” says Schaff’s *History of the Creeds of Christendom*,¹ “is a confession of faith for public use, or a form of words setting forth with authority certain articles of belief, which are regarded by the framers as necessary for salvation... They are summaries of the doctrines of the Bible, aids to its sound understanding, bonds of union among their professors, public standards, and guards against false doctrine and practice.”

The various creeds of the Christian ages may be classified as Individual, OEcumenical or General, and Particular. The INDIVIDUAL CREEDS were drawn up from time to time, as emergency required that confession of the common faith should be made, by distinguished fathers competent to present a just and accurate representation of those doctrines having universal acceptance. Before the Faith had been crystallized in the General Creeds, these Individual Creeds, as short summaries of the great facts in which the Whole Church agreed, were of the greatest value as an intelligent exposition of the Christian tenets to heathen inquirers; as a defense against the fury of a persecution fed by misrepresentation and calumny; as a guide to those desiring to hold the faith in its purity; and as a Witness to future ages of the faith of the fathers.

THE CREED OF IRENAEUS. *Contra Haereses*, lib. i., cap. 10, § 1:

“The Church, although dispersed throughout all the world to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their successors [this faith], that, according to the good will of the Father invisible, every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, and upon the earth, and under the earth, to Christ Jesus our Lord, and God and Saviour, and King, and that every tongue should confess to him, and that he may render a just retribution upon all; that he should send the angels who transgressed and fell into apostasy, and the impious, and unjust, and lawless, and blasphemers among men, into eternal fire (εἰς τὸ αἰώνιον τὸ πῦρ), but to the righteous and holy, and those who have kept his commandments, and remained constant in his love, he will bestow immortality and eternal glory” (δόξαν αἰώνιον).

THE CREED ON JUSTIN MARTYR. An apologetic statement of Christian doctrine presented to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius:

“We hold this view, that it is alike impossible for the wicked, and also for the virtuous, to escape the notice of God; and that each man goes to everlasting (αἰώνιον) punishment, or salvation, according to the desert of his actions. For, if all men knew this, no one would choose wickedness, even for a short time, knowing that he goes to the everlasting punishment of fire.”

THE CREED OF TERTULLIAN. *Ex lib. de Praescript. adv. Haeretic.*, c. xiii:

“This is the rule of faith, namely, that by which we believe that Jesus Christ shall come again with glory for the purpose of translating the holy to eternal life, and the fruition of the celestial promises, and in order to judge the godless With perpetual fire (*igni perpetuo*).”

THE CREED OF ORIGEN. *Ex Proaem. Op.* Περί ἀρχῶν:

“Each soul, when it has departed from this world, shall be rewarded according to its merits, either securing the inheritance of eternal life and blessedness if his deeds have made this meet, or being given over to everlasting (armor) fire and misery, if his transgressions have deserved that fate.”

THE CREED OF BASIL THE GREAT. *Ex Ascet. de Fide*, § 4:

“We believe and confess, therefore, ... that our Lord Jesus Christ... will come in the end of this world to raise all, and to render to every one according to his deeds; when the just shall be translated to everlasting life and the kingdom of heaven; but sinners shall be condemned to everlasting punishment (χόλασιν αἰώνιον), where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched.”

Even the arch-heretics ARIUS and PELAGIUS did not venture to question the prevailing faith on this point. So that the creed drawn up by Arius declares the finality of the decrees of the judgment; and Pelagius expressly asserted at the Synod of Diospolis that the wicked and perverse would not be spared in the day of judgment, but would be tormented in eternal fires (“*aeternis ignibus esse exurendos*”). Thus do the Individual Creeds testify. And if the writings of the Church fathers in general, have shown that they entertained the deep conviction that eternal punishment was one of the Christian doctrines, this embodiment of it in these public, official, epitomized expressions of the faith, demonstrates the further important fact, that they held it to be a CHIEF, MATERIAL, AND FUNDAMENTAL ARTICLE.

1. Vol. i. pp. 3 and 8.↩

7. The OEcumenical Or General Creeds.

THE OECUMENICAL, i.e. General Creeds, are those which are universally accepted— held by evangelical Christians of whatever name — and which, therefore, amid all the unhappy prevailing differences, yet extend their broad aegis over, and form a bond of identity between, the Roman, Greek, and Protestant communions. Of these there are three: The Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian.

“The *OEcumenical Symbols of the Ancient Catholic Church* contain chiefly the orthodox doctrine of God and of Christ as the fundamental dogmas of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation. They are the common property of all Churches, and the common stock from which the later symbolical books have grown... They are three in number: The Apostles', the Nicene, and the ATHANASIAN CREED... These three creeds contain, in brief popular outline, the fundamental articles of the Christian faith, as necessary and sufficient for salvation.”¹

“Those general confessions in which the pure Church has united, in every age since their formation, and in which, throughout the world, it now concurs, are the Apostles', the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan, and ATHANASIAN creeds.”²

Of these truly Catholic creeds the ATHANASIAN (about A.D. 434) is the one which gives precise expression to the Scriptural truth of eternal punishment. The Athanasian, or Third OEcumenical creed “was generally adopted in the seventh century, under the name of Athanasius, when it was classed as an OEcumenical symbol, with the Apostles' and the Nicene Creed.”³ “The Christian Church has considered this symbol a correct expression of her faith, and has arranged it in the third place among the OEcumenical symbols, a rank which its character and antiquity seem to claim for it.”⁴

LUTHER considered the Athanasian Creed⁵ “the most important and glorious composition since the days of the apostles;”⁶ DEAN STANLEY styles it “a

triumphant paean of the orthodox faith;” and the learned theologian HODGE declared it “a grand and unique monument of the unchangeable faith of the whole Church.”⁷

In its introductory article this venerable symbol declares, as the very basis of the Christian doctrinal system: “Whoever will be saved: before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic [i.e. true Christian] faith: which faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled, WITHOUT DOUBT HE SHALL PERISH EVERLASTINGLY (*absque dubio in aeternum peribit*).”⁸ And as if yet further to confirm the vital significance of this doctrine, and to place beyond all ambiguity or dispute its testimony, it is thus repeated at the close: “And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil, into EVERLASTING FIRE (*in ignem aeternum*). This is the Catholic [true Christian] faith.” “This threefold anathema is not merely a solemn warning against the great danger of heresy; but it, does mean to exclude from heaven all who reject the divine truth herein taught.”⁹ We find, then, a clear, positive, and reiterated statement of the Eternity of Future Punishment in one of the universal symbols of the Church of Christ, the common spiritual inheritance and treasure of the Christian world. And as we hearken reverently to this voice of the pious fathers coming down to us across the centuries, may we not unite in the fervent confidence, that “All endeavors of human ingenuity must break against this bulwark of faith, as the waves break upon an inflexible rock.”¹⁰

1. Schaff’s *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. i. pp. 9, 12, 13.↵

2. Krauth’s *Conservative Reformation*, p. 214.↵

3. Hagenbach, *History of Doctrines*, vol. i. p. 269.↵

4. *Book of Concord*, Authority of the Athanasian Symbol, p. 36.↵

5. The *Lutheran* Church throughout the world gives the Athanasian Creed a formal place in her public confessions, and the rubric of the Church of England enjoins that “it shall be sung or said at Morning Prayer, instead of the Apostles’ Creed, on Christmas day, the Epiphany, Easter day, Ascension day, Whitsunday, St. John the Baptist, Trinity Sunday,” and other festival days. The Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States, at the convention of 1785 in Philadelphia, resolved to strike from the Book of Common Prayer both the Nicene

and the Athanasian Creeds; not because of doctrinal opposition, but as unsuited to purposes of public worship. Against this the Archbishops of Canterbury and York protested, and succeeded in having the Nicene Creed restored. As to the exclusion of the Athanasian Creed, the Archbishop of Canterbury expressed himself thus: “Some wish that you had retained the Athanasian Creed; but I cannot say that I feel uneasy on the subject, for you have retained the DOCTRINE OF IT IN YOUR LITURGY, and as to the creed itself, I suppose you thought it not suited to the use of a congregation.” (Bishop White’s Memoirs, pp. 117, 118.)↵

6. Luther’s *Works*, Walch’s edition, vol. iv. 2315.↵
7. *Commentary on the Confessions of Faith*, p. 7.↵
8. Text from Schaff’s *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. ii. p. 70.↵
9. Schaff’s *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. i. p. 39.↵
10. Hagenbach’s *History of Doctrines*, vol. i. p. 269.↵

8. The Particular Creeds.

THESE ORIGINATED at or since the Reformation. The oldest and probably most largely accepted Protestant creed is the AUGSBURG CONFESSION presented to the Emperor Charles V., A.D. 1530.

“The Augsburg Confession will ever be cherished as one of the noblest monuments of faith from the pentecostal period of Protestantism. Its influence extends far beyond the Lutheran Church. It struck the keynote to other evangelical confessions)”¹ “First in place, and first in importance among those great documentary testimonies of the Church which came forth in the Reformation, is the Augsburg Confession.”² ARTICLE XVII.:

“Also they [the Churches with common consent among us] teach that in the consummation of the world Christ shall appear to judge, and shall raise up all the dead, and shall give unto the godly and elect, eternal life, and everlasting joys: but ungodly men and the devils shall he condemn unto endless torments (*ut sine fine crucientur*). They condemn the Anabaptists, who think that to condemned men and the devils shall be an end of torments (*finem poenarum futurum esse*).”³

In the tremendous breach of the Reformation, then, we but find the pure faith ringing out in the same clear and unequivocal tones as in the olden time.

THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND (Convocation of London, A.D. 1562). *Article VIII.*:

“The three Creeds, Nicene Creed, Athanasius’ Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles’ Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed; for they may be proved by most certain warrant of Holy Scripture.”

This solemn adoption of the Athanasian Creed as in most certain harmony with Scripture, is an unqualified endorsement of its twofold affirmation of eternal punishment.

HEIDELBERG CATECHISM,⁴⁵ A.D. 1563.

Question 10: Will God suffer such disobedience and apostasy to go unpunished? Answer. By no means: but he is terribly displeased with our inborn as well as actual sins, and will punish them in just judgment in time and in eternity"

SYMBOLA ROMANA. *The Canons and Dogmatic Decrees of the Council of Trent*, A.D. 1563.

On the Most Holy Sacrament of Penance, Canon V:⁶

"The loss of eternal blessedness (*amissionem aeternae beatitudinis*), and the eternal damnation (*aeternae damnationis*) which he has incurred."

The same is taught in the "*Decree on Justification*, chap. iii." "*On the fallen and their Restoration*," chap. xiv. etc.

SYMBOLA GRAECA ET RUSSIGA. *The Orthodox Confession of Faith of the Eastern Church*, A.D. 1643.

Quaestio cxxi.:

"All souls shall return to their own bodies and receive in them the perfect and eternal reward (αἰώνιον μισθόν) of their deeds and actions, but the bodies of the wicked also will be imperishable because they are to be tormented With eternal punishment (*aeternis discrucienda suppliciiis*)."⁷

WESTMINSTER CONFSSION OF FAITH (1646), chap. xxviii. sec. 2.⁸

"For then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fulness of joy and refreshing which shall come from the presence of the Lord: but the wicked, who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction (*in aeternos cruciatus detrudentur, aeternaque perditione punientur*) from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

This is not only the confession of that large and respectable body, the PRESBYTERIANS; but the American CONGREGATIONALISTS, likewise "have from time to time adopted the Westminster standards of doctrine, with the exception of the section relating to Synodical Church Government"⁹

BAPTIST DECLARATION OF FAITH.

Art. XVIII. THE WORLD TO COME:

“We believe the Scriptures teach that at the last day Christ will descend from heaven, and raise the dead from the grave for final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked shall be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell.”

METHODIST P. E. CHURCH. *Minutes of Conference*, drawn up by the founder of the Church, Rev. John Wesley.¹⁰

“We are all born with a sinful, devilish nature; by reason whereof, we are children of wrath, liable to death eternal. Rom. 5:18; Ephes. 2:3.”

We have thus cited the confessions of the Roman, Oriental, and Protestant Churches, as representative of the Particularistic Creeds, and we find an absolute concurrence on the part of the Modern with the faith of the Ancient Church.

We may yet add the eighth of the IX. “Articles of Agreement of the EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE,” which, being constituted from all the Evangelical Protestant Denominations, could only specify as its basis of union those doctrines of the Christian faith agreed upon by all parties, and therefore in the largest and broadest sense fundamental. It reads thus: “The Immortality of the Soul, the Resurrection of the Body; the judgment of the World by the Lord Jesus Christ, with the eternal blessedness of the righteous, and the eternal punishment of the wicked.”

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1. Schaff’s *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. i. p. 235.↩
 2. Krauth’s *Conservative Reformation*, p. 212.↩
 3. Krauth’s edition of *Augsburg Confession*, p. 23.↩
 4. “As a Standard of public doctrine the Heidelberg Catechism is the most catholic and popular of all the Reformed symbols. The German Reformed Church acknowledges no other. The Calvinistic system is herein set forth with wise moderation, and without its sharp, angular points. This may be a defect in logic, but it is an advantage in religion which is broader and deeper than logic.” — Schaff’s *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. i. p. 540.↩
 5. *Ibid.* vol. iii. p. 310.↩
 6. Schaff’s *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. ii. p. 165.↩

7. *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 897.↩
8. Text from Hodge's *Commentary on the Confession of Faith*, p. 389.↩
9. Schaff's *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. ii. p. 835.↩
10. Buck's *Theological Dictionary — Tenets of the Methodists*, p. 365.↩

9. Universal Consent Established — Not An Open Question.

WHAT, THEN, is the result of this appeal to the testimony of the Church Fathers, the Creeds — Individual, General, and Particular (defining the faith of the Primitive, Mediaeval, and Modern Church) — and the learned conclusions of those ripe patristic scholars who have devoted to them the most elaborate research? Dr. Schaff gives us the answer in his great work, where, setting aside all the points small and great of diversity of opinion, he summarizes only those cardinal truths encountering no opposition anywhere or by any parties in Christendom. These, taken together, he calls “THE CATHOLIC CONSENT OF GREEK, LATIN, AND EVANGELICAL CHRISTENDOM. The consensus is contained in the Scriptures and the OEcumenical Creeds, which all orthodox churches adopt.” He then reduces this agreement to eight general heads. And under the eighth head he gives section 6: “The eternal blessedness of the saints, and the eternal punishment of the wicked.”¹

And certainly, we are now prepared to make answer ourselves that if there is any doctrine settled as an integral part of the Christian faith, it is that of the remediless state of the lost. Other cardinal doctrines, such as the vital one of the Trinity, have indeed been long and stubbornly fought, and have only obtained ascendancy amidst throes of conflict threatening to rend the very citadel of the Church in twain; but there never was a time, from the beginning even until now, when this tenet was not of virtually universal acceptance. Of this there can, then, be no serious question, that over the gate that conducts to the future prison of those who have spurned proffered grace here, the holy Church, the Friend and Shepherd of souls, has graven those foreboding words inscribed by Dante over the door of his Inferno:² .“Ye who enter here leave all hope behind.”

The conclusion of this part of our inquiry is accordingly thus fitly expressed by an eminent writer:³ “If there be any doctrine ever taught in the name of Christianity which can claim to be really catholic, it is the doctrine of never-ending punishment. This has been believed by the majority of Christians in all ages, in all Churches, and, with very insignificant exceptions, in all sects. Fathers, Schoolmen, and Reformers, zealous Roman Catholics and ardent Protestants, have agreed that this is an undeniable portion of the Catholic faith.” To it, then, most evidently pertains that criterion of established and indisputable doctrine referred to in our introductory observations, viz: “*semper, ubique, et ab omnibus.*” And the eternity of Future Punishment is, therefore, no longer an Open question. If it can be challenged, and the challenger yet remain in the bosom of the Church, then can every other foundation be overturned, and there remains no Faith — nothing upon which Christians are certainly agreed.

As the natural and inevitable outcome of these views, the denial of Eternal Punishment, whether under the guise of Restorationism, Annihilationism, or Universalism, has always been deemed heretical, and the orthodox Church has refused every recognition of, or fellowship with, those holding such views. This rule has not only been repeatedly established by the acts and edicts of General Councils, but it is the uniform practice now. For example, as is well known, not a single evangelical denomination acknowledges the Universalists, but repudiates them as vital errorists. And the espousal of Universalistic views (for that is what all the phases of the opposition to the eternity of Future Punishment practically amount to) is considered ground for the exercise of Church discipline, at least in the case of public teachers in the Church. To prove this we need but cite two instances: one taken respectively from what may be termed the poles of Protestantism — the Conservative, and the Liberal.

In the conservative Church of England, in the year 1853, Prof. Maurice, having publicly renounced his belief in this doctrine, was expelled from the chair of Divinity in King’s College, London. And we are assured, upon the testimony of one of the ablest recent opponents of the tenet, that such is the unanimity in regard to it at the present time, “that a clergyman who had received a presentation of a living would find it difficult if not impossible to obtain the signatures of THREE beneficed clergymen to his testimonials, which assert that he has not held, written, or maintained anything contrary to the doctrine of the Church of England, if he was known to have em-

braced the opinions of Origen. The bishop would reject such a candidate for Holy Orders.”⁴

The other instance is that of the recent Ecclesiastical Council of Congregational Churches at Indian Orchard, Mass, which declined to install as pastor of a Congregationalist Church Mr. Merriam, because he avowed his inability to give his assent to the doctrine of everlasting punishment.⁵ But what occurred in this connection is still more significant. The subject exciting wide concern in that highly intelligent communion, the editor of the *Congregationalist*, the organ of that denomination, sent out from Boston a hundred circulars to as many representative ministers of that Church (carefully including those supposed to lean in that direction), “asking their best judgment as to the fact of any important change in Congregational sentiment upon the doctrine of the future punishment of the impenitent, and the relation of the holding of that doctrine to fitness for the Congregational ministry.” The editor gives the replies in full in the issue of December 12, 1877, and comments as follows: “Of eighty-six who respond, sixty-seven, or more than eighty-three per cent., testify unequivocally that, in their judgment, and so far as their observation extends, there has been no essential departure on the subject in question from the faith which has been usual in our body... As to how far a belief in the doctrine should be insisted on as a prerequisite to our ministry, sixty-three brethren, or more than seventy-eight per cent (of whom thirty-two are in New England, eight in the Middle States, and twenty-three in the West), emphatically declare that IT SHOULD BE INSISTED ON IN ALL CASES! We,” continues the editor, “confess ourselves agreeably surprised at these figures. We have heard from some quarters such confident assertion of most important driftings from the old anchorage, in the direction of what we consider lax doctrine in this respect, that we were prepared to fear a different and much less cheering result.”

Nothing could more thoroughly expose the utter groundlessness of all the recent parade about “abandonment of effete dogmas,” “progress of enlightened sentiments,” “change among the more cultured ministers,” etc. etc. ad nauseam, than these hard, practical facts. The Congregationalists, an outgrowth of New England — the nursery and home of Universalism, and that soil where freedom in matters of thought and faith is larger and bolder than anywhere else, and whose ministers stand in the very forefront of the keen and incisive thinkers of the time — yet indignantly and overwhelmingly repudiate the charge of any appreciable drifting away from the ancient

moorings of the Church in respect to the eternity of future punishment, and refuse to induct into the Ministry, or to allow to be a shepherd of their flocks, and a teacher from their pulpits, anyone who cannot conscientiously accept the Church's teaching on this vital truth. And, as in this instance, so has the recent assault upon this doctrine only demonstrated the extraordinary unity of Christians in regard to the fundamental tenets of Christianity. Everywhere, from the official utterances of Synods, from the columns of the religious Press, and from Evangelical Pulpits, there has resounded but one voice, viz., that the faith of old is the faith of the present, and that the Ancient and the Modern Church are at perfect accord in their testimony; thereby giving a new and irrefragable illustration to this hollow, shifting, and skeptical age that one kingdom stands firm and immovable, its adamantine walls alone unwasted by the dissolving stream of time, viz., the CHURCH OF CHRIST — “the pillar and ground of the truth” — which abides “the same yesterday, today, and forever.”

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1. Creeds of Christendom, vol. i. p. 921.↩
 2. Canto iii. v. 9.↩
 3. Rev. John Hunt, D.D., *Contemporary Review*, April, 1878.↩
 4. Anglicanus, *Contemporary Review*, vol. xix. p. 577.↩
 5. As a similar illustration is the action of the committee of the United Presbyterian Synod of Scotland in the case of Rev. Dr. Macrae and his teachings concerning the future state of the wicked. They report that the latitude of opinion claimed by him is inconsistent with the standards of the Church, and require his separation from the people under his charge.↩

Part Two. The Teaching Of Scripture.

THE WRITINGS of the fathers relating to the Eternity of Future Punishment, and the official testimony of the Creeds are, of course, only valuable inasmuch as they are signal witnesses as to what, in the Apostolical and Primitive times: the Church understood to be the meaning and intent of the Scriptural teaching thereupon. The most important part of our investigation, therefore, yet remains, viz., to repair to the HOLY SCRIPTURES themselves, the Rule of Faith, and the primal source of all authority in defining and settling Christian dogmas. "The original Scriptures are the only legitimate source of ultimate appeal in all controverted subjects of religion."¹ Upon a casual glance at them, we are not surprised at the unanimity of the conclusions arrived at by the Fathers. "No one approaching the New Testament without preconceived opinions could get any other impression from its language on this subject than that the punishments of the wicked in hell are to be everlasting."² So manifest is this that even a stout opponent of the doctrine makes this candid admission: "To the English reader of the Bible, the plainest and most obvious doctrine concerning the Future Punishment of the wicked is, that it shall be endless." We find the irreversible condition of the condemned in the world to come set forth in terms as clear, as definite, as positive, and as unmistakable, as it is possible for language to depict it.

It is remarkable, too, that in the New Testament, where the Gospel of Love and Mercy comes out most resplendently to view, there also this solemn and tremendous truth of everlasting woe and destruction lowers in deeper, bolder, and darker outline upon the horizon.

Thus says CANON LIDDON of the present Future Punishment controversy: "The sternest things that have ever been said as regards sin's prospects in another world, first passed the tenderest lips that ever proclaimed God's love to man. Our Lord would not leave the revelation of its penal future to His Apostles. He took the unpopularity of making such a revelation Him-

self. No unbelieving criticism can touch the plain meaning of the tremendous words in which the All-merciful One has depicted the case of a moral being, stiffened by final impenitence into a permanent, self-torturing rebellion against eternal justice and eternal love.” And WORDSWORTH remarks the same feature of the evangelical prophet Isaiah and the gentle disciple John as follows:³ “It is remarkable that the evangelical prophet, ISAIAH, who is more copious than any other writer of the Old Testament in merciful revelations and comforting assurances of God’s free grace and love to all men in Christ, concludes with a solemn denunciation of punishment and woe to the wicked (chap. 48:22), and sums up all with those terrible words (chap. 66:24, the very last verse of his prophecy): ‘Their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.’ In the same spirit, the Apostle and Evangelist, St. John, who speaks more fully of Divine love than any other writer of the New Testament, reveals most clearly in his Epistles, and in the Apocalypse, the punishments which are reserved for all unbelief and sin.”

Section One. Individual Words In The New Testament Teaching Eternal Punishment.

αἰὼν and αἰῶνιος

These, both on, account of their significant force, and the frequency of their use, are admitted by those of every opinion to be the pivotal words in the argument. Let us then carefully search out their meaning. There are two primary causes fixing the significance of words, viz., derivation and usage. A word's original extraction always exercises an after-following influence, greater or less, upon its meaning. What then first is the derivation of αἰὼν, together with its adjective form, αἰῶνιος? It is compounded of two Greek words, ἄει (ever) and ὼν (being, existing), so that its literal definition is ever-existing. From, this root, αἰὼν springs the Latin *aevum*, then *aeviternus*, and this, by syncope of the syllable *vi*, leaves *aeternus*, which in Anglicized form becomes eternal, ever, and in the German, *ewig*, etc. ("AEvum, from αἰὼν, eternity. *Aternus*, contract from *aeviternus*, i.e. *aevum* with the temporal ending *ternus*." Andrews' Latin-English Lexicon.) Our great English lexicographers, Webster and Worcester, thus trace our English words, eternal, ever, and everlasting, directly back to this identical root, αἰὼν. (Webster's Dictionary thus gives the source of "Eternal, Latin *aeternus*,⁴ for *aeviternus*, from *aevum*, uninterrupted time, eternity, Greek αἰὼν")

In αἰὼν, αἰῶνιος, we then have simply the philological root, the linguistic spring and source of our own familiar words, ever, eternal, forever, everlasting; so that the meaning which we commonly attach to these will be the best of all guides to show us what force to ascribe to the original terms whence they have taken their being. Thus says the learned Professor Plumtre:⁵ "For the English rendering of αἰῶνιος, 'eternal' is philologically

preferable, as being traceably connected with the Greek, the Latin *aeternus* being derived from *aetas*, and that from *aevum*, which in its turn is but another form of the Greek *αἰών*.”

The very derivation, then, of the words in question, casts a steady and powerful light upon the problem before us. But the etymological significance of words may be either varied or intensified by usage. What then do we find to be the meaning of these terms, as commonly employed by representative writers of antiquity?

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1. Prof. Stuart, *Philological Library*, p. 210.↵
 2. McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, Art. "Future Punishment."↵
 3. *Holy Bible, with notes*, vol. v. p. 196.↵
 4. "The sublime thought, 'without beginning and end,' is more vividly suggested by *aeternus* than by *sempiternus*; *aeternus* involves a metaphysical designation of eternity."—Doederlein's *Synonyms*, 1—3.↵
 5. Ellicott's *New Testament Commentary*, vol. i. p. 157.↵

1. The Usage Of αἰών, αἰώνιος By The Greek Classic Writers.

HAPPILY we have a no less distinguished witness upon this point than ARISTOTLE, the most renowned Grecian scholar of antiquity. He flourished about four hundred years before Christ, and has left us the following invaluable commentary on this identical word.¹ “For indeed the word itself (αἰών), according to the ancients, divinely expressed this: For the period of the whole heaven, even the infinite time of all things, and the period comprehending that infinity is (αἰών) eternity; deriving its name from ἀεὶ εἶναι,² ever being, immortal and divine. Whence also, it is applied to other things, to some indeed (ἀκριβέστερον) accurately, but to others (ἀμαυρότερον) in the lax signification of being, and even life.”³ What could be more precise and specific than this? The radical, proper definition of αἰών among the ancient Greeks was eternity. If used in any sense short of this, it was only by a lax, figurative manner of speaking, a plasticity common to all words in every language as facilitating, and giving variety to expression; but, when used correctly and exactly, it denoted the sublime and unbounded conception of eternity. For similar instances of its proper use see Euripides, Heraclidae, 900, where Jupiter is called αἰών, i.e. the “Eternal.” Plato, Timaeus, p. 302, “eternal origin of the world.” Lycur. clxii. 24. Phocyl. 107. AEschin. Socrat. iii.17. Aretae. Cur. M. Acut., i. 5, where αἰώνιος (eternal) is contrasted with χρὸνιος (long-enduring) etc.

DIODORUS SIOULUS, the famous Greek historian who flourished at the beginning of the Christian era, affords a similar instance:⁴ “There are two theories as to the origin of men: one, that the world was uncreated and immortal, and that men existed from eternity (αἰών) and had no beginning; the other, that all men by the weakness of nature live but a small part of eternity (αἰών) and then perish forever.” The paraphrase here of “no beginning,” and then the contrast of a part of with the whole future eternity, are very

striking. For they show that αἰὼν applied to the past conveyed the sense of eternity *a parte ante*, and when used of the future denoted eternity *a parte post*.

PHAVORINUS, a Greek philosopher of the reign of Trajan, likewise writes that “αἰὼν is formed from ἄει and ὤν, and denotes the eternal and endless, as it is regarded by the theologian.”

MARCUS AURELIUS, Roman Emperor (161-180), but who wrote in the Greek language, says: “Consider the boundless extent of eternity (αἰὼν) on each side of the present.” “Behold the immensity of eternal time (αἰὼν) behind thee, and before that another boundless expanse.” “The present time is a point in (αἰὼν) eternity.”⁵

ARRIAN, Greek historian of the second century. “I am not by nature imperishable and eternal (αἰὼν), but a man, a part of the universe, as an hour is a part of the day.”⁶

[The aeons, personified emanations from the Deity, introduced subsequently to the classical period of the Greek language, as far as the question under discussion is concerned, are only witnesses to the original time — import of αἰὼν; for, as Irenaeus tells us (Contra Haeret., book i. ch. ii. § v.), eternal duration (αἰώνιος διαμονή) was assigned in the Gnostic system to the aeons.]

In view of such and similar instances of its usage, Prof. Stuart thus decides: “Respecting the classical use of the words in question (αἰὼν, αἰώνιος), there can be but little or no doubt. αἰὼν means long time, eternity, long, indefinite space of time. These are the usual significations of the word as given by those excellent lexicographers, Schneider and Passow... It cannot be shown that any words... in the Greek language are so appropriate to... convey the idea of eternity and eternal... as the words αἰὼν and αἰώνιος.” And a very able article in the British Quarterly Review (July, 1878) on future punishment reaches this conclusion; “The noun αἰὼν, whatever its derivatives may be, is evidently cognate with ἄει or ἀεί (ever, always), and means a period of indefinite or unlimited duration. It is contrasted with definite spaces of time. The notion essential to it is the absence of limit. Now, that is the only conception our minds can form of eternity. Accordingly, αἰὼν was used in its full and emphatic sense to signify eternal and unchanging duration: and that is the first meaning assigned to it by Wahl in his Clavis Apocryphorum, which he illustrates amply by citations,

some of which, taken from Siracides are peculiarly striking (see chap. i. 2; xviii. 10, etc.” And Dr. Beecher, While contending that αἰὼν did not primarily mean eternity, but was used in the Homeric period to signify life, etc., yet admits “that the idea of eternity was introduced into it in the later centuries of the language,” i.e. from the time of the Septuagint to the Christian era, and that “by degrees αἰὼν came to be used for eternity.”⁷

Even in the sense the word came to have in the Eons of the Gnostic system, there is seen a reflection of this original sense. This can be seen from such passages as that of Irenaeus against Heresies, book i. chap. i. “They [the Gnostics] maintain, then, that in the invisible and ineffable heights above, there exists a certain perfect, pre-existent Eon (αἰὼν) Whom they call Pro-Arch (first-beginning), and describe as being invisible and incomprehensible. ETERNAL and unbegotten, he remains throughout innumerable cycles of ages in profound serenity and quiescence.” He then determines to send forth the Eons similar to himself.

Who does not here see then that the Aristotelian sense was influencing the term aeons even in the Gnostic usage? “We may take αἰὼν therefore,” accordingly says Harvey in his Cambridge edition of Irenaeus, “in the Valentinian acceptance of the word, to mean an emanation from the divine substance, subsisting coordinate and co-eternally with the Deity.”

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1. Aristotle, *De Caelo*, lib. i. cap. 9.↩
 2. “This term αἰὼν seems to have been formed from the words ἄει ὢν, ever-existing.” *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, vol. i. p. 4. This view, as will be seen, is indorsed by nearly all lexicographers.↩
 3. The recondite and scholarly Andrew Fuller, the “Franklin of Theology,” in his famous letters to Mr. Vidler, appeals to this testimony of Aristotle as decisive of the sense of αἰὼν and its current usage in the classic period of the Greek language.↩
 4. *History*, lib. i. § 6.↩
 5. *Meditations*, book iv.3, 50, and vi.36.↩
 6. *Dissert. Epictetearum*, lib. ii. § 5, p. 179. Edit. Holstenii.↩
 7. *History of Scriptural Doctrine of Future Retribution*, pp. 132, 138.↩

2. The Usage Of αἰών, αἰώνιος By The Greek Speaking Jews.

AN ENDURING MONUMENT of this exists in the Septuagint. This is the title of the oldest translation of the Old Testament Scriptures from the Hebrew into Greek. It is supposed to have been made by seventy-two learned Jews under Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, about two and a half centuries before Christ. In it the adjective αἰώνιος first comes prominently into use. And from the signification which these translators attach to the words in question, we can learn their current meaning among the Greek-speaking Jews of that period. They employed αἰών, αἰώνιος uniformly to translate the Hebrew term עולם (olām).

What then is the signification of olām? It literally implies something hidden or concealed, something beyond the grasp of perception, of which both the beginning and end are lost in the immeasurable haze of distance, which is the true conception of infinity or eternity. Accordingly, the eminent Hebrew lexicographer, Gesenius, in the latest edition of his Hebrew and English Lexicon, gives as its primary signification, “remote time, eternity, everlasting, αἰών, of time past, Ezra 4:15; of time future, Dan. 3:33, etc., whence Dan. 2:20,” from (olām) everlasting to (olām) everlasting.” He further says: “the true and full sense of eternity is expressed by olām in those passages where it is spoken of the nature and existence of God.” The same meaning is given it by the eminent German lexicographer Cremer thus:¹ “Olām, first of all, hidden, and, therefore unbounded time.” The correctness of this definition is easily established by a reference to some of the passages in which it is used. For example, Gen. 21:33, “The Lord (Jehovah), the everlasting (olām) God.” Here the intent is to express in an emphatic sense the everlastingness of God’s existence, from the remotest eternity. to the furthest future. And we may well imagine that these devout Jewish translators, desiring to honor Jehovah to the utmost in the minds of their Grecian conquerors, should have used the strongest Greek word at their command to de-

scribe the eternity of their dread Jehovah, and they selected αἰὼν as that word. So in Ex. 15:18, olām denotes the unlimited duration of the sovereignty of God: “The Lord shall reign forever and ever.” Deut. 32:40, the solemn adjuration: “For, I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live forever,” Hebrew olām, Septuagint, εἰς τὸν αἰὼνα. Ps. 90:2, “Even from everlasting (olām) to everlasting, thou art God.” Micah 5:2, “Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” This passage is peculiarly impressive, for the Seventy, in their translation, have rendered the Hebrew term for “from of old” (הַיָּמִים) by “ἀπαρχῆς” “from the very beginning,” and then the “from everlasting” (olām) by ἀπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος; thereby showing that they considered afar, when applied to the past, as synonymous with ἀπαρχῆς, and hence denoting the remotest time, i.e. eternity. As therefore the Jewish Seventy, in the nearly four hundred cases in which olām is found in the Old Testament, uniformly (excepting only about twenty instances) translated it by some form of αἰὼν (over a hundred times by αἰῶνιος), and as this olām, when technically and precisely used, delineated as vividly as verbal sign could set forth the boundless duration of Him whose beginnings and endings are hidden from the grasp of conception, we have herein the strongest correlative testimony to the accepted meaning of αἰὼν, αἰῶνιος among the Greek-speaking Jews. The great ado which is made over the “catachrestic” use of claim in the Old Testament, where God’s covenant with the Jews; the throne of David; the mountains; etc., are called olām, i.e., everlasting, amounts to nothing whatever. These instances are but trivial in number compared with the vast preponderance of cases in which it stands for eternity in the strict sense. It remains perfectly clear, therefore, that eternity is the primary, usual signification of olām, and its occasional figurative use to characterize existence, which, though not absolutely eternal, was yet to endure for unknown and indefinite periods, is no argument whatever against its leading sense. This will be fully treated of in its appropriate place.²

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1. *Biblich-Theologisches Wörterbuch* der Neu Testamentlichen Gräci-
tat. ↩
 2. “Olām is rightly rendered for eternity, forever.” — Wordsworth’s *Holy Bible with Notes*, vol. iv. Eccles. 3:11, 14.

“In the ancient Hebrew Scriptures the word olām properly means eternity.” — Stuart’s *Exegetical Essays*, p. 221.↩

3. The Usage Of αἰών, αἰώνιος In The New Testament.

IT IS after all most important to know in what sense the inspired writers themselves used this word. For if they meant it to signify eternal, that is conclusive for us, even independently of all other arguments. I take it for granted then, in the first place, that the authors of the gospel meant to tell men something about a genuine eternity; for if that was not the burden of their mission, and if they only employed tropes and figures and terms connoting terminable time, when speaking of the future, then indeed is Christianity but a vain and hollow mockery, but the illusive, shadowy phantasm of a dream. But they did have the thought eternity, in all its sublime fulness, in their minds. What terms then did they use to express it? No other answer can be given than αἰών, αἰώνιος.

It is to be remembered here that at the very outset they encountered the difficulty embarrassing Christian missionaries now. The Hebrew tongue was essentially a religious one. It had grown up as the environment and vehicle of the divine thoughts which Jehovah was constantly revealing, and hence it had the adaptation and capacity to express them. But the Greek tongue, being essentially one of mere human culture, was without the molds to cast the vast conceptions with which the Jewish mind had become familiar. There was, accordingly, no other recourse than for the sacred writers to use the Grecian terms, but to clothe them with a weightier sense, and attach to them those higher meanings which the great spiritual truths, they were now to body forth demanded. This very process occurred with the words under discussion. They were the fittest terms contained in the Greek language to be the medium of unfolding to the world the enlarged Jewish and Christian conceptions of eternity, and in taking them up for this sublime task, they did not lose, but acquired strength by this new and sacred usage. If to Aristotle's pagan mind αἰών signified an eternity vague, confused, and dark, to the Christian it would no less express the same idea of endless time,

but now robed in a transparent brightness through its interpenetration by the rays of infinite majesty, fullness, and grace.¹

1. Dr. Friederich Bleek, one of the most distinguished biblical scholars in Germany, in his learned introduction to the New Testament, commenting upon the influence of the Hebraic-Aramaean upon the Greek language of the N. T. makes these suggestive observations, vol. i. p. 73: It would have been impossible to give expression to all the religious conceptions. and Christian ideas of the New Testament, had the writers strictly confined themselves to the words and phrases in use among the Greeks, and with the significations usually attached to them. These Christian ideas were quite unknown to the Greeks, and they had never formed phrases suitable to give expression to them. Hence it frequently came to pass that when a Greek word in its ordinary signification corresponded with a Hebrew or Aramaean word, the derived and developed meanings attaching to the latter would be transferred to the former, and the Greek word would be used in the higher sense of the Hebrew or Aramaean word, although this meaning had before been unknown to Greek usage." He thereupon states that many Greek words by means of being employed in the Septuagint had acquired this enlarged Christian sense, and cites ἁλὼν as one of them. ↩

4. Αἰών

Αἰών is employed one hundred and eight times in the New Testament; in the form εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, thirty-one times; as εἰς τοῦς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, twenty-three times; and as ἐξ τοῦς αἰῶνας, eight times. In all these instances it has the undisputed force of eternity in the strict sense. Eight times it is found in the form τῶν αἰώνων, generally preceded by the prepositions ἀπό or πρὸ, in at least three of which it likewise denotes eternity, but viewed as past — the ancient (or eternal times. In four cases, ἐξ or ἀπ' αἰῶνος, it has the sense “from of old,” “from the beginning,” i.e., time very ancient and indefinitely remote. In five other cases it denotes either the “world to come,” or “the coming ages,” where eternity may be the idea intended. And in three additional instances, where the construction is somewhat peculiar (Ephes. 3:21; 2 Pet. 3:18; and Jude 25), eternity is clearly denoted. In some seventy instances, therefore, Or about two-thirds of the whole, the sense is that of eternity, either past or future.

And in twenty-size instances, generally either τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦτου, or ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ, or ἐν τῇ συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος, it signifies “the world,”¹ as a place of existence, or as denoting this present era or life (Tit. 2:12), or the spirit of the world, i.e., the carnality and moral apathy of mankind.

In analyzing these instances, we find that those in which eternity is the specific sense are sharply distinguished. For example, wherever the preposition εἰς² (denoting motion or tendency onward) precedes after, which it does in sixty-three cases, there, just as in the Latin “in aeternum” (i.e., to eternity), limited duration is never implied, but eternity is the invariable signification. And so likewise the plural form (αἰῶνες) announces that eternity is the idea to be conveyed.³

Whereas, when the signification is only the world as an abode, or as the whole course and duration of time, the singular number, the presence of οὗτος (this), or the preposition ἐν (denoting rest in) determine the meaning.

Whenever, also, αἰὼν is used to denote future time, i.e., ὁ αἰὼν, ὁ μέλλων (the age or world to come), as contrasted with ὁ αἰὼν οὗτος (the present age), it always conveys the sense of indefinite and unlimited duration.

The usual sense then, that which is first in order (occurring in a very great majority of cases, seventy out of a little over a hundred), of αἰὼν in the New Testament is that of indefinite time, unending duration, i.e. eternity. And in those instances in which (where duration is the sense) it does not express a specific eternity, yet even then it is to be remembered that no thought of limitation is in the mind of the writer, but he wishes to express as vast a duration as the nature of the object in question renders possible, just as, when we say “everlasting hills,” we do not think of them at the time as finite, but as going back to a date so remote from our conceptions, and enduring to such a vast distance in the future, that the image present to our minds is really that of eternity, and no less strong terms than eternal, everlasting, forever, etc., can embody it. It is further to be borne in mind that “there is no case in which αἰὼν is employed in order to designate simply a definite, limited period, in all the New Testament, i.e., where αἰὼν is employed with the intention of conveying the simple idea of duration. . . . But an overwhelming majority of cases designate eternity *a parte post*, i.e., a future period without any limit or bounds.”⁴

A further inquiry into the manner in which αἰὼν is employed shows that, of the seventy instances where eternity is the conception expressed, forty-two describe the everlasting existence, glory, praise, and dominion of God the Father, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the eternal sovereignty and High Priesthood of Jesus Christ; twelve relate to the inheritance, kingdom and reign of the saints, who shall hunger and thirst no more forever; six to the eternal mystery, purpose, and promise of God as revealed in the gospel; five are of a miscellaneous character; and five in express terms declare the future, unending punishment of the wicked. I cite a few instances:—

Luke 1:33: “And he (Jesus) shall reign over the house of Jacob forever.” (εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας).⁵

John 14:16: The “Comforter, that he may abide with you forever” (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα).

Rom. 9:5: “Who is over all, God blessed forever” (εἰς τοῦς αἰῶνας).

Gal. 1:4, 5: “God and our Father: to whom be glory forever and ever” (εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.)

Ephes. 3:9: “The mystery which from the beginning (i.e. from of old, ‘from eternity,’⁶ (ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων) hath been hid in God.”

Rev. 5:12: “Glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lord forever and ever” (εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων).

Rev. 10:6: “And sware by HIM that liveth forever and ever” (ζῶντι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων).

Rev. 22:5: “And they [the saints] shall reign forever and ever” (same as above).

I append also the five instances in which αἰὼν is used to teach future eternal punishment:—

2 Pet. 2:17: “To whom [sinners] the mist of darkness is reserved forever” (εἰς αἰῶνα).

Jude 5:13: “To whom [the wicked] is reserved the blackness of darkness forever” (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα).

Rev. 14:11: “And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever” (εἰς αἰῶνας αἰώνων).

Rev. 19:3: “And her smoke [the Babylon of wickedness] rose up forever and ever” (εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων).

Rev. 20:10: “And [the devil, the beast, the false prophet, and the nations that were deceived by them] shall be tormented day and night forever and ever” (εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων).⁷

It will be observed that in these five instances αἰὼν is used in the strongest and most intensified forms in which it is ever found in Scripture, and respecting which there is not the least doubt as to eternity in its fullest scope being the idea intended. All the marks which identify its signification beyond possibility of mistake are present. The sense is that of duration; the subject is the future epoch (ὁ αἰὼν ὁ μέλλων or ἐρχόμενος), i.e., the age after the judgment as contradistinguished from this present or temporal age; the εἰς indicating the idea of continuance or motion onward is invariably present; and in three of the instances the majestic plural intensive is employed. If αἰὼν then does not in all these cases denote future eternal duration, the sense of eternity can never be applied to it, in the New Testament Scriptures, — especially not in the numerous passages where it serves to measure the everlasting ages of the bliss of the righteous.

1. The important distinction in New Testament usage is here to be borne in mind between $\mu\acute{\omicron}\sigma\mu\omicron\varsigma$, as *mundum*, the world contemplated under aspect of space, and $\alpha\acute{\iota}\omega\omicron\nu$, as *seculum*, the world contemplated under aspects of time." — Trench's *New Testament Synonyms*, p. 206.↵
2. $\acute{\epsilon}\iota\varsigma$ signifies to or into, with a decided eXpression of motion or tendency." — Webster's *Syntax and Synonyms of the Greek Testament*, p. 161.↵
3. The only exceptions are those of the $\tau\omega\tilde{\nu}$ $\acute{\alpha}\iota\omega\tilde{\nu}\omega\nu$, which we have noted, and the $\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ $\acute{\alpha}\iota\omega\tilde{\nu}\alpha\varsigma$ in Heb. 1:2, and 11:3. Even in these exceptional cases, however, we still see the unbounded sense which is proper to Mn. "The universe, as well in its great primeval conditions — the reaches of space and the ages of time — as in all material objects, and all successive events, which furnish out and people space and time." — Alford on signification of $\acute{\alpha}\iota\omega\tilde{\nu}\iota\omicron\varsigma$ in Heb. 1:2.↵
4. Stuart's *Exegetical Essays*, Philological Library, vol. xxxvii. p. 231.↵
5. The synonymous phrase which here follows as explanatory is very important as showing how emphatically the idea intended is endlessness. It is $\acute{\omicron}\upsilon\chi$ $\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\chi$ $\tau\`{\epsilon}\lambda\omicron\varsigma$, i.e. "shall be no end." Luke 1:33.↵
6. Olshausen *in loco*, N. T. Commentary, vol. v. p. 89.↵
7. I have not deemed fit to notice the puerile objection founded upon the expression "ages of ages," as if that which embraced eternity could have no plural; since it is a mere *usus loquendi*, and in precisely the same way is employed in our equivalent "ever and ever," which, so far from proving that ever does not mean eternal, is, as every one knows, merely an intensive style of expression.↵

5. Αἰώνιος

THIS IS preeminently the pivotal word in this discussion. About its meaning has the battle always raged the hottest. More than any other term does it throw light upon the tremendous revelations of Scripture upon this great subject. If we can definitely ascertain its signification, then the problem is decided, and there is no escape from the verdict. How and in what sense, then, is it used? Αἰώνιος is employed by the New Testament writers seventy-two times,¹ and always and exclusively as denoting indefinite, unbounded, eternal duration. We find it thus applied to the future “everlasting life” (ζοὴν αἰώνιον), Matt. 19:29; the eternal salvation” (σωτηρίας αἰώνιου), Heb. 5:9; the “eternal redemption” (αἰωνίου λυτρωσιν), Heb. 9:12; the eternal inheritance (αἰωνίου κληρονομίας), Heb. 9:15; the “everlasting gospel” (εὐαγγέλιον αἰώνιον), Rev. xiv.6; the “everlasting consolation” (αἰώνιον παρᾶχλησιν), 2 These. 2:16; the “everlasting habitations” (αἰώνιους σαηνάς), Luke 16:9; and the “eternal weight of glory” (αἰώνιον βάρος δόξης), 2 Cor. 4:17, reserved for the saints in the heavenly kingdom.

It is used also to set forth the sublime conception of the everlastingness of the Divine Being, as in Rom. 16:26, Where God is called the “aeonian God” (τοῦ αἰώνιου θεου), i.e. the eternal God, who lives forever and ever. In the same manner it is applied to the eternity of the Holy Ghost, who is called “the eternal spirit” (Πνεῦματος αἰώνιου), Heb. 9:14; and it is employed to set forth the imperishableness and indestructibility of the invisible realities of the future, as opposed to the evanescent objects of sense, — “but the things which are not seen are eternal” (τὰ δὲ μὴ βλεπόμενα αἰώνια), 2 Cor. 4:18. It is further used to characterize the “honor and power everlasting” (τιμὴ και κράτος αἰώνιον), 1 Tim. 6:16, which shall be rendered to God throughout ceaseless future ages; it is made to embrace also in its scope eternity *a parte ante*, i.e. the remotest past, “gray antiquity,” the eternity that lies behind us (πρὸ χρόνων αἰώνιων), “before the world began,” 2 Tim. 1:9; and it is similarly used to declare the endlessness of the punish-

ment of those condemned in the great day. An investigation of these instances shows that αἰώνιος is employed fifty-five times of the eternal life, habitation, and blessedness of the righteous in the future, three times of the eternity and glory of God the Father and God the Spirit, twice of the everlasting covenant and gospel, three times of past eternal time, once in an adverbial manner (Philemon 15), and seven times of future punishment.

In not one of these instances does αἰώνιος denote a limited or terminable period, but in every case it signifies eternity in the sense of endless, infinite duration. While this is evidently true of those instances in which it refers to time past, it is still more especially so wherever the sense is that of time future.

For the sake of reference I specify the seven instances relating to future punishment:—

“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 (εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον).” Matt. 18:8.

“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire (εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον).” Matt. 25:41.

“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment (χόλασιν αἰώνιον); but the righteous into life eternal (ζοήν αἰώνιον).” Matt. 25:46.

“But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation (αἰωνίου χρίσεως).” Mark 3:29.

“Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction (ὀλεθρον αἰώνιον) from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.” 2 These. 1:9.

“Not laying again the foundation of repentance... of faith... of baptisms... of laying on of hands... of resurrection... and of eternal judgment (αἰωνίου χρίσεως).” Heb. 6:1, 2.

“Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire (πυρος αἰώνιου δίχην — ‘the just punishment of eternal fire’ — Alford).” Jude 7.

As in all these instances αἰώνιος relates to future time, it conveys, in its very strongest and most unquestioned significance, the sense of endless, infinite duration.

In examining this invariable use of αἰώνιος for eternal, we have a suggestive illustration of the decided preference over all other terms had for it

by the sacred penmen, in its constant repetition in situations where the close recurrence of the identical idea, eternity, would have made it so natural, and more elegant, to have employed a synonym instead. Thus, in Heb. 9:12, 14, and 15, where the apostle has occasion for the thought eternal in each verse, he quite disregards the repetition, and uses αἰώνιος in the three instances. In the same manner, when St. John in his first epistle speaks six times of “everlasting life,” in every instance he simply repeats αἰώνιος. The same repetition is observed in 1 Tim. 1:17; John 17:2, 3; Rom. 6:22, 23, etc. The obvious significance of this is, that the Greek language afforded no satisfactorily equivalent synonym for the proper conception of eternity; and that so much more fully did αἰώνιος convey this great thought, which language labored to bring forth, than any other, that the inspired penmen chose rather its constant repetition, than an incomplete presentation of the mighty gospel message. And even still more conclusively, in 2 Cor. 4:18, we find αἰώνιος placed in contrast with πρόσκαιρος in the declaration “the things which are seen are (πρόσκαιρα) temporal (‘temporary, fleeting, only for a time’ — Alford), but the things which are not seen are (αἰώνια) eternal.” Nothing could more decisively fix its signification than this employment of it to express endless, in express contradistinction from ending time.

If ever there has been in language a word whose meaning was indisputably fixed and clear, definite and pointed beyond all controversy, it is certainly this same αἰώνιος in New Testament usage. One hundredth part of the evidence in its support, adduced in behalf of any other word, would satisfy any reasonable disputant. To divest it of this, its proper signification of eternal, would turn the passages wherein it is found into foolishness, and despoil the Gospel message of its sublimest, most precious, comforting, and blessed burden.

Result.

The result of this inquiry into the New Testament usage of the terms in question, shows that αἰώνιος, in an overwhelming majority of instances (always when it relates to future time), and αἰώνιος, in all the seventy-one instances of its occurrence, are employed to convey the meaning of an absolutely endless duration. That is, when the inspired writers sought to express the mighty conception of eternity, the things of which constituted the principal theme of their utterance, they used for this purpose the terms αἰών and

αἰώνιος; ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-ONE TIMES, while other Greek words, more or less implying this conception, they SCARCELY USE AT ALL. Thus ἀθανασία, immortality, is only used three times; αἰδιος, perpetual, twice; ἀμαραντος, unfading, twice; ἀπέραντος, boundless, once, ἀκατάλυτος, indissoluble, once; and ἀφθαρσία, incorruptibility, eight times. That is, all other synonymous terms together are found not twenty times, while it is noticeable that such emphatic time words (negative) as ἀπῶτος, unceasing, ἀτελεύτητος, endless, and ἔνδελεχης, perpetual, do not appear at all.

The conclusion from these facts is irresistible that αἰὼν and αἰώνιος were the words by which, incomparably beyond all others, the sacred writers felt that they could most fully and completely express the glorious Christian conception of eternity. While other synonymous Greek terms are either passed by altogether, or so casually used, that their entire omission would have left no appreciable gap, these two words, with a universality all but total, they employ whenever setting forth the riches, treasures, and infinite joys of the heavenly inheritance; while by the same terms they depict the awful gloom of the retribution of wrath. What, then, are the bearings of these facts upon the meaning of those texts where these identical terms are employed to describe the duration of the sad state of the lost? We submit to any candid inquirer the question: If, when αἰὼν and αἰώνιος are used some forty times to describe the eternity and dominion of God, and some seventy times to set forth the everlasting life and blessedness of the saints, he understands that not a definite and ending period, but a strictly absolute eternity is meant, whether he can, by any legitimate method of reasoning, doubt but that, in the twelve instances where these identical words are applied to the future punishment of the wicked, they must mean nothing less than their ordinary scriptural import, via, unbounded and infinite duration? The conclusion is so natural, positive, and inevitable, that there is no way to escape it, except by a process which would set at nought all significance of language, render nugatory all deductions from analogy, make futile all principles of philological research, and infringe all rules of critical investigation.

Equally emphatic are the terms in which Prof. Stuart sums up the results of his elaborate investigation into the Scriptural usage of these two important words:² “The result seems to me to be plain, and philologically and exegetically certain. It is this: either the declarations of the Scriptures do not establish the facts, that God and his glory and praise and happiness are endless, nor that the happiness of the righteous in a future world is endless; or

else they establish the fact, that the punishment of the wicked is endless. The whole stand or fall together. There can, from the very nature of antithesis, be no room for rational doubt here, in what manner we would interpret the declarations of the sacred writers. WE MUST EITHER ADMIT THE ENDLESS MISERY OF HELL, OR GIVE UP THE ENDLESS HAPPINESS OF HEAVEN.”

1. Matt. 18:8; 19:16, 29; 25:41, 46 (twice).

Mark 3:29; 10:17, 30.

Luke 10:25; 16:9; 18:18, 30.

John 3:15,16, 36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 39; 6:27, 40, 47, 54, 68; 10:28; 12:25, 50; 17:2, 3; 20:31.

Acts 13:46, 48.

Rom. 2:7; 5:21; 6:22, 23; 16:25, 26.

2 Cor. 4:17, 18; 5:1.

Gal. 6:8.

2 Thes. 1:9; 2:16.

1 Tim. 1:16; 6:12, 16, 19.

2 Tim. 1:19; 2:10.

Titus 1:2 (twice); 3:7.

Philemon 5:15.

Heb. 5:9; 6:2; 9:12, 14, 15; 13:20.

1 Pet. 5:10. 2 Pet. 1:11.

1 John 1:2; 2:25; 3:15; 5:11, 13, 20.

Jude 7 and 21.

Rev. 14:6.

I have used the Greek Concordance of Hudson, based on the Greek text of Griesbach, and ori Scrivener’s compilation of the Greek text of Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, etc.↵

2. *Exegetical Essays*, p. 251.↵

6. The Usage Of αἰών and αἰώνιος By Our Lord Himself.

THIS IS A most interesting study, as it also brings us to the even more vital center still of the argument. We here find what anyone familiar with the Scriptural usage of the word might have inferred. Namely, that, from the calm, deep sublimity of our Saviour's declarations, he would naturally have selected the weightiest, most comprehensive and far-reaching words the Greek language afforded, to clothe in appropriate outward garb his solemn revelations of the invisible future. Accordingly, our Lord never uses any other terms than these to depict the great fact of eternal life. It follows, therefore, that if αἰών and αἰώνιος do not mean endless, then our Lord himself has never given us one promise of everlasting blessedness. As to αἰών, thirteen times he uses it in the form εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, eight times of the future life of the blessed, twice of the Son abiding and the Spirit being ever present with the godly, twice of the barren fig-tree bearing no fruit forever, and once of the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost never to be forgiven. In all these cases he uses it of future duration, and that without limit. I cite two instances: "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst" (οὐ μὴ διψῆσει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα). John 4:14. "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (οὐ μὴ αποθάνῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα). John 11:26.

Αἰώνιος, our Lord makes use of twenty-six times, twenty-two times of the holy, blessed, and eternal life held out as the reward of his faithful disciples; and four times of the irrevocable condemnation, fire, and destruction of the wicked. In every one of these instances our Lord, beyond doubt, intends αἰώνιος to designate eternity in the strict sense of absolute, endless duration. Instances are:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"

(ζοήν αἰώνιον). John 3:16.

“He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal” (ζοήν αἰώνιον). John 12:25.

The four instances where αἰώνιος is used by our Lord to teach the eternity of future punishment have already been given in full under the head, αἰώνιος. They are Matt. 18:18, Mark 3:29, and Matt. 25:41, 46. In this last passage particularly, as if to make his meaning of the word so unequivocal that unbelief would forever assail it in vain, he employs αἰώνιος in both members of the same sentence that it may set forth the contrasted future destiny of the righteous and the wicked. “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment (χόλασιν αἰώνιον); but the righteous into life eternal (ζοήν αἰώνιον).” To the unprejudiced reader this passage must always be conclusive. Nothing but the most flagrant inconsistency can possibly ascribe a meaning to the word in one clause which it does not have in the other and contrasted clause. That our Lord purposely brought these declarations together that they might have an equally solemn significance is altogether manifest; and to pretend that he meant endless in the case of the righteous and temporary in that of the wicked, is to believe him guilty of a prevarication inexcusable in even an ordinary moral teacher. One of the most acute of Biblical critics¹ remarks upon this passage: “I take it to be a rule of construing all antithetic forms of expression, that where you can perceive the force of one side of the antithesis, you do, of course, come to a knowledge of the force of the other side. If life eternal is promised on one side, and death eternal is threatened on the other and opposite one, is it not to be supposed that the word eternal, which qualifies death, is a word of equal force and import with the word eternal, which qualifies life? In no other case could a doubt be raised with regard to such a principle. I venture to say that the exception here (if such an one must be made), is without any parallel in the just principles of interpretation.”

A significant instance of the force which Jesus attached to αἰών and αἰώνιος, is given in that, perhaps, strongest of all passages in Scripture to render indubitable the hope of the pious: “And I give unto them eternal life (ζοήν αἰώνιον), and they shall never perish (ὄν μὴ)αηόλωνται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα), neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.” John 20:28. Here, in the first part of the verse, he makes the promise of eternal life by using the adjective αἰώνιος; and then, when in the second part he repeats and clinches it, as it were, by his most solemn oath of assurance, so that the be-

liever may cling to it with an indomitable trust, he introduces no new term, but prefers to repeat the strongest one within his reach, and, therefore, affixes his irrevocable seal by the substantive form, *via, αἰών*.

Such is our blessed Lord's usage of these controverted words. The Opponents of eternal punishment are wont to tell us, that if we just consent to omit these words from our Bibles there will be no eternal punishment left. This is not the case, for other words decisively teach it, besides its being interwoven throughout the whole texture of Scripture. But we cannot but observe, in passing, the extraordinary effrontery of this proposition. What is asked is, that we erase *αἰών*' and *αἰώνιος*, the two preeminent Scriptural Greek words for eternity and eternal from the Bible, the treasury of our deathless hopes! But are we quite ready to drop the only words, which the great Teacher sent from God and the divine Founder of our faith ever employed to declare unto us the priceless riches of everlasting life? Drop them, indeed! Not until we are ready to give up with them the hope of an unfading promise, and until we are ready to surrender the very foundation of the fabric of the Gospel. No; they are quite too precious and blessed words, too fundamental in meaning, too vastly significant, too closely interwoven with our dearest destinies, too absolutely bound up with the most glorious expectations ever held out to us by our infinite Lord, for us to drop them from our Bibles. If we must mutilate the sacred canon, we would suggest some other less weighty words, where the violation done to Scripture, conscience, and self-interest would be less radical and far-reaching. It would be well for those meditating such destructive propositions as these to remember that thereby " they are not merely rejecting the teaching of the Universal Church in all the ages, though they are, of course, rejecting it; they are not merely rejecting the most solemn declarations of prophets and apostles, though they are rejecting these also; but they are deliberately repudiating His most express, most precise, most emphatic, most awful words, reiterated again and again, whom Christians worship as the Consubstantial Word and Wisdom of the Eternal God."²

1. Stuart, *Exegetical Essays*, p. 246.↩

2. Oxenham's *Eschatology*, p. 126.↩

7. The Usage Of αἰών, αἰώνιος By The Primitave Christians.

IN WHAT SENSE did the first disciples of Christ understand these words as they fell from the lips of their divine Master? Let the aged martyr Polycarp, to whose testimony we have already referred, bear witness; who fortified himself against the fury of the devouring flame by the remark that this fire was but temporary, and that through faithfully enduring it he would escape the fire eternal (αἰώνιος). And arrived at the pile, as Eusebius testifies, he addressed his last prayer to “the everlasting Chief Priest Jesus Christ, the beloved Son, through whom be glory to thee along with him, in the Holy Spirit, both now and forever and ever” (εἰς τοὺς μελλοντας αἰῶνας). Or again, let Justin Martyr make answer, who explains his conception of that aeonian fire by the term ἄπαυστος, unceasing, and who specifically declares that the primitive Christians did not mean by αἰώνιος merely that punishment of the wicked for the space of a thousand years taught by Plato, but a veritable eternity of misery. And so for the similar use of αἰών and αἰώνιος we might cite the testimony of all the fathers.

But what a monument to this same significance is found in the Apostles’ Creed — that most venerable symbol of remote Christian antiquity? For there the “life everlasting,” which the whole Christian Church dispersed throughout the world confesses, is that dependent on the meaning of αἰώνιος, for it is this term which is employed in the original Greek of the creed for everlasting.

The Doxology of the Apostolical Constitutions confirms the same primitive usage of αἰών: “To thee (the Father) be glory, praise, honor, worship, adoration, and to thy Son. Jesus Christ, our Lord and King, and to the Holy Spirit, now and always, and forever and ever (εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων). Amen.”¹

Andreas, the successor of St. Basil as Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, and who wrote about 390 A.D., in his book on the Apocalypse, presents the following striking illustration of the meaning attached to this term by the early Christians: Rev. 14:11: “It is said that the smoke goeth up forever and ever (εἰς αἰῶνα αἰώνων) in order that we may know that the punishment of sinners is (ἄτελεύτητος) endless, even as the bliss of the just is (αἰώνιος) endless.”² Here we find the very word ἄτελεύτητος, about which we have lately been told that it would have been unequivocal, employed to designate the punishment of the wicked, while αἰώνιος is used, as if it were the stronger term, to designate the endlessness of the rewards of the blessed. The selection is perfectly natural, for ἄτελεύτητος being a negative and αἰώνιος a positive word, the latter, to Christian thought, more fully conveys the glorious conception of an eternity filled with life and joy. But this instance of its juxtaposition with so strong a word as ἄτελεύτητος (endless) is quite decisive of the import attached to it by the primitive Christians.

St. Augustine likewise, commenting on the use of αἰώνιος by Christ, declares that, both as applied to the future state of the wicked and the righteous, it must be “understood as perpetual, without an end” (“utrumque sine fine perpetuum debet intelligi”).

And coming down to the dawn of the Middle Ages, JOHN DAUASCENUS, a Greek writer of the greatest genius and erudition, especially accomplished in oriental learning, and who, according to one of the most eminent of modern scholars,³ “remains in later times the highest authority in the theological literature of the Greeks,” as the result of an elaborate philological investigation into αἰὼν in its several forms, arrives at the result that “the expression αἰώνιος, as applied to life and punishment, discloses the endlessness of the coming age.”⁴ He further says that Wherever αἰὼν pertains to the future, it means interminable duration — his words are “αἰώνιος ζοή χάι αἰώνιος χολάσις τὸ ἄτελεύτητον δελοι” And he adds that, after the resurrection time will not be measured by nights and days, but will be one day without an evening; ὁ μέλλον αἰὼν is one whole, and inasmuch as that one whole is made up of a never ending succession of parts, like successive waves of a shoreless sea, the phrase εἰς τον αἰῶνα is equivalent to εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. As another witness we may cite Germanus, the patriarch of Constantinople, who shows, from the words of Christ, apostles, prophets, and fathers, that, “just as the unspeakable bliss of the righteous is everlast-

ing (αἰώνιος), so also the punishment of sinners is unceasing and endless (τὴν τῶν ἁμαρτωλῶν ἀτιλεύτητον τε καὶ ἀνθρώστατον χόλασιν).”⁵ Here the strongest Greek terms for endlessness are again used as synonyms of αἰώνιος.

Αἰὼν and αἰώνιος were then understood, in their common and leading signification, to express eternity by the primitive church, from its earliest martyrs, creeds, and witnesses down to the time when its history broadened out into the highway of the Middle Ages.

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1. Vol. i. p. 487, ed. Labbe.↩
 2. *Bibliotheca Patrum*, Paris edition, 1654, Column 1579.↩
 3. Dorner’s *Christology*, p. 113.↩
 4. *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, book ii. c. 1.↩
 5. *Photius*, in *Biblioth. Cod.* 233.↩

8. Αἰὼν, αἰῶνιος As Defined By Eminent Lexicographers.

THE CRUCIAL TEST of the definition of words is, after all, that to which we now resort. The Lexicographers are endowed with those qualifications and experiences which make them masters in this department. For, to be thoroughly conversant with the meaning of the terms of a dead tongue, their study must be made a specialty. It is, therefore, those alone who have devoted their lives to this department of knowledge, who are perfectly at home in the field, and who, by diversified reading and research, have observed particular words in every variety of position; relation, and contrast, who are really entitled to speak with authority in a controversy of this nature. The community at large cannot examine the original for themselves. They must therefore be content to accept the decisions of those to whom these learned languages have become as familiar as their vernacular tongue; and on their concurrent testimony the public can safely rely. Our English translators, themselves the most accomplished scholars of their day, have seen fit to render αἰῶνιος in every instance by everlasting or its equivalent. This of itself is a very weighty testimony; and turns the scales of probability in favor of that definition. Let us see whether their opinion is corroborated by modern classical learning. It is a very easy as it is an idle thing for an un-informed and inconsiderate speaker or writer to make sweeping assertions as to the purport of classical words; but the testimony of those who are really competent to speak, and who can maintain what they assert, carries with it a very different and a conclusive force.

To such distinguished authorities as these we now appeal for a decision.

LIDDELL AND SCOTT, Greek-English Lexicon: (Sixth edition, revised and enlarged. Harper 85 Bros., 1878.)

“Αἰὼν, VII. In prose writers a long space of time, eternity, like Latin *ae-vum*; and in plural ε τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων, unto ages of ages, forever and ever. τὸν αἰῶνα, forever, Plat. Tim. 370; Lycurgus clv. 42. On αἰὼν as

the complete period either of each particular life, or of all existence, v. Aris. Coel. i. 9, 15. Αἰώνιος lasting for an αἰών, perpetual, Plat. Rep. 363 D. etc., also like (items, everlasting, eternal. ἀνολεθρον, ἀλλ' οὐχ αἰώνιον (indestructible, but not everlasting), Id. Leg. 904 A. οὐ χρὸνιη μοῦνον, ἀλλ' αἰώνιη, (not only for a very long time, but for endless time) Aretae. Cur. M. Acut. 1:5.”

PICKERING, Greek Lexicon:

“Αἰών: an age, a long period of time, indefinite duration, eternity; εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, for a long time, forever, everlastingly. Eschin. Socrat. iii. 17. Αἰώνιος: of long duration, lasting; everlasting, perpetual, eternal. Αἰωνίζω; to make lasting, to perpetuate, to eternize, aeternus in Latin.”

DONNEGAN’S Greek and English Lexicon:

“Αἰώνιος : everlasting, Pseudo-Phocyl, 107, eternal (without beginning or end). N. T. Rom. 16:26, eternal, perennial.”

YONGE’S English-Greek Lexicon:

“FOREVER, δι’ αἰῶνος, Sophocles, Lycurgus, etc. EVERLASTING, αἰδιος, αἰώνιος, Hesiod, Plato. PERPETUAL, αἰώνιος.”

SCHLEUSNER, Graeco-Latin Lexicon:

“Αἰώνιος : (2) omne, quod est finis expers, maxime id, quod est post hujus vitae mundique decursum eventurum (everything that is without end, especially that which is to come after the course of this life and this world). Under this sense must be explained all those passages in the New Testament, Where are found the phrases πῦρ αἰώνιον, κρίσις αἰώνιος, κρίμα αἰώνιον, χόλασις αἰώνιος and ζωὴ (δόξα, σωτηρία) αἰώνιος, Matt. 18:8; 19:16; 25:41, 46; Mark 3:28, etc. For, just as by the phrases πῦρ αἰώνιον, etc., the future punishment which the wicked shall suffer is called perpetual and interminable, so the contrasted phrase ζῶν αἰώνιος signifies the state of unceasing felicity in which the pious shall be after death.”

ANDREWS’ Latin-English Lexicon:

(This lexicon traces the Latin aeternus to aevum, and then to αἰῶν, or, the digamma being dropped, to αἰών; thus showing that the latter is the root of our ever, eternal, etc.) “Aevum, (aeFum from αἰών, kindred with ἄει) uninterrupted, never ending time, eternity. Lucr. i.651 et al. Hence in aevum, for all time. Hor. Od. ix. 14, 3. Plin. xxxv. 212. AEtarnus (contracted from aeviternus — aevum with temporal, ending ternus), eternal, everlasting, differing in intensity from sempiternus; aeternus (denotes) the everlasting, that

which is raised above all time, and can be measured only by indefinite periods. Cic. Inv. 1:27, 39.. In aeternum, for all time, forever.”

So also AINSWORTH’S Latin Dictionary: AEVUM (ex. αἰὼν, qu. αἰεὶ ὤν), eternity. Agere aevum cum diis in coelo. Cic. Tusc. i.12. So also LEV-ERETT’S Latin Dictionary; WHITE and RIDDLE’S Latin-English Dictionary, etc.

GESENIUS, Hebrew and English Lexicon:

This prince of Hebrew scholars, in defining the Hebrew word עולם (olām) as having for its radical meaning “the true and full idea of eternity,” further gives this definition: “remote time, eternity, everlasting; αἰὼν, from everlasting to everlasting.” Again, “everlasting ages, like Greek αἰῶνες, the remotest future.”

“FOREVER, compare N.T. εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Rev. 1:6, 18; Gal. 1:5.”

SCHREVELIUS, Graeco-Latin Lexicon:

“Αἰὼν, aevum, mundus, saeculum, qu. αἰεὶ ὤν. Αἰώνιος, aeternus. Αἰωνίζω, reddere aeternum.”

PASSOW, Graeco-Latin Lexicon:

“Αἰώνιος: long-continuing, everlasting, eternal.”

SCAPULA, Graeco-Latin Lexicon:

“Αἰὼν: aevum, aeternitas (eternity). Dicitur quasi αἰέν ὤν, ut docet Aristot. I. de coelo. Hinc dicitur ἕξ αἰῶνος, ab aevo, ab aeterno (from eternity), et εἰς αἰῶνα, in aeternum (to eternity).”

“Αἰώνιος: aeternus (eternal) sempiternus. Plat. Plut. et alii.”

HEDERICUS AND ERNESTI, Graeco-Latin Lexicon:

“Αἰώνιος: aeternus, sempiternus, perennis. Αἰὼν, aevum, aeternitas quasi αἰεὶ ὄν.”

PILLON (French), Greek Synonyms:

“Αἰὼν (from αἰεὶ) properly Eternity, aevum, Time, the extent of which is unlimited; used, in a more contracted sense, for certain periods of time, as the age or life of man, duration of existence allotted him, age (great number of years), but always in an indefinite sense.”

BAGSTER, Analytical Greek Lexicon (with grammatical analysis of each word):

“Αἰώνιος: indeterminate as to duration, eternal, everlasting.”

On page 8 of the Grammatical Analysis the following synonyms of αἰώνιος; are given: Αφθαρτος, incorruptible. Ἐπίδιος, eternal. Αἰώνιος, everlasting.

WAHL, Clavis Apocryphorum:

Αἰών: In its full and emphatic sense, “eternal and unchanging duration.” This signification this great lexicographer illustrates amply by citations from the Greek classic writers, some of which are perfectly conclusive as to the true sense of αἰών

ROBINSON, Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament:

"Αἰών: endless 'duration, eternity, everlasting, as in the Greek writers. Intensive in plural εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, forever and ever. In the later Jewish and Rabbinical usage, the world to come, always including the idea of endless duration.

“Αἰώνιος: ever-enduring, perpetual, everlasting. Implying eternity both before and after, the future without end. Hence, of the happiness of the saints in the world to come, especially ζοὴ αἰώνιος, eternal life — contra, of the punishment of the wicked, e.g., χόλασις αἰώνιος. Matt. 25:46.”

SCHIRLITZ (German), Griechisch-Deutsches Worterbuch (Lexicon) zum Neuen Testamente:

"Αἰών: (from αἰέν ὦν, ever being), aevum, that is indefinite duration, and the Hebrew oléim, indefinite time, eternity (Ewigkeit).

"I. Ἐπὶ αἰῶνος, ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων, , of old, from eternity (von Ewigkeit her). Εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, εἰς ἡμέραν αἰῶνος, to the most distant future time, to eternity (his in die entferntesten Zeiten hinaus, das ist in Ewigkeit). Luke 1:33; John 6:51, 58, etc. Intensive (verstärkt) εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, in all coming duration, throughout all eternity (in die alleraller entferntesten Zeiten hinaus, in alle Ewigkeit hinaus). Gal. 1:5; Phil. 4:20; 1 Tim. 1:17; 2 Tim. 4:18; Heb. 13:21; Ephes. 3:21.

“II. Time with a reference to the things existing in it, as the aeons according to Hebrew usage, as πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων, before the world was created, also the world-periods. Αἰώνιος, enduring beyond the bounds of time, eternal (ewig) in the absolute sense, as Θεὸς αἰώνιος, Rom. 16:26; Πνεῦμα αἰώνιον, Heb. 9:14; χρόνιος αἰώνιος, from the eternal times (seit ewigen Zeiten), as αἰώνια λώτρωσις Αἰν'pomg, Heb. 9:12, etc. Here pertain the instances where αἰώνιος is used as the predicate of the words ζοὴ, δόξα, χόλασις, ὀλεθρος, χρῖμα, χρίσις.”

CREMER (German), Biblisch-Theologisches Wörterbuch Neu Testamentlichen Gräcität:

"Αἰὼν: according to the context, the duration of a definite space of time, or, generally, the infinite (unendliche) duration of time, the future as well as the past. 2 Cor. 5:1; 1 Tim. 6:16; Rev. 14:6.

"Αἰὼνιος: to eternity, time in its duration, continual, enduring, eternal. Plat. Rep. ii.363 D., ἡγησάμενος χάλλιστον ἀπερτῆς μισθὸν μέθην αἰῶνιον. Legg. 10:904 A. Life eternal (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα) opposed to temporal (πρόσκαιρος). 2 Cor. 4:18. Synonyms: ἀφθαρτος, incorruptible; ἀκατάλυτος, indissoluble.

"The expression χρόνοι αἰῶνιοι, Rom. 16:25, Tit. 1:2, 2 Tim. 1:9, embraces all past periods of duration belonging to eternity *a parte ante*, as ἀπ' αἰῶνος. Luke 1:70; Acts 3:21; Col. 1:26; 2 Tim. 1:9; Ephes. 1:4, 11; Rom. 16:26; 2 Cor. 4:17; 5:1."

PARKHURST, Greek and English Lexicon to the New Testament (in which the meaning of the Greek of Scripture is confirmed by citations from the Greek Writers):

"Αἰὼν: I. Both in singular and plural, it signifies eternity, Whether past or to come. Εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας αἰῶνων, for ages of ages, forever and ever.

"Αἰὼνιος: I. Eternal, having neither beginning nor end. Rom. 16:26; Heb. 9:14.

"II. Eternal, without end, 2 Thes. 1:9, Philemon 5:1.5, αἰῶνιον, forever, not only during the term of his natural life, but through endless ages of eternal life and blessedness. Το πῦρ τὸ αἰῶνιον, Matt. 25:41, that everlasting fire which awaits the ungodly and unclean."

GREENFIELD, Greek and English Lexicon to the New Testament:

"Αἰὼνιος: Unlimited as to duration, eternal, everlasting."

GRIMM, Lexicon of the New Testament:

"Αἰὼνιος: I. Initii et finis expers qui semper fuit, et semper erit (without beginning or end, that which always has been and always will be). Θεὸς αἰῶνιος (eternal God), Rom. 16:26; Πνεῦμα αἰῶνιος (eternal Spirit), Heb. 9:14.

"II. Initii expers (without beginning); χρόνοις αἰῶνιοις (from eternal times), Rom. 16:25; 2 Tim. 1:9; Tit. 1:2.

"III. Finis expers, nunquam desiturus, sempiternus (without end, never-ending, everlasting), 2 Cor. 4:18; Matt. 25:46."

GREEN, Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament:

"Ὁ αἰών, Illimitable duration, eternity; as also οἱ αἰῶνες, ὁ αἰών τῶν αἰώνων, οἱ αἰῶνες τῶν αἰώνων; whence,

"Αἰώνιος: indeterminate as to duration, eternal, everlasting."

MALTBY, Greek Gradus, or Poetical Lexicon of the Greek Language:

"Αἰών: aevum, eternity.

"Αἰώνιος: sempiternus, everlasting, Phocyl. 107. Synonyms of αἰώνιος: αἰδιος (perpetual), ἔντελεχής (endless), ἀπαυστος (unceasing), ἀτέρηων (unbounded)."

DUNCAN, Novum Lexicon Graecum:

"Αἰών: facta vox ab a. intensivo et continuativo, et ab so, cujus participium εων, quasi ἀεὶ ὦν nulla intermissione et perpetuo ων (a word formed from ἀεὶ (ever) and ὦν (being), and, therefore, signifying existence without cessation, and everlasting."

WEBSTER, Syntax and Synonyms of the Greek Testament:

"Αἰών: in Plato, 'long space,' eternity.' The term αἰῶνες, Heb. 1:2, Heb. 11:3, denotes 'the ages,' the temporal periods, whose sum and aggregation adumbrate the conception of eternity."

DAVID LEVI, the author of Ceremonies of the Jews, in the Lexicon (Jewish) Lingua Sacra:

Under the word חלוע gives as its equivalent "Αἰώνιος, perpetual, everlasting. In Chaldee, forever, both as in the Hebrew with a trifling variation in the forms. It also in Rabbinical Hebrew denotes eternal, forever."

JEROME.¹

In the Vulgate, the famous Latin version of the Bible made in the fourth century, and the current Scriptures in use by the Christian world for a thousand years, Jerome renders ζοή αἰώνιος by "vitam aeternam," and χόλασις αἰώνιος by "aeternum supplicium," i.e., everlasting life and everlasting punishment. The passage in full runs thus: "Et ibunt hi in supplicium aeternum, justi in vitam aeternam." Matt. 25:46.

WYCLIFFE.²

In the first translation of the Bible (from the Vulgate) ever made into English (but not printed), about the year 1380, Wycliffe renders αἰώνιος; "euer lastynge;" thus, "And these shulen go in to euerlastynge tourment: for so the just men in to were lastynge lyf." Matt. 25:46.

TYNDALE³

The first edition of the New Testament ever printed in English by Tyn-dale, at Antwerp, in 1526, gives αἰώνιος; the same definition: “And these shall go in to everlasting payne,” and the righteous in to lyfe eternall.” Matt. 25:46.

LUTHER.

In the first version (from the original Greek) of the Bible made in the German language, and still the current one of the German-speaking world, Luther translates αἰώνιος by ewig; e.g., Matt. 25:41, “das ewige Feuer;” Matt. 25:46, “Und sie werden in die ewige Pein gehen, aber die Gerechten in das ewige Leben.” Adler’s German and English Dictionary gives this definition of “Ewig (adjective), eternal, everlasting, perpetual; (adverb), eternally, everlastingly, perpetually.”

OECOLAMPADIUS.

One of the most learned theologians and commentators of the Reforma-tion. He renders Πνεύματος αἰώνιου in Heb. 9:14, by “Spiritu aeterno,” i.e., eternal Spirit.

CALVIN.

In his commentaries (Latin), Calvin translates αἰώνιος by “aeternus,” eternal, as in John 5:24, 6:27, etc.

THEODORE DE BEZA.

One of the most eminent “critics, translators, and expounders” of the Scriptures at the time of the Reformation, Greek professor at Lausanne, and colleague of Calvin at Geneva. In his Latin version of the Greek New Testa-ment, he renders πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον (Matt. 18:8), “ignem illum aeternum” (that everlasting fire). Similarly in Matt. 25:41, “abite a me in ignem aeter-num.” And in the same manner he renders the contrasted αἰώνιος of Matt. 25:46, as signifying “supplicium aeternum — vitam aeternam.” Comment-ing also on Mark 3:29, he explains that αἰώνιου, as there joined with χρίσεως, has the force of “nunquam delendi,” i.e. “never to be blotted out.” To show his opinions, also, respecting future punishment as taught through-out the Scriptures in general, we might cite his annotations on Mark 3:29, as follows: “The fire is called unquenchable for two reasons: (1) because it will never be extinguished, and (2) because it will never cease to punish those who are cast into it.”

Of the vast number of distinguished commentators; I give a few repre-sentatives:—

JACOBUS, Notes on the New Testament:

“Αἰώνιος is used 64 times in the New Testament in the phrase ‘everlasting life,’ or ‘eternal life.’ And-it is used quite as distinctly 7 times in”phrases like these: ‘everlasting punishment,“eternal fire,”everlasting destruction.’ And that it can mean nothing less than eternal, without end, is proved from its use in Rom. 16:26, ‘The commandment of THE EVERLASTING GOD;’ and in Heb. 9:14, of God the Holy Ghost, ‘THE ETERNAL SPIRIT.’ If the divine existence is eternal, so will be the Wicked’s doom.”

STUART, Exegetical Essay on αἰών and αἰώνιος, ‘Philological Library, vol. xxxvii. p. 11:

“As the most common and appropriate meaning of αἰών in the New Testament, and which therefore deserves the first rank in regard to order, I put down, (1) An indefinite period of time; time without limitation; ever, forever, time without end, eternity; all in relation to the future.”

MOSHEIM, Historical Commentaries on Christianity during the First Three Christian Centuries, p. 43:

“Αἰών properly signifies indefinite or eternal duration, as opposed to that which is finite or temporal.”

STIER, Words of the Lord Jesus, vol. iii. p. 341:

Commenting upon the words of Christ in Matt. 25:46, he calls them an ,“exegetically irrefutable sentence;” and says of the force of αἰώνιος, that its use proves that “the eternity of misery is quite as endless as the eternity of life. When the present world passes away, then first begins the eternal misery of those men who are associated with the devil; of whose restoration there is not the smallest word to be found in the whole Scriptures.”

MEYER, Commentary on the New Testament, vol. ii. p. 183: “Matt. 25:4.6, comp. Dan. 12:2. The absolute idea of eternity, in regard to the punishment of hell, is not to be got rid of, either by a popular toning down of the force of αἰώνιος, or by appealing to the figurative character of the term fire, and the supposed incompatibility between the idea of eternity, and such a thing as evil and its punishment, any more than by the theory that the whole representation is intended simply by way of warning; but is to be regarded as exegetically established in the present passage (comp. 3:12, 18:8), by the opposed ζῶν αἰώνιον, which denotes the everlasting Messianic life (Kaeuffer, as above, p. 21); comp. also Weizel in the Stud. u. Krit. 1836, p. 605 ff; Schmid in the Jahrb. f. D. Theol. 1870, p. 136 ff.”

HENGSTENBERG, on the Apocalypse, vol. ii. p. 372:

He comments upon the αἰῶνας αἰῶνων of Rev. 20:10 in connection with λίην τοῦ πυρός, thus: “The everlasting fire is, according to the word of our Lord in Matt. 25:41, prepared first of all for Satan and his angels. The cursed from among men are to be sent there as companions to them.”

So also on Rev. 14:11. “The smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever (εἰς αἰῶνας αἰῶνων); and they have no rest day nor night — we can only understand what is here said of hell-torment, and as the contrast of the heavenly rest of the saints in verse 13. The threatening is a frightful one, but it has the security for its truth in the word of the Lord, ‘Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.’”

OLSHAUSEN:

Notes on Matt. 12:31, 32, vol. i. p. 461: “αἰῶνwg χρίσις, eternal punishment.” Vol. ii. p. 274, “αἰῶνιος χόλασις, everlasting punishment; the expression denotes eternal condemnation.” Vol. i. p. 460: “As the same expressions are applied to the eternity of God, as the terms χρίσις, χόλασις, αἰῶνιος, eternal punishment, χρίμα, πῦρ αἰῶνιον, eternal fire, form the contrast to ζοή αἰῶνιος, eternal life; no objections can be raised against the eternity of punishment on philological grounds.”

TRENCH, New Testament Synonyms, p. 211:

“Αἰῶνιος, in 1 Tim. 1:17, must denote not the worlds in the usual concrete meaning of the term, but according to the more usual temporal meaning of αἰῶν in the New Testament, ‘the ages,’ the temporal periods whose sum and aggregate adumbrate the mighty conception of eternity.”

ALFORD, Greek Testament:

Notes on Matt. 25:41, vol. 1:256: “τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰῶνιον, — greater definiteness could not be given, — that eternal fire.” On Rom. 16:25, “μυστηρίου χρόνοις αἰῶνιος σεσιγημένου, the mystery hidden from eternity.” On Heb. 9:14: “Πνεύματος αἰῶνιου, the eternal Spirit, the divine Spirit of the Godhead.”

ELLCOTT, Critical and Grammatical Commentary on Epistles of St. Paul (Stowe, 1879), vol. 1. p. 110:

“2 Thess. 1:9, ὄλεθρον αἰῶνιον, eternal destruction. All the sounder commentators on this text recognize a reference to ‘res in perpetuum futurae’ (Schott), and a testimony to the eternity of future punishment, that is not easy to be explained away, ‘που τοίνυν οἱ Ὀριγενιασταὶ τέλος τῆς χολᾶσεως μθόουμενοι; αἰῶνιον ταύτην ὁ πᾶυλος λεγει,’ Theoph. In an-

swer to the attempt of some writers of the present day to give αἰώνιος a qualitative aspect, let it briefly be said that the earliest Greek expositors never appear to have lost sight of its quantitative aspects: ‘ἀκριβέστερον ἔδειξε τῆς τιμωρίας τὸ μέγεθος αἰώνιον ταύτην ἀβοχελέσας,’ Theod.”

So on Gal. 1:5 (p. 27), “αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων” the ages of the ages,’ a semi-Hebraistic expression for a duration of time infinitely long.”

And on Eph. 3:21 (p. 82): “It is not impossible, as Grotius suggests, that the two formulae expressive of endless continuity, γενεαὶ γενεῶν, and αἰῶνες τῶν αἰώνων, are here blended together.”

WORDSWORTH, commenting on Matt. 25:4’1 and 46, says:

“Our future Judge Himself has declared that at the great day of doom He will say to those on his left hand, ‘Depart from me, ye cursed, into (αἰώνιον) everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.’ And we have no reason to suppose that the punishment of the devil and his angels will be temporary. And the Holy Spirit, recording our Lord’s language by St. Matthew in the same Scripture, leads us to conclude that the punishment of the wicked will be equal in duration to the happiness of the righteous. For in the ’Greek original of this passage, the word which is rendered everlasting in the former clause is the same word as that which is rendered eternal in the latter.”

JAMIESON, FAUSSET, AND BROWN, Commentary on the Old and New Testaments:

Matt. 25:46, vol. ii. 60: “Αἰώνιος χολασις, ζοή αἰώνιος, everlasting punishment — life eternal. The word in both clauses, being in the original the same, should have been the same in the translation also. Thus, the decisions of this awful day will be final, irreversible, unending.”

The same definitions are given by Matthew Henry, Clarke, Theile, Edwards, Tholuck, Martensen, Tischendorf, Lange,’ and all orthodox commentators.

We see, then, that those who by their eminent linguistic talents and culture are thoroughly conversant with the classical and Scriptural usage of αἰών, αἰώνιος, and who have formed their views from observing them in every variety of situation in the original Greek, such as bring out their most delicate shades of meaning, speak with the most perfect confidence as to their unquestioned significance of eternity, when specifically employed, i.e. when applied to the duration of the destinies of the world to come.

The Rev. G. B. Willcox (Congregationalist), of Stamford, Mass., gives, as the response to a recent inquiry made by himself, the same result, as follows: "Some time ago, I requested from leading Greek scholars, in the various colleges, their opinions as to the force of the words in the New Testament regarding this subject, which are translated in our version 'everlasting,' 'eternal;' and, almost without exception, they made them to be 'time-words,' and to imply endless duration."

So, likewise, Rev. N. O. George: "No point has been more clearly shown by those eminent men who hate controverted Universalist views on this subject, than this, that the proper meaning of the Greek noun, αἰὼν, and its corresponding adjective, αἰώνιος, is endless."⁴

To this effect is the emphatic testimony of the learned Dr. Joseph Angus, viz.: "The three expressions, εἰς αἰῶνα, εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων and αἰώνιος are the only phrases used in Scripture to set forth the future glory of the redeemed; the duration of the power of God himself; and all are used to set forth the punishment with which those are visited who reject the Gospel."⁵

Thus, too, Dr. J. Pye Smith: "The strongest expressions (αἰώνιος, etc.) are employed which the Greek language furnishes, to signify a final, irreversible, eternal doom."⁶

So, also, Rev. J. H. Bell: "It is plain that the words rendered eternal or everlasting in the New Testament, when applied to the punishment or torment of the devil and the Wicked, have the same absolute sense."⁷

Similarly, also, Prof. Stuart: "If αἰὼν and αἰώνιος do not signify eternity and eternal in the Greek language of the Septuagint and New Testament, then what terms has this language to express such an idea? Will anyone venture to say that the sacred writers had no such idea as eternal and eternity? But if it be admitted that the idea was familiar to them, then by what terms could they express it in the Greek language so appropriate as these?"⁸

The result, then, of this appeal to eminent authorities on the subject is, that the etymology of αἰὼν and αἰώνιος, their usage by Greek writers, by learned Jews, by the inspired authors of the New Testament, and, above all, by our Lord himself, as well as the sense in which the primitive Christians understood the Saviour to use these terms, and also the testimony of an overwhelming array of modern lexicographers and commentators, concur and corroborate each other, in establishing with a remarkable unanimity, that, if language has any definite meaning whatever, then the pivotal words

in this discussion — when used of the state of future blessedness or doom — DO HAVE FOR THEIR SIGNIFICATION THE IMPORT OF BOUNDLESS, UNENDING, INFINITE TIME. So decisive, repeated, and cumulative do these testimonies become, the more widely and carefully the field is explored, that their tendency is to exert a constantly deepening impression of surprise how any unprejudiced inquirer could arrive at any other than the one, inevitable conclusion.

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1. These from Jerome to Beza, though not “modern,” will still not be considered out of place.↵
 2. *The Gothic and Anglo-Saxon Gospels in parallel columns, with the versions of Wycliffe and Tyndale.* Rev. Joseph Bosworth, D.D., F.R.S., F.S.A., p. 139.↵
 3. *Ibid.*↵
 4. *Universalism not of the Bible*, p. 324.↵
 5. *Three Letters on Future Punishment.*↵
 6. *First Lines of Christian Theology*, p. 411.↵
 7. *Everlasting Destruction*, p. 12.↵
 8. *Exegetical Essays*, p. 248.↵

9. Objections Considered — The Figurative Use Of αἰών, αἰώνιος .

THE OBJECTION based upon the plural intensive form has already been noticed, and less still is there necessity for a special refutation of the futile attempts to take from these terms the sense of duration altogether, and foist upon them the wholly foreign idea of spiritual, a sense never befitting them, and which, in an overwhelming majority of instances, would involve their meaning in utter obscurity and absurdity. We will accordingly consider the objection upon which chief stress is placed, viz., the occasional use of these terms to denote terminable or ending periods of time. This argument is stated by FARRAR in this manner:¹ “Thus in the Old Testament αἰών, αἰώνιος, so far from necessarily implying endlessness, are used of many Jewish ordinances which ceased centuries ago.”

But what shall we say of such an assertion as this, when it is remarked that αἰών does not occur in the Old Testament at all! This arises from the simple fact that the Old Testament is written in Hebrew, while αἰών being Greek is, of course, not found in the Hebrew Scriptures. But how is it that Farrar can make such a statement, if it is totally unfounded? The only ground for it is, that such a usage is found in the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Old Testament. That is, while he is declaring solemnly (I use his own words) “only, first, you must go to the inspired original, not to the erroneous translation,” he appeals from our learned and accurate version to a (however valuable in the weightiest respects) yet far less reliable translation, and cites this as the “inspired original” over against our “erroneous and uninspired” one! In reference to this very same translation (the Greek Septuagint) the learned DE QUINCEY remarks: “Upon any question arising out of deep, aboriginal, doctrinal truth, we have nothing to do with transla-

tions. The word αἰώνιος is a word proper to the New Testament, and any sense which it may have received from an Alexandrian Jew in the third century before Christ is irrelevant to any criticism.” This assertion then, of Farrar that αἰών is used in the original Old Testament, is contrary to fact, and looks very much as if designed to mislead the uninformed laity. Practically it has that result at all events, as we have ourselves observed in conversing with those who have read his book.

When the ground of his objection to “everlasting” as the definition of αἰών, αἰώνιος, is made to rest upon the assumption that translations are untrustworthy, then to make a professed appeal to the original, when he is but referring to a translation of which we know with no definite certainty when or where or by whom it was made, really deserves the severest censure.

It is sufficient, then, in refutation of the assertion that “in the Old Testament αἰώνιος is used of many Jewish ordinances which ceased centuries ago,” to tell our readers, in the language of De Quincey, that αἰώνζογ does not occur in the Old Testament, “but is a word proper to the New Testament.” And in the New Testament it never appears in the figurative sense, but always and unequivocally, either in its sublime usage to characterize the eternity of the Being of God, or, in expressing the want of bounds to future happiness or future misery, means everlasting. But “in the New Testament no instance of a use so catachrestic as this occurs. An indefinite, unlimited period is the basis of all the significations of αἰών and αἰώνιος there, wherever they have a simple reference to (future) time.”²

It is proper, however, to observe that, if such words as the Hebrew מלוע and the Greek αἰών, αἰώνιος are occasionally used to imply only a terminable period of time, and not eternity, it is only that in all languages words sometimes are used, as Aristotle says, “inaccurately,” i.e. figuratively or hyperbolically. And this principle finds abundant illustrations not only with these classical words, but in our own words “everlasting” and “eternal” as used in the English language. Though no words have a more definite and unmistakable meaning when we employ them accurately, yet how constant in our literature is their use after the figurative style, i.e. only to denote terminable periods of time?

A few notable instances will exemplify this: WORCESTER, in his Dictionary, gives this definition of “EVERLASTING: Enduring forever; endless; eternal; immortal; unending.” And then gives this illustration of its permissible use: “Everlasting flowers, certain flowers whose hard tissue and deficient

moisture render them little liable to change, and enable them to retain their color for several months after having been gathered.” Here everlasting, whose true and primary definition is given as that of “enduring forever,” is figuratively applied to that which lasts only a few months. It is safe to say that no such extreme instance of the hyperbolical use of αἰώνιος has ever been found either in the Septuagint or elsewhere. And how much more, then, may some astute scholar like Farrar, coming a sufficient number of centuries after us, be expected to demonstrate incontrovertibly from this instance of Worcester, that everlasting, on the very highest authority, only denoted a very short space of time, possibly not exceeding a few months, and that we actually had no English word to express the full conception of eternity!

LONGFELLOW, in the “Spirit of Poetry,” affords us another example:—

“There is a quiet spirit in these woods
In the green valley, where the silver brook
From its full laver pours the white cascade;
And bubbling low amid the tangled woods,
Slips down through moss-grown stones with endless laughter.
And frequent as the everlasting hills”. etc.

RUSKIN may give us another instance from the “Stones of Venice” — and the celebrated description there given of St. Mark’s Cathedral: “A multitude of pillars and white domes, beset with sculpture of alabaster, fantastic and involved, of palm leaves and lilies, and grapes and pomegranates, and birds clinging and fluttering among the branches, all twined together into an endless network of birds and flowers.”³

Here the first masters of lexicography, poetry, and prose in the English language; employ our strongest and most absolute words for eternity to express ending periods of time, or limited areas of space; and yet what child will not see at a glance" that they are using them figuratively or with poetic license? and whose ideas are at all hereby confused or misled as to their real force? And if in the very next sentence these authors were to apply these same words, “everlasting,” “eternal,” “endless,” and “forever” to God or the future state, would they not imply boundless and infinite duration? and would not the context direct us at once with infallible certainty to the fact that they were now to be understood in their strict and proper sense?

It is to be remembered, however, that 'even when these terms are figuratively employed, as in the expressions, "eternal ocean," "everlasting mountains," "endless circuit of the winds," etc., no idea of limitation is at the time in the thoughts of the speaker. But he means even then a course of duration which runs out beyond his vision and loses itself in an indefinite distance which at least adumbrates the conception of eternity; and that is essentially different from using them to express a definite, measurable period of time. Even their figurative use then still complies with the true idea of a figure. For in denoting a period possibly terminating, and yet whose end is unknown and indefinite to the speaker, being lost beneath the horizon of distance, it but typifies their higher and specific use when they are employed to set forth the conception of absolute endlessness.

HODGE makes this sound criticism on this point:⁴ "It is objected that the word 'everlasting' is sometimes used in Scripture (not in the New Testament, however) of periods of limited duration. In reference to this objection, it may be remarked that the Hebrew and Greek words rendered in our version eternal, or everlasting, ' mean duration whose termination is unknown. When used in reference to perishable things, as when the Bible speaks of the 'everlasting hills,' they simply indicate indefinite existence; that is, existence to which there is no known or assignable limit. But when used in reference to that which is either in its own nature imperishable, or of which the unending existence is revealed, as the human soul, or in reference to that which we have no authority from other sources to assign a limit to, as the future blessedness of the saints, then the words are to be taken in their literal sense. If, because we sometimes say we give a man a thing forever, without intending that he is to possess it to all eternity, it were argued that the word forever expresses limited duration, every one would see that the inference was unfounded. If the Bible says that the sufferings of the lost are to be everlasting, they are to endure forever, unless it can be shown either that the soul is not immortal, or that the Scriptures elsewhere teach that those sufferings are to come to an end. No one argues that the blessedness of the righteous will cease after a term of years, because the word everlasting is sometimes used of things which do not continue forever. And our Lord teaches that the punishment of the wicked is everlasting in the same sense that the blessedness of the saints is everlasting."

We see, then, of what egregious trifling, and of what inexcusable sophistry they are guilty, who would seek on such entirely untenable

grounds to destroy altogether the proper import of one of the weightiest and most venerable words in all language. With respect to αἰώνιος more particularly, let us trust, therefore, that we may witness no further attempts, based upon its occasional figurative use out of the Scriptures, to overthrow its true, primary, and legitimate sense of absolute eternity, always pertaining to it when used in the Scriptures.

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1. *Eternal Hope*, Excursus 3:198.↩
 2. Stuart's *Exegetical Essays*, p. 246.↩
 3. "All the ground here (on the summit of the Alps) wears an eternal covering of ice and snow," — *Animated Nature*, of Oliver Goldsmith, of whom Headley says: "The prose of Goldsmith is the model of perfection, and the standard of our language." Any number of similar illustrations might be adduced.↩
 4. *Systematic Theology*, vol. iii, p. 876.↩

10. Opinions Of The Jews At The Time Of Christ; The Talmud.

ANOTHER PRINCIPAL ground of opposition is based upon the alleged opinions of the Jews of Christ's time respecting eternal punishment. It is asserted that they had no clear belief on this point, and therefore could not have understood our Lord to use αἰώνιος in the sense of eternal. The inherent weakness of this argument is apparent from this, that, if it be admitted to have any force, then Christ could not have taught anything except what was known and commonly received before he came,— a principle which would absolutely preclude him from giving a revelation! What if the Jews did not know of eternal punishment, could not Christ have taught it notwithstanding? No! say all the opponents of the tenet. But what could be more self-contradictory than this, in those who profess to adore Jesus as the author of a new word from God, and the one who brought to light truths before unknown which have revolutionized the world? The Jews had no conception of the eternal generation or pre-existence of Christ either. No! so little did they understand it that they even "took up stones to cast at him" when they heard it. Therefore, according to this line of argument, he could not possibly — have meant to teach it! If my readers think it idle to refute such a puerility as this, they must bear in mind that it is not only gravely presented, but really is a very "shibboleth" in the mouths of those disputing the Scriptural doctrine. But while this fallacious style of reasoning vitiates altogether the conclusion sought to be drawn, yet the premises on which it is sought to be based are equally untenable, and more, — they are directly contrary to the facts.

As to the opinions of the Jews in Christ's time on Future Retribution, we have a no less eminent witness than JOSEPHUS himself, the learned and accurate Jewish historian, who bore a principal part in the terrible scenes atten-

dant upon the capture of Jerusalem by Titus, and to whom we are indebted for the invaluable “Antiquities of the Jews.”¹

Now Josephus says distinctly, in his carefully prepared “Discourse to the Greeks,” concerning the religious opinions of his people, that “In this region (Hades) there is a certain place set apart as a lake of unquenchable fire, which is prepared for a day afore-determined by God, when the unjust, and those who have been disobedient to God, shall be adjudged to this everlasting punishment.” — “Giving justly to those that have done well, an everlasting fruition; but allotting to the lovers of wicked works eternal punishment. To these belong the unquenchable fire, and that without end; neither will sleep give ease to these men — death will not free them from punishment,”² etc. What language could he have employed to make his testimony more explicit than this?. The same declarations he repeats at several other places in his works, and it is simply impossible that on so solemn a doctrine he could have falsified the faith of his people. That this was the belief of the Jews is likewise shown from such passages as Isa. 33:14, and 66:24; Eccl. 11:3; and especially Dan. 12:2, where the future eternal bliss of the righteous, and the misery of the wicked are brought into direct contrast: “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting (עליון) life, and some to shame and everlasting (עליון) contempt.”

And that the Jews gathered the doctrine of endless retribution from these inspired teachings is shown by the BOOK OF ENOCH, an Apocalyptic work, which the most reliable authorities concur in ascribing to the age before Christ, or, at least, to a period not later than the first century, and which exerted a greater influence in molding theological opinions than any work of the time. Its influence was at its height during the age of Jesus, and the primitive Christians, along with the Jews, revered its authority as that of inspiration. It is even quoted in the New Testament by the apostle Jude, vs. 14-16. Now what does Enoch teach with regard to the grand climacteric at the close of time and history? Enoch emphatically announces eternal punishments. Thus, chap. 33., he says of the offspring of the sons of God (angels) and daughters of men that Michael shall “bind them underneath the earth, even to the day of judgment and consummation — then shall they be taken away to the lowest depths of the fire in torment, and in confinement shall they be shut up forever.” Chap. 21: “Moreover, abundant is their suffering until the time of the Great Judgment, the castigation and the torment of those who eternally execrate, whose souls are punished and bound there

forever. Their souls shall not be annihilated in the day of judgment, neither shall they arise from this place.” Chap. 38: “Better would it have been for them had they never been born.” Throughout the whole book run expressions of this character, and the perfectly confident tone of the author shows that he was but reflecting the universally accepted belief of the age.

The APOCALYPSE OF EZRA, a book similarly esteemed as canonical, i.e., of prophetic or inspired sanction, by the Jews, “defends, by the authority of God, the doctrine of future eternal punishment.”

Such is the clear, precise, and accordant testimony of Ezra, Enoch, and Josephus, the three most distinguished representatives of the Jews at about the time of Christ, whose writings have reached us. On the strength of their testimony, Dr. Edward Beecher, in his “History of the Scriptural Doctrine of Retribution,” regards it as irrefutably demonstrated that the prevailing opinion and commonly accepted faith of the orthodox Jews of the time of Christ, was that of the endless punishment of the wicked.

So also affirms Dr. Hodge: “It is admitted that the doctrine of the perpetuity of the future punishment of the wicked was held by the Jews under the old dispensation, and at the time of Christ.”

And that such was the case is proved, moreover, by the Talmud, a digest of the law supposed to have been received orally from Moses, and transmitted as sacred tradition along with the written law. The Talmud also contains the comments of learned Jews upon the Scriptures, and in it the opinions of various schools of thought, often conflicting, are adduced; and all kinds of categories and sophistical propositions are brought forward for discussion. Its testimony, indeed, can throw but little light upon the question, as the text, or Mishna, was not written until the close of the second century after Christ by Rabbi Judah the Holy, and the Gemara, or commentaries on this text, were added at various times during the next three centuries; so that the Talmud was not complete until the fifth or sixth century. The trifling puerilities which disfigure large portions of it render it of little value as evidence. Thus, says Dr. JOSEPH BARCLAY,³ in his recent learned critical review of the Talmud: “It is hardly possible to conceive a more extraordinary instance of moral and literary degeneration than that which strikes us in comparing the Old Testament Scriptures, and the puerile and trivial absurdities of the Mishna.”

And yet it is from this arsenal that the opponents of Eternal Punishment would draw their weapons with which to overthrow the true significance of

the sublime declarations of the Old Testament, and the faith of the holy nation, upon eternal things. But however suitable such an inconsistent mixture of opinions may be for beclouding a question, it is still perfectly clear that the Talmud enjoins eternal punishment. There are a number of passages which affirm it so definitely that even many of its opponents are constrained to admit that they cannot be explained away. We append a number of such selections:—

Rosh Hashanah, ch. i. p. 17: “Christians and apostates descend into Gehenna, and are judged therein for generations after generations.”

Babla Mezia, p. 58: “All who go down into Gehenna rise up again, with the exception of those who go down and do not rise, the adulterer, etc.”

Targum of Onkelos on Deut. 33:6: “Let Reuben live in life eternal, and not die the second death.”

Jerusalem Targum on Deut. 33:6: “Let Reuben not die the second death, which the wicked die in the world to come.”

Jerusalem Targum on Is. 66:6: “I will not give them an end in this life, but will recompense them with vengeance for their sins, and deliver their bodies to the second death.”

Chaldee Targum (of Jonathan Ben Uzziel) on Isaiah 33:14: “Who among us shall dwell in Jerusalem, where the ungodly will be judged, and will be delivered into Gehenna, into everlasting fire.”

Gemara Sanhedrim, c. 11: “The wicked, who deny the existence of God, the divinity of the law of Moses, and the resurrection, have no portion in the world to come.”

Gemara Erubin: “Man should always endeavor to do good, but should an inducement be afforded him by the committal of a sin, let him counter-balance the transient pleasure which iniquity may afford by reflecting on the unremitting punishment which it is sure to entail on him hereafter.”

Aboth 4:22, demonstrates the general belief in a judgment after death, and the finality of its decisions thus: “Those that die are to rise again; those that rise again are to be judged. He is... the Creator, the Judge, the Witness, and the Prosecutor; and he will pronounce the sentence. Know also, that everything is to be accounted for; let not, then, thine evil lusts persuade thee that the grave is a place of refuge for thee.”

To show the conclusions gathered by eminent Jewish commentators from these teachings, the erudite expositor Ibn Ezra (whose opinion is a recognized authority among Jewish critics) writes, in his Commentary on Isa-

iah 66:24, p. 306, as follows: “From this verse all the learned gather that there will be a day of judgment. Neither shall their fire be quenched. Many discover herein allusion to the fact, that the soul, when it leaves the body, remains within the sphere of fire, if it does not deserve to join the angels of the Lord. The ancients said that this would take place after the resurrection, and supported this opinion by a reference to Dan. 12:2, who asserts that all the wicked, when called to life again, will be to an EVERLASTING ABHORRING. All this is quite true.” To the same effect also testify the writings of Chief Rabbi Weill, Rabbis Saedja, Bar-Nachman, Allo, etc.

The learned Rabbi Mendez, whom I have consulted with great satisfaction in regard to the general teaching of the Talmud, writes me that their sages universally teach that this present is the “world of action,” and the future the “world of retribution,” and declares that the Talmud properly interpreted “will serve to refute all beliefs in the wicked repenting after death;” and as illustrative of this says that the Gemara Emek Hammelech, cited by Farrar as teaching future restoration, viz.: “The wicked stay in Gehenna until the resurrection, and then Messiah will pass through and redeem them,” teaches nothing of the kind, but “only means that they will be brought to the throne of God by Messiah for the final judgment, when the irrevocable verdict shall be pronounced against them by God.”

Although the opinions of the school of HILLEL, who taught the annihilation of the wicked, and from whom those extracts are taken which misrepresent its true position, are proposed in the Talmud in a hypothetical form for discussion, yet its prevailing teaching is that of the school of SHAMMAI, Who taught that the torments of the impious in Gehenna are eternal. As far, then, as the Talmud is a reliable witness, it sustains the Old Testament Scriptures, and the apocalyptic books of Enoch and Ezra, as well as the formal and positive testimony of Josephus, all of which demonstrate beyond dispute, that the prevailing opinions of the Jewish multitudes who listened to Christ were to the effect that future punishment was endless and irrevocable, and in this sense, therefore, would they naturally interpret our Lord’s language, when he affirmed it even in the very phraseology with which they were familiar.

These so-called objections, then, far from invalidating, only add strength to our general position. So that we may conclude with all assurance that αἰὼν and αἰῶνιος, when specifically employed, express the positive conception of eternity as do no other words in the Greek language: Eternity, without beginning and without end — Eternity, in that vast scope in which

the past and the future are alike hidden from view — Eternity, as the unlimited, embracing all-possible duration, and absolutely beyond all bounds — Eternity, infinite, immeasurable, and incomprehensible as the Being of God himself: This is their proper sense when elevated to their highest application. And when, then, our Lord used these terms, and these alone, to describe the interminable life of the blessed, and when he similarly applied them to the ceaseless doom of those driven away in the Final Judgment, he simply selected these words because their solemn, far-reaching, and illimitable signification made them by far the most competent to give the strongest force to the sublime truth which he desired to impress, in all its momentous character, upon his hearers.

Thus, Dr. Hodge: “The strongest words which the Greek language affords are employed in the New Testament to express the unending duration of the final torments of the lost. The same words, αἰὼν, αἰῶνιος, are used to express the eternal existence of God, the endless duration of the happiness of the saints, and the endless duration of the sufferings of the lost.”⁴

Such is the identical conclusion to which the laborious investigations of that eminent philological critic, Prof. Moses Stuart of Andover, led him, to wit: “If αἰὼν and αἰῶνιος do not signify eternity and eternal, in the Greek language of the Septuagint and New Testament, then what terms has this language to express such an idea? Will anyone venture to say that the sacred writers had no such idea as eternity and eternal? If he will, I do not think him worthy of refutation. But if it be admitted that the idea in question was familiar to them, then by what terms could they express it in the Greek language so appropriate as those which have now been examined?”⁵

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1. “The fidelity, the veracity, and the probity of Josephus are universally allowed; and SCALIGER, in particular, declares that not only in the affairs of the Jews, but even of foreign nations, he deserves more credit than all the Greek and Roman writers put together.” — Bishop Porteus. ←
 2. *Systematic Theology*, vol. iii. p. 871. ←
 3. Now appointed by Lord Beaconsfield to the Episcopal See of Jerusalem. ←
 4. *Confession of Faith*, p. 393. ←

5. *Exegetical Essays*, p. 278.↩

11. Other Scriptural Words Teaching The Eternal Duration Of Future Punishment.

WHILE αἰὼν and αἰώνιος are the principal and common terms in the New Testament to describe the ceaseless retribution of the wicked, they being employed no less than fourteen times for that purpose, yet several other of the strongest Greek words are also used to support and confirm their teaching. These are:—

[1] Ἄιδιός:¹ “always-existing, perpetual, eternal.”

This word is found but twice in the New Testament, in one of which instances it is applied to the abstract, essential idea of Divinity, viz., “his eternal Godhead,” Rom. 1:20; in the other to the “everlasting chains” (Jude 1:6) of “the angels which kept not their first estate.” If the wrath of God falling upon these sinning angels can visit upon them such an everlasting perdition of darkness, torment, and chains, let sinning and impenitent men, who have had and rejected the Christ, mark well the Apostle’s words, when he declares that these ruined angels “even as Sodom and Gomorrah” “are set forth” “for an example” to admonish us of that “vengeance of eternal fire.”

[2] Ἄσβεστος: “unquenchable, inextinguishable, eternal.”

Used seven times, in Matt. 3:13, Luke 3:17, and Mark 9:43, 45, and 44, 46, 48 (verbal form), and always of the unquenchable fire (τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον) which shall burn but not consume the wicked. In the latter passages, Mark 9:43, 45, 48, where that dirge-like refrain of our Saviour’s woeful warning is repeated three times: “where their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched,” it is impossible to conceive of any form of utterance that could give a more startling and awful intensity to the absolutely hopeless fate of those whom he is describing.

It is a noteworthy fact to be considered here also, that the Prophet Isaiah, 66th chap. and 24th verse, uses these identical words to describe the unremitting pangs of the condemned; and one still more significant, that Josephus, when discussing future retribution, employs precisely this same phraseology, viz., “to these belong the unquenchable fire, and that without end, and a certain fiery worm never dying, and not destroying the body, but continuing its eruptions out of the body with never-ceasing grief.”² From these remarkable coincidences it is evident that this was a current figure and phrase among the Jews, by which to set forth the everlastingness of future penalties.

And this important fact is of the greatest moment. For it shows us that our Lord did not let these expressions fall out accidentally. But that he must have fully considered their effect, knowing that they were in the precise line of Jewish thought. He knew in what sense the multitude would understand this current phraseology, familiar alike to Pharisees, Scribes, Priests, and the common people, and when he used it without condition or modification, he thereby gave it his solemn sanction as the veritable truth of God. This coincidence, then, which our Saviour must have known and consciously designed, gives to the import of this direful trilogy the utmost possible perspicacity, and places quite out of the sphere of all warrantable criticism that caricature of exegesis which would refer its tremendous warning but to the temporary and purifying fires burning in the vale of Hinnom.

[3] Οὐ τελευτᾷ.

Repeated three times in the above passages in connection with the unquenchable fire. The rendering in our version, viz., “where their worm dieth not” (σχωλήξ αὐτῶν οὐ τελευτᾷ), however justly expressive of the idea, yet is not literal.

Τελευτᾷ is the Greek verb denoting to end, and coupled with οὐ (not) the literal signification is simply does not end, i.e., “is endless.”

Οὐ τελευτᾷ is, therefore, the Equivalent of the adjective ἀτελευτήτος (later Greek), the strongest negative word to express eternity, and which, says PRESIDENT WOOLSEY, is “absolute in its meaning of endlessness.”

Οὐ τελευτᾷ is, then, the verbal, literal contradiction of those who strive against the voice of Scripture. For while they tell us that the worm of future remorse and despair will end, the Word of God expressly asserts in the very words that it will “NOT END.”

1. “A word which unquestionably means forever.” *Salvator Mundi*, Rev. 8. Cox, p. 99.↩
2. Works — Discourse on Hades, p. 608.↩

Section Two. General Statements Of Scripture In Which The Eternity Of Future Punishment Is Either Expressly Taught Or Necessarily Implied.

THE DOCTRINE in question does not rest alone upon the strength of individual words. It stands in no isolated position. But it is a fundamental constituent of Scripture. Accordingly, as a vein of gold underlying the rocks will here and there break out, so that everywhere we discover its shining traces, thus do we find the out-breakings of this great underlying truth on every page of revelation — disclosing itself to view in every conceivable position — and interweaving itself with every general statement and doctrine. No matter, then, how preeminently it may be set forth by any such particular terms as those we have just considered, yet it is not by any means dependent upon these individual words. Remove every one of them altogether, and this doctrine will still stand, upheld by the universal arch of Scripture. Even where the purpose is not to express it directly, it none the less exists by implication and necessary inference. “Moreover, apart from special passages, the general tone of the New Testament indicates the final and irreversible ruin of those who persist to the last in sin, and in the rejection of Christ the Saviour.”¹

1. Life The Only Stage Of Probation.

This is set forth constantly in such Scriptural passages as: “He limiteth a certain day, as it is said, TODAY, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts,” Heb. 4:7. Again, “Behold now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation,” 2 Cor. 6:2. “Afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully and with tears,” Heb. 12:17. “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved,” Jer. 8:20. So also Luke 19:44; Is. 55:6; Heb. 2:3; and our Lord’s answer to the question: “Are there few that be saved?” Luke 13:25, in which he declares that when once the “door is shut” many shall seek to enter in, but shall be driven away with unrelenting rigor.

Now, what possible import or meaning can these passages have, if they do not fix a limit to the day of grace, if they do not teach that this present life is the ordained time for repentance, and if they are not meant to warn mortals that the salvation of the soul is a business for this probationary stage alone, and that he who postpones it until death closes the door, will find it then eternally too late? We must either take this as their certain intent, or conclude that they were spoken by God with the deliberate purpose to deceive men, by declaring that repentance must be exercised within a definite time, when he did not mean anything of the kind.

But with God such double dealing is impossible, for the theory of benevolent deceit and pious fraud taught by Origen and the Restorationists is not to be tolerated for a moment. And consequently, these texts do prove, that after the present life the allotted limit of grace is passed, and in the doom the impenitent have voluntarily chosen, they must be content to abide. “Where is another state of probation described? What are the means of grace to be enjoyed in Hell? Is it the preaching of the Gospel? Is it the influence of the Spirit of God? Who preaches in the bottomless pit? or how shall the Spirit of God dwell with blasphemers and reprobates?”² If souls are to be converted and saved after death, then the stage of retribution is more ef-

fective for this purpose than the very one that has been appointed for it, viz., the stage of probation. In other words, those who postpone the work of repentance until after the appointed time is past, succeed better than those who attend to it during the set time. For the former all infallibly succeed, while the latter notably do not. But how wretchedly all this inverts and destroys the whole order of salvation!

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1. McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopadia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, vol. viii. p. 790.↩
 2. Stuart, *Exegetical Essays*, p. 47.↩

2. Unpardonable Sins.

THE DOCTRINE of the eternity of Future Punishment is involved in those Scriptural statements which characterize certain classes of sins as irremissible, not to be repented of, or overlooked by the Divine Majesty, and therefore, in their direful consequences, eternal. Such are said to be:—

[1] Deliberate, “willful” sins: “For if we sin willfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” Heb. 10:26.

[2] The “sin unto death”: “There is a sin unto death, I do not say that he shall pray for it.” 1 John 5:16. “This sin unto death is a sin leading to eternal death,” says Alford. The sin here referred to is evidently either a particular deed so atrocious and abominable as to deaden the conscience to all subsequent moral sensibility, or it is as Luther, Calvin, Beza, Lücke, and others have thought, that “abnegation of Christ, which bears upon it the stamp of severance from Him who is the Life itself.” The injunction of the apostle regarding it is stronger than it appears in our version. In the original it amounts to a prohibitory command against intercession for it, as an act of presumption.

[3] The sin of falling from grace. “For it is impossible for those... who have tasted of the heavenly gift, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance.” Heb. 6:4-6.

[4] The sin against the Holy Ghost. “Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.” Matt. 12:32. On this passage Olshausen¹ remarks: “The words of our Redeemer in Matt. 12:32, remain as an awful testimony to the fearful character of sin and its consequences.” And the profound thinker and theologian Martensen² has this exegetical note: “The word ultimo; (‘eternal’) is taken by some to mean eternal ages which have to be traversed, but which come to an end at last. This explanation is directly contradicted by that passage which speaks of sins which shall be forgiven neither in this world, nor in that which is to come. Upon this assumption we are

compelled again to say: *Ex inferno nulla redemptio* (For those once in hell, there is no deliverance).” So, also, the erudite and spiritual Von Oosterzee:³ “Even though we had only the words of Jesus concerning the sin against the Holy Ghost, the eternity of future punishment would be thereby, already, in principle decided; unless it be, without reason, asserted that this sin never was committed, and also never will be committed.”

If then, as gathered from these texts, there are sins for which the sacrifice of Christ shall no more avail; sins from which it is impossible to be renewed; sins for which even prayers are forbidden to be made; and sins for which there is neither forgiveness in time nor in eternity; what is this but an express declaration, and solemn avowal upon the part of the oracles of God, that the consequences of such sins are irretrievable, and that their penalties shall be visited upon those who incur them forever.

1. *Commentary on the New Testament*, vol. i. p. 460.↩

2. *Christian Dogmatics*, § 287.↩

3. *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. ii., *Restitution of all Things*, p. 808.↩

3. Finality Of The Future State.

THAT THE FUTURE STATE of the lost is beyond remedy is further proven by that large class of texts which directly assert the finality of condition after death.

Such are: “In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.” Eccles. 11:3. “It is appointed unto men once (ἄπαξ, once for all, i.e. finally) to die, but after this the judgment.” Heb. 9:27. Similarly, we are told, “The time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.” Rev. 22:10-11, where permanence and continuance in those moral states and conditions in which we enter the future world are unquestionably taught. They show that opportunity for repentance. and change will then be withdrawn, and that as death finds us so must we remain.

So, likewise, “the great gulf fixed” (χάσμα μέγα ἐστήριχται, “a yawning chasm, impassable, fixed forever.” Alford) which formed an insuperable barrier between Dives in torment, and Lazarus in Abraham’s bosom (Luke 16:26). Precisely of the same import are our Lord’s words to the self-hardened Jews: “Ye shall die in your sins; Whither I go, ye cannot come.” John 8:21. How are these to be interpreted in any other rational or intelligible way than as explicitly declaring that for those dying impenitent in their sins, there is to be no second probation; no subsequent choice; no remolding of character; no recasting of destiny; but a perpetual reaping of the harvest of judgment, woe, and misery. Such, also, is the sternly solemn lesson of passages like this: “Shall be cast out into outer darkness .° there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,” for as long as the faintest star of hope hangs in the sky, men do not thus give up all effort and abandon themselves to the devourings of remorse; but it is only when that thick horror of “outer darkness” becomes so heavy and impenetrable as to imprison Within its bars of blackness the soul forever and ever, that the shuddering sense of de-

spair creeps over them, and their incurable anguish vents itself in “gnashing of teeth.”

Even beyond all these passages, however, terribly alone in its crushing force stands that melancholy sentence uttered by Jesus of Judas “the son of perdition” — “Woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! it had been good for that man IF HE HAD NOT BEEN BORN.” Matt. 26:24. Prof. Maurice admits that his restoration theory stands aghast at these words, thus: “This is our version of our Lord’s saying in Matt. 26:24; the construing of them is difficult, but I have no other to offer. I receive them with awe and reverence, as the words of him who knows what is in man, and who died for man. Nor do I find them merely terrible, though they are so terrible.”¹ Plutarch tells us that such was the horror with which the Greeks regarded annihilation, that an eternity of misery would have been preferable; and certainly, if in the remotest future, although reaching over an indefinite series of ages, and prolonged throughout a succession of almost interminable cycles, there would yet come an end of suffering, and an admission to infinite and everlasting joys, the period of suffering would but be as a cipher to that eternity of blissful recompense. “Who counts the billows when the shore is won? who would cast back a moment’s regret at the all but interminable vista of cleansing agony, through which he had passed at last into the light of the beatific vision, and the raptures of the immortal home?”²

When, therefore, our blessed Lord, piercing with his infinite glance to the utmost bounds of the hidden, future, and summoning its everlasting scope within his vision, deliberately declared that Judas, who was to travel all along its endless course, would better never have been born, he meant that the furthest deeps of futurity contained no succeeding crown of bliss that was to balance his foregoing burden of misery, and accordingly that his punishment was to be unremitting. “Such an affirmation is ill compatible with the idea that the wicked should, after a punishment of any conceivable length, enter upon a life of bliss. The first moment of release would make amends for all suffering; throughout eternity they would praise God that they had been born.”³ To precisely the same effect is the comment of Dr. Hodge: “This [passage] at least is conclusive against the doctrine of universal salvation; for if, after any period of suffering, an eternity of happiness awaits a man, his being born is an unspeakable blessing.”⁴

1. *Letters to Dr. Jelf*, p. 27↩
2. Oxenham's *Eschatology*, p. 126.↩
3. *Duration and Nature of Future Punishment*, Rev. H. Constable,
p. 11.↩
4. *Systematic Theology*, vol. iii. p. 877.↩

4. The Apocalypse.

THE ENTIRE APOCALYPSE is simply a delineation of this identical truth, viz., the determinate end to which the fitfulness of all things in time is hastening, and the consequent impossibility of repentance and salvation in the future world. As it is the great finale of Scripture, the closing up of the volume of Inspiration, so it also fitly portrays the Grand Consummation. Its opening of the seals of mystery, its sounding of the trumpets of destiny, its pouring out of the vials of wrath, all announce that the final catastrophe has come. Its evolving and interchanging tableaux of world-wide upheavals, its kaleidoscopic views of the rapidly-shifting scenery of history, its portrayures of the Sublimely awful battles between the confederated legions of darkness and the gathered armies of the saints, its rising up of the beasts and devils and Apollyons of evil from the seas and deeps and bottomless pits of the infernal regions to foment discord and breed disasters upon the earth, its thunders and earthquakes and fierce Armageddons and falling Babylons, and rains of hail, blood, and fire, its blasphemous cries from those who “gnaw their tongues for pain” at the scorching agonies of defeat, and its shouts and songs of triumph from the victorious saints — all these are nothing less than an illustration that the last tremendous struggle between light and darkness is in progress. The issue has at length been joined, the two opposing forces that have been confronting each other for ages are now brought into decisive conflict, the battle rages all along the line, the righteous and the wicked, Michael and his angels, and the Dragon and his angels, Heaven and Hell, God and Satan, hurl upon each other the deadliest missiles of destruction.

And when, finally, there comes “a great voice out of the temple of heaven from the throne, saying, IT IS DONE,” Rev. 16:17; when the oath of the mighty angel, who, with one foot resting upon the sea and the other upon the earth, “sware by Him that liveth forever and ever that there should be Time no longer” (Rev. 10:6) is accomplished; and when the issue of the grievous struggle, raging all these weary generations, is decided by the

Great Rider upon the “White Horse” of Destiny, whose name is “KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS,” and who sweeps all in ruinous consternation before his sharp sword and rod of iron, “treading the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God,” Rev. 19:15; do not every feature and aspect of this awful carnage forbade FINALITY, and forbid as profane all supposition that the settled issue is to be reopened, and the fearful battle fought over again, and the same sad and terrible round of war and woe re-enacted time without end? “First, we have the Apocalypse of Christ in relation to the earthly churches; then the Apocalypse of his relation to the glorified Church; then the Apocalypse of his actual manifestation to the world in the battle of the Great Day of God Almighty, the establishment of his kingdom, and the investiture of the saints in their future sovereignties; and then the Apocalypse of the destruction of death and the grave, and the introduction of the final estate of a perfected Redemption.”¹ So another: “The seer of Patmos does not depict the full glory of the heavenly Jerusalem until he has made mention of the final decision of destiny for all who are living or have ever lived.”

As then the Apocalypse is the sublimest of all paintings, as it has the universe and all history for its theme, and as it has the Son of God for its Artist, so the canvas upon which it is drawn is nothing less than the immutable background of eternity. As its outlines are sketched, its colors set, and its figures formed, so will they abide while the days of heaven endure.

1. *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, by Joseph A. Seiss, D.D., vol. i. p. 23. ↩

5. The Last Judgment.

THIS ADDS yet another stone to the vast edifice of testimony in favor of the eternity of future doom. The Word of God specifically foretells a Public, General, and Last Judgment to take place at the close of Time. The particular New Testament word for this is κρίμα, κρίσις, κατακριδς, rendered “judgment,” “condemnation,” “damnation.” It is used seventy-six times to set forth the spiritual judgments of God upon sin, the judicial sentences of the Great Day, and the misery and despair of those to whom it. proves a “resurrection of damnation” (κρίσεως), John 5:29.

In confirmation of this sharply-emphasized truth, it is altogether superfluous to cite individual texts.

All through the vista of Scripture there looms up this tremendous vision of a Future General Judgment, an assize of all the generations of the risen dead, a judicial inquiry into “the deeds done in the body.” Its ominous flashes light up the prophetic proclamations with a lurid glare, it forms the background of the Apostolic preaching, and our Lord himself, with divine prescience, drew from behind the veil such a sketch of its tremendous acts, as will forever be unapproachable in majesty of thought and language.

And the awful sublimity of its pageantry; its earth and heaven-piercing trumpet blasts awaking the dead from land and sea; its terrible Judge from whom heaven and earth, affrighted, flee away; its formal opening of the dread books of destiny, whose tremendous record can neither be purchased nor refuted; its searching judicial processes into every secret thought; its portentous sentence, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41); and its folding up and sealing of the volume of Time in those intensely suggestive words: “And Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:14), — certainly were purposely designed to impress every bearer of the Word of God, and every beholder of these panoramic Apocalyptic sketches, with the solemn conviction that the mighty adjudications of that “Day of Days” shall be absolutely irreversible. “Punishment will be of eternal duration. The JUDGMENT

once passed, God holds out no hope beyond. Man now makes his choice of one or other of two conditions, each of which will be eternal.”¹

Throughout all of these incomparably grand and sublime delineations there is not a single feature, not a line, word, or syllable, which to a well-poised mind, resolved to give thoughtful heed to what God has unveiled for its admonition, can for a moment justify any other conclusion than that the judged shall then receive their everlasting “recompense of reward.” Indeed it is distinctly stated that these solemn adjudications shall be “eternal” in their effect. For St. Paul says that it is an “eternal judgment.” Heb. 6:2. And the SaviOur likewise, in Mark 3:29, warns men of the danger of this “eternal damnation (αἰώνιον χρίσεως).” It is the “DAY OF THE LORD” (2 Pet. 3:10), when his heavily taxed forbearance is at last Worn out, and He arises in his might, marvelously to vindicate his saints, and terribly to stamp down his enemies.

With the LAST JUDGMENT, the painful and incongruous commixture of good and evil, joy and sorrow, light and shade, — which is Time’s deep mystery, — is to come to an end; and the long-baffled sceptre of Jehovah is to attain complete ascendancy, so that “having put down all rule, and all authority and power,” and having crushed “all enemies,” and the “last enemy,” “under his feet,” he shall reign without let or hindrance everywhere, — the saints glorifying him with pure, loving, exultant worship, and the devils and condemned souls, by their woeful fate, glorifying that inflexible justice and that absolute sovereignty which now so terribly prove what they once scoffed at; viz., that “God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” Gal. 6:7. “Evil and good, which even on earth, though outwardly blended, are separated in their nature and essence, are to have an ultimate and complete separation. The DAY OF JUDGMENT (χρίσεως, separation) reduces to its ultimate principle that which appears here mixed together. At the great separation which is impending over the universe, every individual life will be attracted and governed by the power of that element to which it granted admission into itself. He who admitted the Spirit and light of Christ, Will be drawn by him into his kingdom of light; he who allowed the spirit of darkness to rule in his heart, will become a prey to the power of darkness.”²

Even the Restorationist, Prof: F. D. Maurice, is forced to admit the irresistible demand of human nature for a goal to this interminable commixture of good and evil in time: “Do we not require a redemption of all that is hu-

man from its changeable accidents: a judgment and separation? Do we not ask for a day in which light and darkness, life and death, shall never be mingled and confounded again?"³

The necessity of this final and irrevocable judgment, alike as a doctrine of Scripture, and as a postulate of the Moral Sense, is thus forcibly depicted by Dr. HODGE:⁴ "The full triumph of the kingdom of God is at the same time the completion of the decisive judgment of the world. It is carried out in the presence of heaven and earth by the glorified Christ, who summons all nations before his judgment-seat, and FOREVER determines the portion of each one, according to the relation of each to Him, and to His people. That the history of the world is a continued judgment of the world, is acknowledged by all who attentively and believingly observe it. But it is equally manifest that it can by no means yet be termed the Final Judgment, although it is unceasingly preparing the way for this last. Nothing less than such a FINAL JUDGMENT is the postulate of a living faith in the holiness and righteousness of God; and it is easily to be comprehended that the expectation thereof occupies a prominent place in the most diverse mysteries of religion."

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1. *Duration and Nature of Future Punishment*, Rev. B. Constable, p. 11.↵
 2. Olshausen's *Biblical Commentary*, vol. i. p. 430.↵
 3. *Theological Essays*, — Judgment, p. 134.↵
 4. *Systematic Theology, Eschatology*, vol. iii. p. 801.↵

6. The Scriptural Doctrine Of Hell.

THE SCRIPTURES reveal a place in which lost souls shall suffer torment. It is characterized by several names and titles, as follows:—

[1] “ΑΔΗΣ (Hades), the term in common use among the Greeks for the under-world, the realm of the dead in general. It comprised two apartments: the upper, the Elysian fields — the abode of the righteous, and the lower, Tartarus — the prison of the wicked. In the New Testament it bears to some extent the same signification. That is, it denotes the whole empire of the dead, i.e., disembodied spirits, in one apartment of which, Abraham’s bosom, or Paradise, the righteous, while indeed happy and rejoicing with their Lord, are still deprived of that full, blissful re-union with their bodies to take place at the resurrection; and in the other of which, the wicked are already reaping a bitter foretaste of their final doom. Hades occurs eleven times in the New Testament. In at least one of these instances it is equivalent to HELL, viz.,”And in hell (ἐν τῷ ᾄδῃ) he lifted up his eyes, being in torments.” Luke 16:23. The passages in Matt. 11:23 and Luke 10:15: “And thou,”Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell”¹ (ἐως ᾄδου), may also bear the same interpretation.

Likewise in Matt. 16:18, where it is said: “The gates of hell (πύλαι ᾄδου) shall not prevail against it,” there is a personification of the infernal powers in assault against the Church, which seems to refer the passage to hell, the empire of moral darkness.

[2] ΤΑΡΤΑΡΩΣΑΣ: A verbal form of the Greek word Tartarus, the lowest part of the infernal regions and the abode of the damned. It was a melancholy prison, shrouded in eternal gloom and darkness, where the wicked underwent the penalty of their crimes in unavailing toil and incessant pains (Soph. OEd. C. 1291, Phaedo of Plato, etc.). Here the unhappy Titans, having made war against the gods, and having been overthrown, were confined. This term is found but once in the New Testament: “For if God spared not

the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell (ταρταρώσας), and delivered them into chains of darkness.” 2 Pet. 2:4. As the apostle has employed this word without comment, and as the imagery he connects with it — “judgment” and “chains of darkness”— corresponds to its Grecian signification, it is fair to presume that he used it in its Grecian sense, which, it is well known, was that of a never-ending prison.²

[3] ΓΕΕΝΝΑ (ג' הוֹנֵה- the VALLEY OF HINNOM or TOPHET; GEHENNA: HELL). A deep ravine to the north of Jerusalem, wherein horrid rites of the idolatrous worship of Moloch had been celebrated by ancient wicked kings of Israel. The image of the idol having been made red-hot, children were placed alive in his arms, and devoured in the molten furnace within. The valley accordingly became desecrated by these barbarous and sacrilegious sacrifices, and was used as a place to deposit offal and everything vile and unclean from the city, and perpetual fires were kept burning in it to dissipate its vile odors. From these diabolical rites and revolting associations, the Vale of Hinnom (Gehenna) came to be considered as a symbol of the infernal regions, and thus Gehenna came into use as the name of the abode of the wicked after judgment. In this sense, i.e., the place of future suffering. of the wicked, it is the word in common employ in the oldest Rabbinical writings.

Gehenna is the specific New Testament word for HELL. It is found twelve times, always meaning “hell,” as it is correctly rendered in our common version. With but a solitary exception (James 3:6), in every instance it is our Saviour who uses it, so that “It is Christ’s word for hell,” thus reminding us of the lines of the poet Keble: —

“The Fount of Love
His servants sends to tell Love’s deeds.
Himself reveals the Sinner’s Hell.”

Our Lord thus forewarns men to “fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (γέεννα). Matt. 10:28.

Again: “If thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched (γέενναν, εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον).” Mark 9:43.

Again: “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” (χρῖσεως τῆς γέεννης). Matt. 23:33.

The other instances of its use are altogether similar. “In the New Testament the name Gehenna is frequently used to designate the place of punishment of the damned. Unlike the Hebrew Sheol and the Greek Hades, it is never found in any other signification than that of the place of punishment of the sinner after death.”³

1. The Nature Of The Punishments Of Hell.

The representations employed to depict the nature of the sufferings of hell are the most fearful known to language. It is called the “bottomless pit,” the “lake of fire,” the “blackness of darkness,” the “winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God,” a “great furnace” the “smoke” of which “darkeneth the air and the sun,” a “prison” fastened by strong “gates” or bars and “burning with fire and brimstone,” the inmates of which are “tormented day and night forever and ever.” It is further described as a “furnace of fire,” a deep and dreadful abyss, a place of incessant and eternal gloom, separated by an “impassable gulf” from light and hope, over whose woful confines brood alone the awful vultures of remorse, woe, and despair, by whose pitiless devourings the wretched victims are incessantly torn, and from out whose mournful caverns there arise cries and blasphemies, and sounds of “wailing and gnashing of teeth,” all of which, however, shall not again open or rescind the decrees of the now eternally closed and sealed book of judgment.

2. Is Hell Fire A Material One?

The Bible describes it as such, and much objection is taken by many to these strong Scriptural, material delineations of hell. They are declared to be too harrowing, shocking, and revolting to be endured by the highly sensitive and exquisite tastes of modern culture. And we are indignantly asked whether such loathsome tortures compose a part of the orthodox faith, and we are warned that such tenets will not stand before the gentle and refined spirit of the age. To all which we make this simple response to our inter-

rogators: Do you receive the Scriptures? For no language that we may employ can present these woeful horrors in a more direful form than that in which the Scripture has clothed them, and certainly the messenger of the Word cannot be charged with going beyond his message when he confines himself to the identical language and imagery in which the message has been delivered to him for proclamation by, the Holy Ghost. It is a fact, moreover, very worthy of notice, that the most direful portraitures of hell have fallen from the lips of our gentle, pitiful, and exquisitely sensitive Lord himself, and from that disciple whom he loved, the meek and angelic John, who, in his lonely isle, beheld those tremendous visions of its woes, which appall the beholder.

And yet that these descriptions may be figurative, we are not prepared positively to deny. Although the probabilities favor their literalness, yet on this question orthodoxy does not definitely pronounce. For it does not in the least touch the matter of their force. Whether literal or figurative, whether material or spiritual, they are none the less real. If figures are employed in Scriptures, they are only the colors which bring out in bolder relief the great outlines of truth. It must be remembered that images are but the copies of sensible objects, that similitudes are but the likenesses of substantial verities, and that figures are but the shadows cast from realities behind the veil. And we may rest assured, therefore, that when the reality itself shall appear, its shadow will not eclipse, but pale before it. An acute writer says that “a heartache may be much worse to bear than a toothache” — the soul is capable of more exquisite suffering than the body, and if it be acknowledged that God can justly punish the one, Where is the difference if he afflict the other? True, in a more refined age like the present, a cultured taste may forbid the coarse presentations of this doctrine, that have come down to us from times when all else was similarly blunt and coarse, but it is to be remembered that even refinement cannot banish reality, and it is well that we have a care, lest in the extreme of our volatilizing process, the great substantial truths underlying all these declarations escape us altogether.

“There is no doubt that the Holy Scripture requires us to believe in a properly so-called place of punishment, in whatever part of God’s boundless creation it is to be sought. That the different images under which it is presented [need not be] taken literally, will certainly need no demonstration; but it is, perhaps, not unnecessary to warn against the opinion that we have here to do with mere imagery. Who shall say that the reality will not infin-

itely surpass in awfulness the boldest pictures of it? The want of all in which the heart has here sought its heaven, must in itself constitute a hell of anguish... accompanied with the heart-rending sense that the opportunity for recovery from the consequences of past misdeeds is gone forever.”⁴

The language of Scripture, it must be admitted, favors the presumption of literalness. The punishment is to be for deeds “done in the body,” the wicked are to be raised and judged in their bodies, and our Saviour even specifically speaks of the “body” being “cast into hell” (Matt. 5:29, 30; 10:28), and the account of, the rich man in torment (Luke 16:19—31) sustains the same view. Instead, therefore, of surmises as to whether the fire shall be material or spiritual, how much better so to live in the fear of God as to escape it!

3. Are Hell Punishments Without Distinction In Kind Or Degree?

This would certainly be contrary to the universal principles of moral law, and to the very conditions in accordance with which the Scriptures declare that the General Judgment shall be administered. For it is written: “And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books” (Rev. 20:12); and yet again: “And they were judged every man according to their works” (v. 13). Now, if the judgment proceeds on the basis of every man’s individual deeds, it follows that the sentence will be in accordance with the measure of guilt, and that the punishment will be proportional. It is just this. that makes that great trial, as St. Paul calls it, “the righteous judgment of God” (Rom. 2:5), because, as he states in the clause which ensues as explanatory, “who will render to every man according to his deeds.” The words of our Saviour also give marked support to this view when he speaks of those who “shall receive the greater damnation;” and of those who are “twofold (διπλοῦτερον) more the child of hell” than others. That ST. AUGUSTINE held to degrees in hell is evident from De civ. Dei, xxi. 16. “It is not to be denied that future eternal fire, according to the different deserts of the wicked, will be lighter to some and more grievous to others, either through its burning with greater fierceness, or through a difference in the acuteness of sensibility.” We can, therefore, heartily endorse the words of BISHOP ELLIOTT: “Assuming the perpetuity of the punishment, it does not involve nec-

essarily an EQUALITY of suffering for the whole multitude of the condemned at any time, nor for any single soul throughout its whole duration.”⁵ So also Von OOSTERZEE: “Unquestionably the Scripture gives us reason for believing that even in the gloomy domain there are different degrees of future punishment (‘shall be beaten with many stripes — shall be beaten with few stripes,’ Luke 12:47, 48); but all that we know or conjecture thereto, impels us only the more with deep emotion to glory with the apostle in Him who delivered us from wrath (1 Thess. 1:10).”⁶

We may assume, then, that there are degrees in the punishment of hell, and in this fact there may be found much to mitigate the aversion with which many are inclined to regard this whole subject. Let us remember that God will only punish those who have disregarded his kindly, urgent, and repeated admonitions, to the standard that right and justice demand — no more and no less.

4. The Punishments Of Hell Endless.

In regard to the duration of the punishment of hell, it is sufficient to make the comment, that inasmuch as the condemnation to that dire abode itself is called “eternal” (Heb. 6:2), and the fire thereof is said to be “unquenchable,” and not even the “tip” of a finger dipped in water is allowed to “cool the tongue,” or alleviate the anguish of the sufferer; the conclusion is unavoidable, that its woebegone inmates have in their sinful madness gone beyond the reach of mercy’s ear, and must either call in vain for pity, or rage in impotent fury. For, over the inexorable gates of this “place” of “perdition” is engraved by the iron pen of vengeance this stern inscription: “THE BORDER OF WICKEDNESS, and the people against whom the Lord hath indignation FOREVER.” Malachi 1:4. As the Holy Scriptures thus specifically declare the existence of this dismal “prison” of retribution, and assert that the wicked shall, in pursuance of the decisions “of the great and dreadful day of the Lord” (Mal. 4:5), be cast therein, it becomes obligatory upon those who contend that its punishment will but be temporary to point out where in the Scriptures it is said that the inmates of this “bottomless pit” will ever be released again? But if the Scriptures put them into hell, and by not the remotest intimation take them out again, we have no other recourse than to leave them where the infallible Word of God leaves them, viz., “to dwell

with everlasting burnings” (Isa. 33:14). “It would be contrary to reason to allege that the doom of the Lake of Fire, which is of eternal duration for the devil, the beast and the false prophet, and also for the worshippers of the beast who are tormented with fire and brimstone, is yet of limited duration for the rest of the Wicked.”⁷

1. “The judgment of which our Lord here speaks is still future; a judgment not on material cities, but their responsible inhabitants — a judgment final and irretrievable.” — *Jamieson, Fausset, Brown, Commentary on Old and New Testaments*.↵
2. Keightley’s *Mythology*, Tartarus.↵
3. Chambers’s *Encyclopedia*, article *Hell*.↵
4. Von Oosterzee’s *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. ii. p. 790.↵
5. *New Testament Commentary*, vol. i. p. 157.↵
6. *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. ii. p. 790.↵
7. *Everlasting Destruction*, J. H. Bell, p. 121.↵

7. Purgatory.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC THEOLOGIANS divide hell into four compartments: 1. *Limbus Patrum*, the prison of the Old Testament saints; 2. *Limbus Infantum*, the abode of children dying without baptism; 3. *Purgatory*, in which Christians suffer the natural punishment attached to each sin; and 4. *Hell proper*, wherein the devils and lost souls are punished. The locality of Purgatory was thus supposed to be next to that of hell. The idea of Purgatory, i.e., a purifying fire after death, is of Parsic and Pagan origin. The temperate Oxenham fully admits this (*Catholic Eschatology*, p. 27): “The doctrine of Purgatory is distinctly laid down in the Republic and Georgias of Plato, who distinguishes between curable (ἰασίμα) sins, and the most heinous offenses of those who are incorrigible (ἀνιάτοι), and must suffer in an eternal Tartarus. It held a prominent place in the popular belief of ancient Greece and Rome, as also of the East.” Accordingly, in the earliest Christian history there is no mention of it. In the writings of TERTULLIAN, ORIGEN, and CLEMENT of Alexandria, it is only an indefinite and undeveloped theory, while CYPRIAN knows nothing of it. It grew out of the belief of a place intermediate between death and the judgment, and conjectural inquiries as to the condition of spirits during this interval. AUGUSTINE (*Enchirid. ad Laur.* § 68) thus discovers in 1 Cor. 3:11—15, a purifying fire after death (“ignem purgatorium post hac vitam”), and distinguishes between *capitalia crimina*, cardinal sins, whose eternal punishment can only be removed through the atonement of Christ, and *minuta peccata*, minor offenses, the temporal punishment of which is to be endured through this “second sacrament of regeneration,” the baptism of fire. Opinions wavered as to whether it was a literal fire, for how could that pertain to a bodiless spirit? — or but a spiritual fire, i.e., a torment of the soul through the thought or conception of fire. Bellarmine (*Purg.* xi. 10) writes that it is “A punitive fire, whether it be considered as a real, or metaphorical fire.” Dr. Newman seems to view it as an agony attempered with rapture; thus, in the *Dream of Gerontius*:—

“Softly and gently, dearly ransomed soul,
In my most loving arms I now enfold thee,
And o’er the pearly waters, as they roll,
I poise thee, and I lower thee, and hold thee;
And carefully I dip thee in the lake,
And thou, without a sob or a resistance,
Dost through the flood thy rapid passage take,
Sinking deep, deeper into the dim distance.”

Some of the fathers regarded it as only a torment of longing, the privation of the beatific Presence, and the consuming thirst of the soul for the deferred communion with God. The current conception of it now, however, would appear to be that of a material fire. GREGORY THE GREAT (604 A.D.) was the real inventor of the doctrine, for he first cast it into its present shape, and from his time it was no longer deemed a private opinion, but an article of faith. The Reformers protested against it as a Papal invention and error, and universally rejected it. In our day it has been prominently brought forward again by the opponents of eternal punishment, as in every way preferable to the orthodox View. Thus says O. H. Hall, D.D.: “The Roman Catholics have an alleviation which is of the utmost importance in the idea of Purgatory.”¹

So, also, Farrar: “Few can estimate the diminution of the horror of contemplating the future which Roman Catholics derive from the doctrine of Purgatory,” and in his Preface (p. 18) he actually declares that with a few modifications “there would be nothing in the doctrine of Purgatory which seems to me in any way inconsistent with Scripture.”

The objections to a purgatorial or purifying fire after death are:—

[1] It is absolutely without any Scriptural support. In no other case in the history of Christian doctrines has an effort been made to erect so momentous a tenet on so utterly intangible a basis. The texts ordinarily relied upon, as Matt. 12:32, 1 Cor. 3:11-15, 15:29, 1 Pet. 3:19, and a few minor ones, imply nothing of the kind. In the leading passage, 1 Cor. 3:13: “It shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is,” it is the work that is to be burned and not the doer of it, and therefore the reference manifestly is to the searching, testing inquiry of the final judgment, which shall try the deeds both of the righteous and the wicked. “The fire of St. Paul is to try the works, the fire of Purgatory the persons of men. St. Paul’s fire causes loss to the sufferer; Rome’s purgatory, great gain, viz.,

heaven at last to those purged by it. Thus this passage, quoted by Rome for, is altogether against, Purgatory” (Jamieson — Fausset — Brown).

[2] It is expressly contradicted by numerous specific passages, and the constant tenor of Scripture, which assert the immediate entrance of the righteous and wicked, at death, into their final abode. There is a difference of state, but not of place after the resurrection. The thief on the cross was to be, the very day (Luke 23:43) of his death, with Christ, not in the fires of Purgatory, but in the bliss of “Paradise.” And Paul would scarcely have been in such “a strait” (Phil. 1:23), “having a desire to depart and be with Christ which is far better,” if he expected for untold ages to undergo the “annealing” process of fire, before he could verily enter heaven.

[3] It substitutes another atoning agency for the blood of Christ. It gives back to his mighty triumphal cry, as the darkness of the crucifixion horror yielded to the light of victory, “It is finished,” the answer, No, it is not finished, the price of redemption is not fully paid, the cup of trembling is not drained to the bitter dregs. And to the evangelical proclamation: “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin,” 1 John 1:7, it makes reply, No! there are some sins which the blood of Christ does not wash away. To which the question very naturally occurs: If the sacrifice of the Lamb of God avails for mortal, why not for venial sins? if for the greater, why not for the less?

[4] It is pernicious in its practical effects. For its history shows that it gave rise to the belief that intercessory prayers, works of merit, and especially masses for the dead (*missae pro requie defunctorum*) could shorten the pangs of the sufferers, and therefrom the greatest abuses arose. It was used as a means of exciting the tender anxieties of the living for the repose of the souls of the departed, in order thus to extort large gifts for the support of the hierarchy. PETER LOMBARD (12th century) even hesitated not to declare that the rich thereby have a great advantage over the poor, Lib. iv. Dist. xlv. D, thus: “It can, however, be asserted that the larger means of the rich will purchase for them a speedier deliverance.”

And so Tetzels, with revolting coarseness, asserted in the age of Luther. What can be more immoral and unscriptural than to teach of Him Who “regardeth not the rich more than the poor,” Job 34:19, that the one who can procure the most masses can shorten the pains of his kindred; While the poor must leave his loved ones still “to tread the burning marl of that middle world of cleansing agony”? Is this the Church which Jesus, the friend

and comforter of the poor, established? Well then says the Church of England, Art. 22: “The Romish doctrine concerning Purgatory is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warrant of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God.”

As regards its application to the question before us, we remark that this doctrine does not touch the eternity of future punishment. The opponents of the latter are here artful and misleading. For they constantly assert that this theory is more merciful than the Protestant view, thus designing to leave the impression that Purgatory is a substitute for eternal punishment, whereas, they know perfectly well that such is not the case. Purgatory in the Roman Catholic system is a purifying fire for the righteous, and not at all for the wicked, who go at once to the final hell. Thus the Council of Trent, Sess. 25, Cat. Rom. i. vi. 3: “There is a purgatorial fire in which the souls of the pious are cleansed by suffering for a certain period, that an entrance may be opened for them into the eternal country, into which nothing defiled can enter.” How unjust, then, to make the inference that Purgatory excludes or modifies eternal punishment for those who die impenitent!

We have here, moreover, a curious confirmation of the fact that a cautious conservatism is the only steady movement forward after all. Ringing out the old, what sort of a new is it then, that is to be rung in? While professing to sound the trumpet of progress to a petrified Church, these pseudo-reformers really are leading back to the exploded theories of Romanism, and making great assumptions to be the leaders in a movement of modern thought which is to emancipate a dogma-manacled Christendom — lo, the issue is, that we are to be relegated to the darkness of the Middle Ages! Verily, if the resurrection of a long and deeply buried Purgatory, in whose molten billows the souls of the holy dead are to be steeped for ages before they can enter their heavenly rest, be all the benefit that this “party of mercy” are to bring us, it would seem as if there was scarcely adequate reason for all this disturbance, and for this great outcry against the long-cherished convictions of the Christian world.

1. *The Valley of the Shadow*. Eight sermons on Future Punishment, p. 156.↩

8. Annihilation.

ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR FORMS, in our time, of the opposition to future eternal punishment is the theory called Annihilation, or Conditional Immortality. Frantic efforts are made to find a basis for this View in certain perverted Scripture texts. But nowhere are the extravagances of an exegesis which is resolved to inject its preconceived Opinions into the sacred canon, more conspicuous, violent, and partisan than here. “The weakness of the general position and mode of argument of the advocates of the system in question becomes especially apparent when we come to examine, with any care, the particular texts which constitute their chief reliance.”¹ The words upon which they would rest their theory, in fact, only set forth in darker hues the future conscious misery of the wicked. Among the more prominent of such are:—

[1] ἈΠΩΛΕΙΑ, “perdition.” It is used twenty times, as in 2 Pet. 3:7: “Reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition (ἀπώλειας) of ungodly men.” The true meaning of this term is shown in such passages as the famous one, St. John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish (ἀοόληται), but have everlasting life.” Here it is evident that it denotes not the opposite of existence, but of blessedness. And that is its plain meaning in every instance. Of the same import is—

2. ὈΛΕΘΡΟΣ, “destruction,” as “Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction (ὄλεθρον) from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power,” 2 Thess. 1:9. Here it is plain that the penalty is one known to experience, for it is a destruction of the enjoyment of the beatific presence, and of beholding the glory of the Godhead. “Cast out from the presence of the Lord, is the idea at the met of eternal death” (Jamieson — Fausset — Brown). “Destruction is the Opposite of salvation, just as life is the opposite of death; so that as salvation is not merely continued life, neither is ‘destruction’ the cessation of life.

Each is both present and future, and.; the future of each is only the present in its blessed or its awful completeness.”²

The “destruction,” then, of the Bible is not annihilation of existence, but of blessedness. It is not the extinction of being, but of happiness. It is not the end of life, but of hope. It is perishing not in a natural or physical, but in a spiritual sense. It is “that state of separation from God in which all the higher faculties of human nature are working falsely and discordantly; in which the true end of being is discarded, and its true enjoyment lost; and in which there is, at last, the complete extinction, not of the soul’s being, but of its well being.”³

Still more emphatically is this seen in that startling phrase—

3. Ὁ ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ Ὁ ΔΕΥΤΕΡΟΣ: “The Second Death.”

“And Death and Hell (Hades) were cast into the lake of fire (ἡ λίμνη τοῦ πυρός) This is the SECOND DEATH.” Rev. 20:14.

A solemn distinction or contrast is here designed. (The first death is a death in time, the second is a death in eternity; the first death closes our eyes totally to the joys of this world, the second shuts us out forever from the bliss of the world to come; the first is a death of the body, the second is moral, i.e., the death of the soul. “As there is a second and higher life, so there is also a second and deeper death. And as after that life there is no more death (Rev. 21:4), so after that death there is no more life.”⁴ Rev. 20:10; Matt. 25:41.

“Death⁵ eternal is likewise named the second death, Rev. 2:11; 20:14, because it occasions the forfeiture of that other life which man was able to attain when the present life had been completed; besides it is called corruption, Jude 1:12; Matt. 7:13 3 everlasting destruction, 2 Thess. 1:9; not as though eternal death were an annihilation of substance, but because it is the forfeiture of happiness, and shame and everlasting contempt, Dan. 12:2.”

From the first death there is a resurrection again, but as widely removed as is time from eternity, so totally apart are the conditions of this death, which is emphatically, therefore, called the second.

“Death can only mean here the death of perdition. For such only can be cast into the lake of fire. The idea is this, that in place of provisional there now enters final perdition” (HENGSTENBERG on the Apocalypse, Rev. 20:14).

That by the second death annihilation cannot possibly be intended is shown from the words: “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, etc., shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death,” Rev. 21:8. If, then, suffering and the lake of fire are, i.e., constitute the second death, it is not annihilation, for we do not suffer infinite pains when we are annihilated. The second death, then, is a phrase designed to symbolize, in the strongest conceivable manner, that total destruction of happiness. that utter extinction of hope, and that impenetrable night of despair, followed by no morning dawn forever and ever, which characterize the prison and state of the lost.

Jonathan Edwards pertinently asks: “But how can those who are annihilated be said to be cast into fire, and to be tormented there, to have no rest, and to weep and wail, etc.? As well might these things be said of them before they were created.” And so an eminent living divine: “There is a ‘second death’ to which the wicked are finally consigned; but there is no evidence that it is annihilation any more than the first death. It is more particularly described as ‘the lake of fire and brimstone, Where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.’ It is further said of the inmates of that lake, that ‘the smoke of their torment ascendeth up day and night forever and ever.’ This does not look like annihilation.”⁶

Annihilation then lacks even the shadow of support in Scripture. As we see that even its chosen terms utterly preclude its hypotheses, so is it also negated by those multitudinous passages which assert the future life of the wicked; which declare a “resurrection of damnation;” and which expressly affirm the eternity of the pains of hell in the identical terms which assert the eternity of the existence of the righteous. Annihilation, therefore, is not scriptural, but is simply a vain assumption of anti-Christian reason. The guilty cannot thus easily escape the “long suffering,” and long accumulating storm of Divine vengeance, when at last it overleaps the bounds. But as they have sinned consciously, so shall they suffer consciously. “The Scripture no more teaches the final annihilation of the wicked than it does their restoration. Human reason would like in one way or another to abolish the dualism with which the history of the world closes. Let her do it on her own responsibility, but let her not falsify the Scripture, which teaches an eternal personal continuance of all personal beings, and a continuance principally conditioned by what they have become in time” (DELITZSCH).

The annihilation theory, moreover, is peremptorily forbidden by the facts of natural science. There is no such thing as the destruction of matter. The most powerful material forces that can be brought to bear upon any object of sense can but change its conditions, but alter its relations, but sever its bonds of affinity, but vary its mode of being. Fire, the most destructive of all material agents, can only volatilize and return back into primary elements; but it can never relegate one iota of matter into that nothingness from which creative energy summoned it. Nothing created is to be destroyed is one of the primary postulates of modern science. And how much more then must this be the case with moral entities, wherein the principle of consciousness, the likeness of God, and the sensible grasp of immortality make the indestructibility of life yet more absolute.

The inviolability of moral being in the Divine plan of government is thus strikingly illustrated by an able writer from God's treatment of the devil: "He has degraded his position in the universe; he has taken away the lustrous robe with which he was originally clothed; he has caused him to wither into the most awful and repulsive deformity; on every side the most tremendous pressure has been brought to bear upon him; but no force can touch the life."⁷

We may conclude then, that annihilation is annihilated both by reason and Scripture. God will take no retrograde step in regard to the immortal soul. He has made no such mistake in the moral creation as this would, admit. He will not blot out the noblest offspring of his Almighty wisdom and power. But before the soul stretches out a path of eternity; a path which, if anyone so choose, will go on from brightness to brightness, as age after age unrolls its volume of deepening glories. "What, in comparison with this, is the most aesthetic coloring of the hope of annihilation, with which a Buddhism, here and there arising among us, flatters itself and others? The Nirwana will in the long run just as little prevail against Heaven, as death can have the last word to say against life."⁸

1. Lutheran Quarterly — Annihilation Theory Examined, Rev. D. M. Gilbert, p. 684.↩

2. *Three Letters on Future Punishment*, by Dr. Joseph Angus.↩

3. *Life and Death Eternal*, Samuel C. Bartlett, D.D., President of Dartmouth College, p. 39.↵
4. Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iv. p. 735.↵
5. Hollazius, Schmid's *Doctrinal Theology*, Hay and Jacobs, p. 665.↵
6. *Post-Morten Accountability*, Rev. J. A. Seiss, D.D., p. 27.↵
7. *Ecce Deus*, chap. ix. Eternal Punishment, p. 219.↵
8. *C_hristian Dogmatics_*, Von Oosterzee, vol. ii. p. 790.↵

9. The Apocatastasis, On Restitution On All Things.

IT IS CONTENDED that there is a class of scriptural passages which point to a future restoration, a “restitution” of that blissful state of things which existed before the fall of angels and men, a new harmony of the moral universe by all souls being brought back into perfect reconciliation with their creator. The locus classicus of these passages is that of Acts 3:21: “Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things (ἀποκαταστάσεως).” So also it is said in Ephes. 1:10: “That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ.” And Col. 1:20: “And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself.” So, too, those passages where the saving purpose of God is declared to embrace the totality of mankind, and where Jesus is expressly said to be a universal Saviour. Such are, 1 Tim. 2:4: “God, our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved;” 1 John, 2:2: “He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world,” etc.

These passages, however, carefully examined and correctly interpreted, will be found to contain no contradiction to the general tenor of Scripture. Thus, when the apostle advances the doctrine of an Apocatastasis, it is not the restitution of all souls but of all THINGS, of which he speaks. For the reference of Peter is plainly back to the Word of our Lord himself in Matt. 17:11: “Elias must first come, and restore all things” (πάντα). What is meant, therefore, is not a universal salvation, but a bringing back or restoration of the primal order and harmony of creation; a re-adjustment of the disturbed constitution of the universe; a reestablishment of the true and original proportion and relation of things, by giving to God and law and righteousness that supremacy which Satan and disorder and wickedness have usurped. “For we know that the whole creation (πάντα ἢ χτίσις) groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now,” Rom. 8:22, but in that great resti-

tution not only will the laws and forces of the spiritual, but also those of the natural kingdom undergo a thorough renovation. Things have been in a sadly mixed and inverted state, and Christ now comes to restore the true and primal order, and to fulfill the promises and execute the threatenings. “spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began,” Acts. 3:21. And how this will be effected is shown by the word of the apostle in this very statement; for he warns every one to repent before that day lest he “be destroyed from among the people,” Acts 3:23; and it is depicted also in the dreadfully tragic sublimities of the Apocalypse, where we learn that this “restitution,” this glorious “παλιγγενεσία” (Tit. 3:5: regeneration), this golden age, which ever beckons with its enchanting pictures to cheer sorrow beset souls, will be ushered in by a process quite the reverse of a universal salvation, viz., by an infinite energy of justice and vengeance beneath which all rebellion shall be crushed, all opposition stamped in pieces, everything crooked made straight, and all iniquity eliminated from righteousness, hurled from power, and cast into the lake of eternal fire.

Such is the scriptural Apocatastasis, that blessed future era, when, by the universal prevalence of the Christian dispensation, and the complete re-enthronement of God and his holy will, Nature shall take up again her morning song of joy, “and the wicked shall cease from troubling” (Job 3:17), while “then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Matt. 13:43). This doctrine cannot in any wise therefore be so perverted as to embrace the restoration of condemned men and devils. To the same end comments that eminent biblical critic OLSHAUSEN upon all this line of passages: “The scriptural terms used to denote the resolving of the discord arising from sin into a harmony, ‘ἀπόκατάστασις τῶν πάντων,’ restitution of all things, ‘καταλλάξις’ reconciliation, etc., can, according to the doctrine of Scripture, never be applied to the spirits of the kingdom of darkness, nor to men who, by persevering and continued resistance to the drawings of grace, have become the subjects of that kingdom.”¹

Further, with regard to those general statements declaring the saving purpose of God, and the universal offer of the blood of Christ for the remission of the sins of the world, the condition, even though not mentioned, is always implied, that faith is indispensable, and that it is only to those who are “in Christ” that these glorious promises are applicable. “If certain conditions be specified as essential to secure certain results, then, Where the conditions are notoriously wanting, we do not presume that the results will fol-

low from the mere occurrence of the word all in a general proposition. The all must there be qualified by the understood condition.”² The Scripture is replete with instances of this character. For example, James 1:27, where “pure and undefiled religion” is explained to consist, in good and charitable works, it is not to be supposed that faith is to be excluded as unnecessary, merely because it is not mentioned. The apostle rightfully considers that he is speaking to Christians, and that its vital importance is so universally allowed that he need not there enforce it. So in John 3:16, where faith alone is made the condition of everlasting life, we are not to presume that because they are not mentioned there, therefore the sacraments can be omitted without detriment to salvation, when we know that they are strictly and positively enjoined in other Scriptures. And so in numberless instances. Any other mode of speaking than this would involve the inspired writers in a hopeless labyrinth of repetitions. All these large and general passages, therefore, present no difficulty whatever. Conditions could not always and over and over again be stated, which elsewhere have been insisted on so specifically that the sacred penmen knew full well that their readers would invariably presuppose them. Besides these unconditioned declarations are quite true on God’s side. With him there is no limit; his love is manifold and all-embracing; no language is too large, or free, or gracious, or ample, to express the outgoings of his fatherly love, Compassion, and good will to those whom he deems his own sons and daughters. But the limit, the condition, the fettering of the promise come altogether from man’s side, and from his treatment of the glorious offer. Thus, what is more infallibly true than that God “will have all men to be saved”? Why, most emphatically, does he assert that in Ezekiel, in the very sentence in which he remonstrates with men, lest they escape his loving purpose and die, viz.: “As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?” chap. 33:11. With impassioned earnestness he pleads with them, but for all that he will not save them forcibly; there still is a condition, and that is entirely their matter, viz., that they will turn unto him of their own free choice.

Any obscurity or apparent conflict arising from those passages in which the glory and bliss of the evangelical reign to come, for the time being so well over in the inspired speaker’s soul as to quite drown all painful realities, is, moreover, easily and altogether dispelled by the application of that rule of biblical criticism called the “Analogy of Faith.” Its very existence

shows that in reference to all Scripture doctrines there must be cases demanding its exercise. It teaches that there' is a coherence, a proportion, and a consistency between the various articles of faith. And just as, in a geometrical progression, if one term is wanting the ratio of the series will supply it, so that the proportion be unbroken, so, where, in the statement of any particular doctrine of revelation, other correlated doctrines, necessary conditions, and assumed premises are omitted, these are to be supplied by the Analogy of Faith. For this principle will not allow that the sacred writers contradict each other, or that the teachings of Scripture clash. Consequently the omitted statements are always to be supplied from other portions of the Word where they do occur, and thus the coherence, the symmetry, and the rotundity of Christian doctrine are to be preserved. Thus, if it be affirmed in one Scripture that the sacrifice of Christ came "upon all men unto justification of life," Rom. 5:18; but another text affirms that "he that believeth not the Son shall not see life," John 3:36; these declarations are not to be taken in an independent and absolute sense, whereby they would clash together, but they are to be correlated, and the one construed by the other. And thus, "defined by the critical rule of the Analogy of Faith, we find no contradiction whatever, but one resultant, clear, and harmonious statement, viz., that"all" of those who "believe the Son" shall come "unto justification of life." And so in all similar cases.

As to the passages relating to the descent of Christ into hell, e.g., "the preaching to the spirits in prison," 1 Pet. 3:19; and "the preaching of the Gospel to them that are dead," 1 Pet. 4:6, etc.; they are altogether too shadowy and mysterious to build any certain conclusions upon. But, as they are confined by their very terms to the antediluvian world, "the disobedient in the days of Noah, while the ark was a-preparing," who were ignorant of the salvation of Christ, they afford no basis whatever of hope after death for those who now, in the high noon of the Gospel, reject "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," 2 Cor. 4:6. Stretched to their utmost tension of inference, they can only throw a faint ray of light upon that darkest of questions, the salvability of the heathen, by suggesting the possible interpretation that between death and the sealing of the volume of time and history, i.e., during the interval preceding the general judgment, there may be an evangelical proclamation given them of that Jesus, the Saviour of the world, whose joyful day they had never known while living upon the earth.

We may, therefore, in so far as it is urged against the eternity of future punishment, dismiss the Apocatastasis as but a dream of the carnal imagination, but a myth of the softly voluptuous heart. Blessed and glorious in itself, and lighting up with a radiant glow all this darkened horizon of sin and sorrow, yet its entrancing splendors are not for those who wantonly reject their day of grace.

That it teaches a universal restoration is disproved by the fact, that not one divine word, fairly construed, points to any such thing; by the utter absence of passages teaching that there is any purifying virtue in suffering; by the absolute manner in which prescribed conditions of salvation are insisted upon; by the fact that “Scripture everywhere represents man’s state, Whether saved or lost, after death as irreversible” (Jamieson — Fausset — Brown); and by the further notable truth that this very predicted restitution is declared in distinct terms to be effected by a whirlwind of Almighty wrath sweeping the face of the earth, and purifying the moral elements by the everlasting banishment and destruction of the ungodly.

And such is the unanimous judgment of the Church, as *Hagenbach’s History of Doctrines, Eschatology*, vol. iii. 37, attests: “The fanatical notions of the Anabaptists, concerning the restitution of all things, were rejected by the Protestants. Roman Catholics were in almost perfect accordance as to the doctrine of the last things.”

We close the subject with a fine critique, by Von Oosterzee:³ “Even side by side with the expectation of an absolutely endless retribution for sin, faith can, may, and must retain the assurance of such a perfect victory of the kingdom of God, that God, in the fullest sense of the apostolic word, shall eventually be ‘All in all,’ 1 Cor. 15:28. THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF ALL AGES HAS DECIDEDLY REJECTED THE DOCTRINE OF THE APOCATASTASIS, even when it was presented to her in the most charming colors. It was as though the Church instinctively felt that thereby too little is, in principle, made of the holy and inflexible righteousness of God, yea, of the whole Scriptural mode of regarding the connection between the present and the future life; and in reality there is something in the apparent easiness of this solution of the world problem which awakens an involuntary suspicion... As against the single indications in the Word of God which appear to be in favor of the Apocatastasis, there stand others, and those more numerous, which lead to an opposite conclusion; while the principles of Hermeneutics teach that obscure and

ambiguous places must be explained by the light of such clear and unambiguous places, and not the reverse,”

There is not then the slightest break in the solemn and stately uniformity of Scripture teaching upon this tremendous theme. But, if there is any force in individual words, or any necessary implication in general statements and lines of teaching; in short, if language is at all capable of conveying definite thought; if every variety of expression directed to a specific end can make any conception clear whatever; “if, as collated in phrases, words have any meaning; if, as related to ideas, metaphors have any relevancy,” — then it must be an indubitable conclusion that the Scriptures teach the final and irreversible misery of those who neglect the issues of life and death in time.

To this same conviction was that brilliant enemy of the Gospel, Theodore Parker, brought, who, finding the proof too overwhelming for him to resist, was sufficiently honest to reject the Bible, rather than to arbitrarily compel it to quadrate with his a priori, preconceived opinions. For his testimony was: “To me it is quite clear that Jesus taught the doctrine of eternal damnation. I can understand his language in no other way.”

And at a similar conclusion, though from a totally different standpoint, arrives the learned Prof. Shedd, in the terms of whose decision we may fitly express the result of this branch of our inquiry: “It is impossible to eliminate the tenet from the Christian Scriptures, EXCEPT BY A MUTILATION OF THE CANON or a violently capricious exegesis.”

1. *Commentary on the New Testament*, vol. i. 460.↩

2. *Eternal Punishment* — *British Quarterly Review*, July, 1878.↩

3. Vol. ii. p. 808 — *Restitution of All Things*.↩

Part Three. The Voice Of Reason.

1. Reason And Revelation.

WITH THE OPPONENTS of eternal punishment nothing plays so large a part as reason. It is their constant Shibboleth, their universal solvent for all enigmas, their sovereign way of escape from every embarrassing statement of Scripture. Now, while we have no objection whatever to resort to this tribunal, still we are not quite ready to submit to the indiscriminate style in which it is sought to apply the scalpel of metaphysics to the settlement of these sacred issues. To deny the legitimate claims of reason is indeed superstition, but the divine witness in revelation has also its just scope and prerogative, and to deny this is sacrilege. In bringing reason to our aid in matters of revelation, there are two things always to be borne in mind: One, that it is no longer the unfallen and pure reason, and hence no more an infallible medium through which to distinguish the features of the truth; and the other, that revelation has largely to do with truths, not indeed contrary to, but above reason, and belonging to the sphere of heavenly mysteries and supernatural realities.

“For what,” says Lessing, “would be a revelation which reveals nothing?” If we find there no landscapes, and heights, and worlds and firmaments of truth, hidden from the ken of Reason, what have we gained by it, and what is there in it supernatural and divine? Lord Bacon therefore says: “We must enlarge our mind to the magnitude of Divine Mysteries, not limit them to the narrowness of our understanding.” So also Pascal:¹ “The last attainment of reason is to know that there is an infinity of things that surpass it. It is but feeble, if it has not gone so far as to know this. If we submit ev-

everything to reason, our religion will have nothing in it new or supernatural;” and then he adds with one of his characteristic master-touches, reminding us of the fine irony of St. Paul: “There is nothing so in conformity with reason as this disavowal of reason.”

In illustration of these axiomatic truths, we have only to ask what would become of the fundamental Christian doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Atonement, and the New Birth by the Holy Ghost, if we were required, as with Eternal Punishment, to cast them into the retort of Reason, heated by the fires of malignity, and then be content to put up with the resultant? We would indeed soon have “nothing new or supernatural” left.

The philosopher Locke makes an application of these general principles precisely pertinent to our subject, thus:² “In reasonings concerning eternity, or any other infinite, we are apt to blunder, and involve ourselves in manifest absurdities. But since God in giving us the light of reason has not thereby tied up his own hands from affording us, when he thinks fit, the light of revelation in any of those matters; revelation, where God has been pleased to give it, must carry it against the probable conjectures of reason.” These words strike the keynote of the controversy. They define with justice the respective bounds and prerogatives of reason and revelation. Reason may pass its judgment upon the genuineness and sufficiency of the evidences-of a revelation. It may harmonize its several statements, and give to them a scientific form; but it is not competent with its “probable conjectures” to pass an a priori sentence rendering nugatory the very subject-matter which the divine message contains. When it has once settled the question, “Has God spoken?” then reason’s task is done, and it must be silent and reverently hearken to the celestial proclamation. But for reason then to attempt a compression of these eternal verities within its finite molds, and reject all that is too vast and wonderful to quadrature with its narrow and defective conceptions, is a presumption altogether intolerable. When the light of the window that opens to the empyrean above falls upon us, that which comes in by the side-windows pales away. Coasting by the borders of the sea of truth, reason may be a valuable beacon shining from the shore, but once arrived in mid-ocean. with nought but infinities all around us, we, can be guided by nothing but the polar star of revelation.

These cardinal principles are so essential to Christian thought, that it ought to be quite unnecessary to urge them. Every believer knows that revelation is simply that “higher reason” of which Fénelon speaks; and the

plainest disciple understands in what sense AUGUSTINE says, that “Faith makes Christians, but Reason makes heretics.” When reason cannot weigh in its balances all the deep outgivings of the everlasting Mind, if it seek then to handicap them, it is perverted from its legitimate sphere to an ally of infidelity.

And applying these principles to the question before us, what shall we say to such utterances as these coming from those claiming the title Christian:³ “Even if it be conceded that, according to the most probable interpretation of the texts supposed to contain the doctrine of endless punishment, they do contain this doctrine, it may still be asked, — Does this decide the question? Scripture may be wrong. But no faculty is less likely to err than the moral faculty.” And another: “Is any man, the basest worm that ever crawled, to be punished by endless suffering? Now, my answer is, that the moral presumption” against the affirmative is immeasurably too great. to be overcome by any amount of evidence for it. No revelation can be established upon such evidence that it shall not be afterwards open to fatal attack upon intrinsic grounds.” To such startling propositions, may we not well respond: “To settle the question whether endless punishment is possible, before we come to the Scriptures for investigation: and then to search them merely to see whether we cannot find something to confirm our views, or to remove the difficulties which the Bible throws in our way: is virtually to renounce the Scriptures as our guide, and to set up our own conclusions and reasonings in the place of them. . . The’ question is not, what this or that individual may wish or desire to be true? but,”What have the sacred writers taught? This is surely to be made out by philology, i.e., by an investigation conducted agreeably to the principles of language; not by philosophy, i.e., by a priori speculations about the nature of God’s moral government.”⁴ It is against such a preposterous abuse of Reason and encroachment upon the rights of Faith and Revelation, that we wish here to enter our most solemn demurrer. It is as sophistical as it is sacrilegious. It does not even allow to the sacred oracles that coordinate authority which Ralph Waldo Emerson ascribes to them in his”Problem“:—

“Out from the heart of Nature rolled
The burdens of the Bible old,”

but it subjects revelation absolutely to the supreme and unquestioned dictum of reason. Assuredly, it is too bad to have to refute arguments of this kind from those who have any manner of regard for the Christian system. And yet, we are painfully compelled to testify that it is upon such untenable and skeptical defenses as these that too many writers of this class fall, when the Scriptural testimonies press too hardly upon them.

Reason, however, rightly questioned upon this grave subject, gives back no discordant answer with Christianity. But her intuitions, as well as her deductions from experience, bring their support to confirm the Scriptural teaching, and go to establish the same result, viz., the hopelessness of future doom. This we shall now see.

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1. *Thoughts*, chap. xiv. p. 277.↩
 2. *Essay on the Human Understanding*, book ii. 257, and iv. 171.↩
 3. Rev. R. Jellet, *Contemporary Review*, April, 1878.↩
 4. Stuart's *Exegetical Essays*, p. 208..↩

2. Natural Religion Affirms Eternal Punishment.

A REMARKABLE PROOF that the tenet of eternal punishment does no violence to reason, but contrariwise finds support in it, arises from the fact that it was commonly believed and taught by the ancient Pagan world. Those who had no revelation yet derived this truth from the light of Nature alone. It is a precept of the Natural Religions. Among the ancient Egyptians this doctrine found impersonation in the deity Osiris, who is represented in their works of sacred art as sitting upon a judgment seat in the realms below, allotting their respective destiny to departed spirits. Having weighed each heart in his inexorable scales, he thereupon sent the wicked to regions of perpetual darkness, but the virtuous, having first been permitted to drink of the water of immortal youth, which distilled like dew from the tree of life eternal, were admitted to the realm of light and the gods.¹ The faith of the Greeks and Romans on this point is altogether indisputable. Tartarus, their fabled place of punishment in the future world, the prison in which the Wicked suffered for their misdeeds, was, according to their system, characterized by “eternal gloom and darkness.”² The very names of the ‘rivers, whose mournful tides washed’ this dark abode, as Acheron, river of “eternal woe,” Pyriphlegethon, stream of “fire,” and Cocytos, river of “weeping and wailing,” indicated this inexorableness in a manner quite as strong as that of any express terms.³

That this unrelenting rigor of the decrees of justice was an underlying feature of the Greek and Roman mythological systems is demonstrated by that eminent scholar of classical antiquities, Prof. Tayler Lewis, thus: “The moral aspect [of classical mythology] may be seen in many of the epithets of Zeus employed by Homer and the Grecian tragic poets. It is strongly manifested in that whole department of mythology which has reference to the infernal deities. It appears in the striking personifications of Nemesis, of Adrasta, or the Inescapable, and of the ancient Themis, who is ever repre-

sented with the sword and scales, and sitting at the right hand of eternal justice in the heavens. It shows itself in the mythology of the Destinies, and in that Grecian doctrine of Fate, which had far more the aspect of a stern moral decree, than of a physical necessity. Moipa, as well as the Latin *Fatum*, was the positive divine decree, the inexorable law or *Αιχμή*, inflicting wretchedness, and, coming, down with immutable and unrelenting severity.”⁴

But strong as are these inferences, we have, in addition, testimonies of the most direct character. Thus Josephus, to whom, as a theologian, the religious tenets of the Pagans would be a peculiarly interesting study, tells us that “the Opinions of the Greeks allot to bad souls a dark and tempestuous den, full of never-ceasing punishments; whereby the vehement inclinations of bad men to vice are restrained, by the fear and expectation, that although they should lie concealed in this life, they should suffer immortal punishment after death”⁵

Such, also, is the testimony of Justin Martyr: “When we assert departed souls to be in a state of sensibility, and the wicked to be in torments, but the good free from pain in a blissful condition, we assert no more than do your poets and philosophers.”

Accordingly, we find the doctrine of eternal punishments directly stated in the Greek and Latin writers. Thus, Cicero speaks of a “*sempiternum malum*,” and Lucretius of a “*mors immortalis*.” And Plato even gives a particular account of the manner in which this doom is executed in the case of those incorrigible sinners, who are adjudged into the gloomy fastnesses of Tartarus. He says: “As soon as the dead arrive at that region whither his daemon carries each, in the first place, those who have led an upright and a holy life, and those who have lived otherwise are judged... But those who appear to be incurable on account of their enormous offenses, who have committed either many and flagrant sacrileges, or many murders in contempt of justice and the law, or any other similar crimes, these a suitable destiny precipitates into Tartarus, whence they never at any time come forth.”⁶ Similar statements are found in Timaeus, AEschylus, Pindar, etc.

To this prevalent belief of heathen antiquity a distinguished historian of Greece thus testifies:⁷ “Great offenders are doomed to a kind of suffering most in accordance with the character of the infernal realms, to the torment of unavailing toil, and never satisfied longings. A more tremendous prison, removed as far below Hades as earth is from heaven, was reserved for the

audacious enemies of Jupiter, the abyss of Tartarus, fast secured with iron gates and a brazen floor.”

Bishop Butler confirms the same statement, viz.,⁸ “Gentile writers, both moralists and poets, speak of the future punishment of the wicked, both as to the duration and degree of it, in a like manner of expression and of description as the Scripture does. Reason did, as it well might, conclude that it should finally, and upon the whole, be well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked.”

Prof. Stuart corroborates this fact thus:⁹ “Or, if we insist still on what the light of nature can do, then let us go to those who enjoyed it, and see how they decided in relation to the question before us. Did not the Greeks and Romans hold to the eternity of future punishments? Notoriously they did... The heathen had no apprehension of deliverance from Tartarus. Tantalus, Sisyphus, Ixion, and all others sent there, were doomed to endless punishment.” So indisputable was this that Celsus, the pagan philosopher, who in the second century composed a treatise against Christianity, refuses to acknowledge this truth as a discovery of revelation; but asserts that “from of old it was the universal belief that the wicked shall suffer endless pains.” The Egyptian and Persian philosophical and religious systems were likewise framed upon these same principles, just as they also constitute an integral part in the modern Mohammedan faith.

Assuredly, then, there can be nothing repugnant in this doctrine to the moral intuition of mankind, if, without any other light than that which shone forth from the temple within, the race yet felt constrained to acknowledge and adopt it! But rather does this affirmation of the eternity of future punishment by the non-Christian religions of antiquity, prove that it is one of those generic truths going down to the foundations of human thought — one of those necessary ideas irresistibly demanded by the rational constitution of man — one of those great luminaries of natural religion, whose rays, even amid all the benighting effects of the fall, have still not altogether vanished from the sky. And this significant fact should imbue with becoming modesty those who are wont so confidently to obtrude what they unwarrantedly assume to be the innate voice of reason upon this problem, but which really is their perverted view of it. For this admitted intuition of the heathen world demonstrates clearly that the verdict of the universal consciousness sustains the view propounded by revelation.

1. *The Religions before Christ*, Edmund de Presensé, p. 33.↵
2. Keightley's *Classical Mythology*, p. 29.↵
3. *Manual of Mythology*, Greek and Roman, Norse, Old German, etc., art. Hades, p. 59.↵
4. *Introduction to Grecian and Roman Mythology*, p. 15.↵
5. *Wars of the Jews*, book II. chap. viii.↵
6. *Phado*, chap. lxi.↵
7. Thirlwall's *History of Greece*, vol. i. p. 224.↵
8. Butler's *Analogy*, chap. ii.↵
9. *Exegetical Essays*, pp. 45, 114.↵

3. Divine Justice No Less Infinite Than Divine Love.

THE LOVE OF GOD is commonly adduced as the strongest presumption against a doom to everlasting woe. It is contended that such an unrelenting sentence stands opposed to this brightest and most blessed of divine attributes. But we are necessitated to survey the Deity under two aspects: "Love can be strong and severe, even while it is sad and pitiful." There is a dark background of wrath, as well as a bright forefront of mercy. God is a Sovereign and a Judge as well as a Father; and there come crises when it would but be weakness in him not to be inflexible in severity. The safety of the universe throughout unceasing ages demands that God illustrate everlasting justice upon sinners, as well as that he exhibit infinite love. There is a moral law, a system of rewards and retributions, which has its terrestrial expression in human governments; and as the safety of society here depends upon the firmness of its administration, so is it throughout immensity and eternity. The archangel Michael, in the famous painting of Guido, crushing the dragon under his feet, and standing puissant in triumph as the unwavering Vindicator of right, and the unflinching avenger of wrong, is a sublime-symbol of this immutable law. This scene fitly represents the "backbone of the moral universe." And to deny this truth, and to seek to view God in the aspect of love alone, is to ignore the most patent facts everywhere circumventing us.

RUSKIN forcibly depicts this very mistake as exposed by the analogy presented by the sternness of nature. "I understand that as the most dangerous, because most attractive, form of modern infidelity, which, pretending to exalt the beneficence of the Deity, degrades it into a reckless infinitude of mercy, and blind obliteration of the work of sin; and which does this chiefly by dwelling on the manifold appearance of God's kindness on the face of creation. Such kindness is, indeed, everywhere and always visible, but not alone. Wrath and threatening are invariably mingled with love, and in the

utmost solitudes of nature, the existence of hell seems to me as legitimately declared, by a thousand spiritual utterances, as of heaven. It is well for us to dwell with thankfulness on the unfolding of the flower, and the falling of the dew, and the sleep of the green fields in the sunshine; but the blasted trunk, the barren rock, the moaning of the bleak winds, the roar of the black, perilous Whirlpools of the mountain streams, the solemn solitudes of moors and seas, the continual fading of all beauty into darkness, and of all strength into dust, — have these no language for us? We may seek to escape their teachings by reasonings touching the good which is wrought out of all evil, but it is vain sophistry. Gerizim and Ebal, birth and death, light and darkness, heaven and hell, divide the existence of man and his futurity.” In this unrelenting sternness, nature but images forth one aspect of the Creator, and nothing conduces more to clothe him with that solemn and everlasting grandeur before which mortals bow with awe. Infinitely kind and compassionate to his creatures, caring for their most trivial wants, noting their every sigh, and marking their every tear; resorting to the most unprecedented and amazing means to save them, and in the unfathomed reaches of his love, sparing not even his only Son as the purchase of their redemption; yet all this but prepares us for a proportional display of the other side of his character.

When love has done its utmost, when all kindly means prove unavailing, when not the least spark of good in the soul can be found to be enkindled into a regenerating flame, then Justice steps upon the scene. And now let angels and men veil their faces from the awful issue. For, to just as great and unbounded depths as love has gone, will the infinitely terrible, pitiless, and destroying sword of justice now pierce. For the measure of love is ever the measure of hate. The capacity for, and the exercise of, the one are the rule for the administration of the other.

It is only a morbid sentimentality, entirely at variance with what we see interwoven with the whole web of existence, which prompts one to ignore this essential condition of things. A vacillating prince in a time of impending revolt, or an irresolute judge in the face of defiant criminals, is not a friend, but the worst enemy society can have. To compromise, then, is no exhibition of the genuine quality of mercy. It is confession of weakness, and worse — it is deliberately “unchaining the tiger.” “On the whole,” says CARLYLE,¹ “we are not here altogether to tolerate. We do not tolerate Falsehoods, Thieveries, Iniquities, — we say to them, Thou art not tolerable! We

are here to extinguish Falsehoods, and put an end to them in some wise way. Tolerance has to be just in its very wrath, when it can tolerate no longer.” And herein lies the necessity of the irrevocableness of future judgment. A system of terminable punishments would but invite a series of interminable transgressions. The purposes of God would all be set at naught. His sovereignty as judge of all the earth would be impeached. He would no longer hold the reins as in very deed Governor of the worlds. His final ascendancy over evil would be postponed forever. Consequently, there must be as infinite energy, and as everlasting resolution in his inflexible stamping out of sin, as there is in his immutable faithfulness to the righteous.

There can, then, be no weakening in the unbending decisiveness of Him who sitteth on the throne, which will not send a shudder of dislocation through the moral bonds of immensity. Should this ever come to pass we would realize the exclamation of the appalled Psalmist: “All the foundations of the earth are out of course” (Ps. 82:5). No direr calamity could befall the whole creation, than just that God should, as some so much desire, abandon the attribute of justice, and allow it to be wholly merged in a love, gentleness, and mercy, that know no exhaustion forever. This never can be until the quality “moral” is eliminated from the constitution of things. “Do not our State governments immure criminals for life? May not punishment continue as long as sinning? Why, then, may it not be true that the Supreme Governor of the Universe may immure in the State Prison of the Universe, such as cannot be permitted to go at large without jeopardizing the order, harmony, peace, and happiness of the universe?”

And if eternity be the point objected to, the reply is, that duration is a secondary consideration to origin. This really is the hardest and most inscrutable of all problems. It is this which has given rise to that dualism — the idea of an eternal principle or spirit of evil opposed to that of good — constituting the basis of so many religions, as the Persian Ahriman, the Spirit of Darkness; the Hindu Siva, the Destroyer; and the Northern Odin, waging a world-wide and unceasing battle with the wrathful storm-spirit of the elements. This conception of Evil as a twin-contestant for the throne with God himself, — and originating all the evils of time — as expressed in the Manichean heresy, and illustrated by the sharp internal conflicts of St. Augustine, was also one of the most virulent obstacles in the way of the primitive Christian church. And in all these cases, it is nothing else than a grotesque attempt to escape from the intolerable proposition that God

should have been the primal cause of evil. The continuance of evil, physical and moral — guilt and pain — is not, therefore, as great a difficulty as its beginning. If there be a dilemma, it lies right here. For, it is not by any means so great a wonder that when evil was once permitted to enter, it should be allowed to stay, as that, when it was not in existence, its hideous form should have been allowed to appear. If, in substance, says an eminent divine,² in the beginning of things, one philosopher would have told another that God was about to create a world in which sin, hate, war, bloodshed, blasted hopes, broken hearts, despair and madness should abound as we see them here, the latter would have replied, “Impossible, a Being supremely holy, good, and pitiful can never permit this.” But a God of Love did create and allow just such a world, and hence the event has dispelled the objection. And nothing more than such an illustration demonstrates the complete impotency of reason to say what God should or should not do in view of his moral nature.

But this we can herefrom infer, that since the origin of evil and its apparently baleful entrance into our world. evince no antagonism to the qualities of goodness and mercy; so, also, when the event shall have shown that divine justice demands the unceasing punishment of the ungodly, and their eternal separation from the rewards of the righteous, — there will be still less difficulty in seeing that it but harmonizes with those eternal and infinite attributes of Love and Justice, which have their accordant spheres in His nature, who is the sum of all perfections.

1. *Heroes and Hero Worship*, p. 188.↩

2. Saurin — *Sermons*, vol. ii. p. 230.↩

4. Eternity The Contrast Of Time.

ETERNITY ITSELF stands opposed to the temporality of its punishments. The idea of eternity is in vivid contrast to that of time. PLATO finely expresses this by the remark: "Time is the moving shadow of eternity." Here all things, all conditions, all destinies are shadowy, and hence fitful, changing every hour; there they will be substantial, real, and hence determined and fixed. Here there is conflict, revolution, repentance, conversion; there the battle will be over, whether lost or won, — the even tenor of peace ensues, and an eternal progress will mark the state of being. Just as the upheaval, violence, and distorted developments visible in nature indicate an incomplete and disrupted frame in the present, which must not always be, even so is it with the moral creation — the soul. In eternity its uncertainties will be decided, its misgivings will be calmed, its sowing will have ceased, and it will enter upon the harvest of its deeds. This is one of the most clearly identified of our innate ideas. The only sense in which we can conceive of eternity as a notion or entity distinct from time, is that its conditions are eternal, as contrasted with the conditions of the present, which are temporal. To say that all things will just go on in the future as in the present — that the same opportunities will be held out, and the same distorted, jarring existence move on in these sad, old ruts — is simply to negate eternity altogether, and to say that time will always continue.

Conscience, too, here lifts up her authoritative voice. And her testimony in the hearts of all mankind is that time is the stage of probation — eternity that of retribution. She forewarns men that their future destiny is being molded here; that while time lasts they can change their course, tear down their building and reconstruct it, leave off their sins and lead a new life; but that, when once their feet touch the eternal shore, that opportunity has passed never to return. This is amply certified by that feeling of immeasurable awe and mysterious dread with which men everywhere and in all times

have contemplated the approach of death. The secret of this feeling simply is, that conscience, the deep intuitive voice of man's moral nature, forewarns him of that Scripture truth that "God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness" (Acts 17:31). Few are so hardened that they must not tremble when they think of their sins. An involuntary conviction holds universal seat in the human breast that wrath and punishment will one day be visited upon sin by the eternal Judge. "Conscience whispers that retribution will come. We may stop our ears; we may drown her voice with music or with shouting; all these expedients are but temporary. When every artifice is wearied out, and every shout which overpowered the still small voice has ceased, then comes the tremendous whisper again. In our lonely recesses, in the dead of night, on the bed of sickness, in the hour of danger, — conscience whispers, with an accent that penetrates the inmost recesses of the soul, 'There is a God who judgeth the earth'—'God is angry with the wicked every day.' Where, O where, is an asylum from this still small voice, more terrific than the seven thunders which shake the throne of heaven?"

Take away this probationary character of the present, to which conscience thus testifies, and the most essential significance of time is destroyed, and the Creator's purpose in placing us here becomes altogether inexplicable. "This¹ time stands in contrast with the true time. This time means a season of conflict and restlessness, during which the forces of life are continually in collision with each other. The true time expresses for the moral development of life its undisturbed advance toward the goal of eternity... In that kingdom will be an endless progress, a progress in infinitum, an advance εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων."

If this distinction be not preserved, and if the probationary, undetermined stage be projected into eternity, then all the unsettled, conflicting aspect of time will be transferred to the future, and it loses the very marks that identify it as a totally different state of being. Then we are still not yet arrived upon the mighty, oceanic calm and rest of existence; then God is not more in the ascendant where and when he rules in person than he is now; then evil is still not finally put down; then the fundamental opposites disappear between here and there. If also it be admitted that a second probation is allowed in eternity, what is to prevent a third and so on without limit?

“But say I could repent, and could obtain
By act of grace my former state; how soon
Would height recall high thoughts, how soon unsay
What feigned submission swore! ease would recant
Vows made in pain, as violent and void.”

And is not such a turbid commixture of temporal conditions in the eternal world, contradicted by every voice of our inner consciousness?

It must be remembered too, that, if such a view he once admitted, and if the wicked can invert their destiny in the future, the same line of reasoning constrains to the inevitable conclusion that the condition of the righteous will not be fixed and eternally secure. But however bright their purity, however confirmed their holiness, and, however ecstatic their enjoyment of the beatific vision, yet they are not safe from the possibility of fall; and in the long succession of ages the time will come when they will be struggling in the old mire and agony of sin and sorrow and misery again. Thus sings the poet Keble:—

“For if the treasures of thy wrath could waste,
Thy lovers must their promised heaven forego.”

This sense of insecurity, the very one from which Christians hope to escape when they enter the heavenly rest, will necessarily brood like a cloud of ominous dread over the sky of the saints, imparting its deadly chill to all their raptures. To show how strict logical consistency impels to this result, Origen, the first and greatest restorationist, included in his system the ever and anon recurring lapse of the saved, as the natural swing to the other side of the same pendulum of mutation which delivered the wicked from perdition. We hardly feel that our readers will be quite satisfied with the Rev. Cox's (restorationist) escape from this dilemma. “If the punishment of the wicked is not to last forever, what guarantee have we that our felicity will last forever? To that question I reply: Would you then have the vast majority of men damned in order that you may feel quite sure that your timid soul will ‘sit and sing itself away in everlasting bliss?’ If your soul is capable of no higher flight than that, is it worth saving?”² According to this we are to renounce life to accommodate those who are too indolent to secure it. But all this is intensely unreal, confused, and visionary. Eternity is the goal; change, inversion, and temporal states are eliminated from its conditions.

There is an eternal life and movement, but it is a harmonic development, an endless progress. The righteous advance, and the wicked, but there are no new redemptions, and no retrogressions. To the one it is a deepening eternity, of brightness, and to the other a deepening eternity of shade.

1. Hartman's *Christian Dogmatics*, pp. 185 and 485.↩
2. *Salvator Mundi*, p. 142.↩

5. Inviolability Of The Will.

THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL is another insurmountable objection presented by reason to a final universal restoration. The noblest quality of man is his free-will. By virtue of it alone, he attains an independence even from God himself. For, in order that it be truly his, he must be unrestricted in its exercise. It is a God-like quality, that which marks him out as “fearfully and wonderfully made,” and that causes his brow to glow with an awful lustre of divinity. The free-will of man is the most marvelous of the Creator’s works. After such an achievement, well might he pause to contemplate with wonder what his hands had wrought. But the essential character of this free-will is that it be swayed by no power except that of voluntary self-determination. “Man has within himself a certain point of freedom, upon which no external agency can encroach. Much as he may be influenced by outward circumstances or inward impelling motives, it is man’s own resolution that makes the final decision. Herein man resembles God. For the highest thing that can be said of God is, that He is his own master.”¹

But to conclude that future punishment in every case must totally cease, presupposes that there must with every lost soul take place conversion, i.e., a voluntary act of repentance and faith. For God certainly would not transfer these wicked spirits to heaven, unless purified by a moral change. But what right has anyone to assume, even if it were possible, that every spirit in hell will deliberately choose to undergo this work of saving conversion (and if one suffers eternal torments, the blackest devil, even Satan himself, the whole. argument for restoration falls, for if it be cruel and unjust, it is all the same whether it be one or a thousand millions)? If men do not choose conversion now in every instance, or even in the majority of instances, how do we know that no exceptions will be found hereafter?

What ground is there to presume that the conditions for inducing repentance will be more favorable in the future than in the present? On the contrary, the whole presumption bears precisely the other way. Punishment is not a propelling influence to love and moral change. We see this constantly

illustrated in life. Does punishment soften and reform evildoers? Does the ever-closing, serpentine coil of disease, pain, and shame reform the devotee of vice? The more cruelly and fatally she transfixes him with her fangs, the more tightly he hugs her to his bosom, and the more obdurately he hardens his ear to every appeal of loving sympathy. How many of the criminal classes are converted by the repetition and increasing severity of the blows of the law? "The infliction of penalty has no tendency to reform the guilty," said EDMUND BURKE. "Punishment² per se is not a regenerator. Hell itself, if intermediate instead of final, could not convert men to Christianity." And these observations are fully borne out by experience. A certain group of faces grows quite familiar to judge and officers of the court, and agents of the law. With these culprits it is only from trouble to trouble, and from prison to prison. Scarcely have they expiated one crime until they are arraigned for a greater. No sooner do they have their freedom than they are again before the tribunal. In the case of these hardened criminals penalties, no matter how severe, effect no change. There is but one safe method with them, and that is to keep them where they can do no hurt. And the longer they are confined, the more violently rages; their bitterness against the power that holds them.

How is it, further, with the devils? If future punishment begets reformation, why do they not bethink themselves of their folly, and resolve to humble themselves before God and find mercy, instead of abiding in their chains and thick darkness forever? It is because devils cannot love. Their pains but sting them into fury and lash them into darker paroxysms of madness. Hate intensifies pain, and pain augments hate. A remarkable instance of this is given in Rev. 16:9, Where the fourth angel pours out his vial upon the sun and scorches men with fire, and thereupon they "blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him the glory." Their gnawing pains, instead of convicting them of their sinful deserts, but evoked fresh blasphemies.

Even then if salvation were possible in the future, the power of voluntary self-determination, which belongs inseparably to the will, would still present an insuperable obstacle to the obtaining of it. For God would not receive these condemned souls into heaven without repentance, faith, and conversion; and the conditions being such as to exclude these, wrath, and hate, and misery would forever extinguish the possibility of moral change. For we may be assured, that what the wondrous grace of redeeming love

and the touching appeal of the cross fail to effect on earth the pains, and anguish, and despair of hell will much the less effect. There will remain no other remedy, therefore, but that God shall violate the free will of these his rational creatures, and compel them to feelings and volitions not their own preference. But in doing this he would have to crush the creature himself. In defacing from him his own image, he would essentially destroy man's nature, so that he would cease to be man. He would simply then be reduced to the level of the brutes. This, too, JONATHAN EDWARDS asserts: "If we consider the nature of things: torments inflicted have no tendency to bring a wicked man to repentance. His heart does not comply... Yea, unless we suppose a divine interposition of Almighty efficacious power, we may be sure that under these circumstances the heart will not turn to love God. But such an interposition of efficacious power is not agreeable to the notions of freedom and moral agency."³

Such a hypothesis is, therefore, open to the same objection as-annihilation, viz., that it would be a retrograde movement on the part of God, a confession that his whole purpose in the human creation was a failure, and that he found himself forced to abandon it. Besides, if God was eventually to forcibly restrain man from sinning, why did he not prevent the first sin in Eden, and avert the terrible train of misery that has intervened?

We may rest satisfied, then, that the freedom of the will stands like a wall of adamant in the way of a decree of universal delivery from the prison of future woe. In torment the will cannot soften, and the Creator will not overcome it by force. To presume that he would is simply the avowal of fatalism.⁴ And such a hypothesis is unworthy alike both of God and man, and we must, therefore, discard it, as only another of the inconsistencies and absurdities resulting from the attempt to abrogate eternal retributions. No better explanation of the dark problem of moral evil and endless punishment can, perhaps, ever be given than that of TERTULLIAN, viz., that the endowment of free-will is so priceless a prerogative, that to possess it inviolable, man must take the hazard of those tremendous possibilities of ruin, which necessarily accompany it.

So says NITZSCH: "The thought of an everlasting perdition is to such an extent a necessary one, since there can be in eternity no enforced sanctification of the personal being, and in eternity no blessed unholiness." So also Rev. H. Constable: "God, in dealing with the higher order of his creatures, is dealing not with lifeless matter, not with living things walking by a law

of necessity, but with living creatures under the high and elevating but also most perilous condition of a free will.” As positions of extraordinary honor and profit carry with them a proportional responsibility and risk, so that he who stands on the most glittering pinnacle of fortune is in danger of the most ruinous fall, so with that last and highest of honors and dignities with which the Supreme Spirit has clothed his national creatures, the investiture of a sovereign will, there goes also the fearful possibility, the tremendous risk of an everlasting downfall.

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1. Luthardt’s *Fundamental Truths of Christianity*, pp. 123-4.↩
 2. *Ecce Deus*. Eternal Punishment, p. 213.↩
 3. *On Endless Punishment*, Works, vol. i. pp. 628, 639.↩
 4. “Fatalists, secondly, such as suppose... that by a series of causes doth unavoidably result whatsoever is done, which fate is a concatenation of causes, all in themselves necessary, which was asserted by the ancient Stoics, etc.” — *Krauth’s Vocabulary of Philosophy*, p. 196.↩

6. The Guilt Of Sin Incalculable.

THE RATIONAL or metaphysical conception of sin presents another ground for the support of eternal punishment. For when the discussion is transferred to the arena of reason, then we must follow the legitimate processes of ratiocination, and accept the issue. Now, tried by this test, sin is unlimited in its disastrous consequences. It naturally entails remediless discomfiture. Its wages are not temporal hurt, but spiritual, eternal death. It is not the physical force that determines a deed, but the motive, which is ascertained from the object against which it is directed, and the injury it was designed to effect. Whether the point of a pin be thrust against a stone, or into the pupil of the eye; whether a match be cast into the sea, or into the magazine of an arsenal; whether a blow be given to check the murderous assassin, or whether it be the meek and innocent Saviour who is rudely smitten, — makes all the difference in the degree of moral turpitude.

Just so, too, is it with the law of proportion. The question is raised, Shall anyone suffer throughout eternity for deeds done but in the course of a lifetime? The answer is that the length of time has nothing to do with the moral character of an act, and hence there can be no proportion between the time occupied in a crime, and the requisite duration of its punishment. It may require but an instant to commit a murder, whereas it may take a whole night to accomplish a petty theft; but what becomes of the law of proportion as applied to these cases? And accordingly, society in her adjudications takes no notice of any such standard. “A citizen who has maintained a good reputation for half a century, who has been a generous benefactor of the poor, whose name obtained the highest credit on the exchange, has been proved guilty of a crime, perpetrated in imagined secrecy. How does society treat the tower which was fifty years in building? Society razes the very foundations, and forgets half a century of unchallenged life in one day’s discovered villainy. The law of duration, founded on mere proportion, would require a different result, but society happily forgets its formal logic when un-

der the influence of high moral inspiration, and in its own arbitraments reproduces the government of God.”¹

And tried by this true test of the desert of guilt, it follows with regard to sin, that, since it is an offense deliberately perpetrated against God who is everlasting, against his holiness which is infinite, against that order of the universe which he is sworn to maintain at all hazards, against that sovereignty whose subversion would relegate immensity to chaos, and shroud the future in inextricable gloom, we can, therefore, form no adequate conception of the degree of its moral turpitude, nor can we, least of all, draw any just proportion between the lifetime required for its commission, and the length of the punishment which it deserves and will receive hereafter.

“It must,” says the eloquent CLAUDE, “be a punishment proportionable in greatness as well as in duration to the greatness of the Judge who ordains it, the tribunal which decrees it, and the Almighty hand which executes it.”

And this involves the conclusion that no finite line can measure, and no finite plummet fathom, its height and depth. Infinity and eternity alone can compute its character and results. As the stone cast into the ocean sends forth ever enlarging circles, until they grow invisible, though not lost, in the pathless expanse; so the consequences of sin against the moral Immensity and its dread Monarch reach on and on into that unexplored existence, “unmarked by the pauses of Time.” “It was,” writes the erudite QUENSTEDT, “the infinite God that was offended by sin; and because sin is an offense, wrong, and crime against the infinite God, and, so to speak, is Deicide, it has an infinite evil, and deserves infinite punishment.”²

And this conception of sin. is not merely metaphysical. It does not exist only in the theoretic reason. But it has its intensely practical illustration. There are those who have felt the pangs of sin, whose inward eyes have been opened to the view of its enormity; who have seen the light of a divine illumination falling upon it, and revealing it in its unmasked hideousness. And they have felt that it was so utterly without excuse, — that it was directed against such an everlasting, infinite, and blessed God and Father, — that it was so radically opposed to the right and wise and beneficent constitution of things, — that it hurled them against such a holy and inflexible law, — and that it was so deliberate and criminal a choice of self-destruction, that the uproused voice of their whole nature has cried out against them that they have merited an irrevocable doom, and that they have con-

signed themselves to everlasting burnings. “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom. 7:24), exclaimed the apostle, as the throes of this intolerable conviction of guilt racked his soul, and the storm of righteous judgment bore down so heavily upon him, that he knew not whither to fly for relief. “Ask them,” says LUTHER (in a letter designed for the very purpose of condemning fanatical religions excitement), “if they have known those spiritual heavings, those deaths and hells which accompany a real regeneration.”

If this, then, be the sense of the guilt, horror, and agony of sin experienced by men before they have found the divinely provided grace of pardon, what will be their experience of it after they have seared their consciences by deliberately rejecting the only remedy? When consciousness awakes again upon the eternal shore, it will be to find the soul in a dilemma whence every avenue of escape is barred, pierced by a remorse whose sting never ceases, and overarched by a wall of despair, penetrated by not the ray of a single star. Ah! let men tremble, then, as they confront the dread voice of Reason, when she warns them of the incalculable guilt, and the immeasurable penalty of sin against the righteous Sovereign of the Universe!

“I do not,” says PROF. PLUMPTRE, “hesitate to accept the thought of the punishment of evil as being endless. If that punishment comes, as Butler teaches us, as the ‘natural consequence’ of sin, if the enduring pain be—

Memory of evil seen at last
As evil, hateful, loathsome,

then I cannot see how it can be otherwise than everlasting. Christian theology knows no water of Lethe to steep the soul in forgetfulness of its own past; and if the sin is not forgotten, then the remembrance of it must throughout the ages be an element of pain and sorrow.”³

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1. *Ecce Deus, Eternal Punishments*, p. 213.↵
 2. Schmidt’s *Doctrinal Theology*, Hay and Jacobs, p. 374.↵
 3. *Letter on the Teaching of Bishop Butler on the Future Life*.↵

7. Inveteracy Of Evil.

THE TENDENCY OF EVIL to become inveterate is another of the strong probabilities suggested by Reason in favor of the remediless future destiny of the lost. It is an essential characteristic of moral evil that it grows by that it feeds upon. Like a torrent of fire it burns its way the deeper the further it flows. By an ever-accelerating movement and an ever-augmenting volume, it keeps on its devastating way through the soul. The seed of evil, once lodged in the breast, fastens its poisoned roots on every moral fiber, and ever gains a deeper hold, and a more ineradicable seat. This is a part of the curse — the natural consequence — attached to sin. It is one of its most fatal effects, that it renders impotent the very faculties by which alone it could be eradicated. Its discolored fumes of passion cloud the actions of the intellect, and the ever-growing tendrils of forbidden desire fetter and handicap the volitions of the will.

The stupefying effect upon conscience of continued indulgence in sin is thus one of the most clearly demonstrated moral laws. Every sin is a fresh shock to the moral organism, blunting its sensibility to distinctions between right and wrong, and silencing the alarm-bells which would forewarn of the Rocks of Destruction each hour growing nearer. “There comes a condition of carnal security, wherein the dominion of sin is no longer felt to be misery. This security, continually developing, results in a condition of obduracy and moral insensibility. That there is a condition wherein sin has become an unconquerable force in our nature, cannot be denied.”¹ Now, when evil has obtained this absolute and fearful domination over heart, mind, and will, — man is in servile bondage to it, and has no longer power to strike off one of his fetters, and hence results an eternal condition of moral inability.

This characteristic of evil to become inveterate, and of habit to form an ever-thickening incrustation over the soul, compels FARRAR himself to hesitate at the results of his own theory, and to make the fatal admission, — “because it is impossible for us to estimate the hardening effect of obstinate persistence in evil, and the power of the human will to resist the law and re-

ject the love of God.”² Prof. F. D. MAURICE is likewise brought to a halt in his latitudinarian speculations by this same inexorable fact. He says: “I ask no one to pronounce, for I dare not pronounce myself, what are the possibilities of resistance in a human will to the loving will of God. There are times when they seem to me — thinking of myself more than of others — almost infinite?”³ “But what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?” indignantly exclaimed Hazael to the Jewish prophet, as he exhibited to him the barbarous and bloody scenes his fiendish cruelty would one day bring to pass in Israel. But the Assyrian captain had overlooked those deadening influences and subtle advances, by which evil ever insensibly steps its victims deeper and deeper in the mire of moral corruption, and propels them to crimes of pitiless ferocity, and deeds of reckless blasphemy, from which, at first, they would have shrunk back in horror. Even the gentle CANON KINGSLEY is induced to confess that there is solemn and startling force in this consideration: “It is well here to say that I do not deny endless punishment. On the contrary, I believe it possible for me and other Christian men to commit acts of ἄτασθαλία, sins against light and knowledge, which would plunge us into endless abysses of probably increasing sin, and therefore of probably increasing and endless punishment.”⁴ This tendency, then, of evil to acquire permanence; this ever-augmenting power of sinful habits, until they fix themselves ineradicably about the very nature of man; this increasing strength of temptation as the power of resistance proportionally diminishes; this growing insensibility caused by the repetition of offenses until sin is rolled as a sweet morsel under the tongue; and this ever-accelerating velocity of that momentum which urges the transgressor faster and more hopelessly down the steps of moral destruction, is one of those truths which erect an impassable barrier between the lost and the possibility of reformation. We observe, therefore, in this natural working of moral laws, the same principle announced by Scripture, viz., “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil.” Jer. 13:23. And it is “this, the essential tendency of evil, when left to itself, to intensify, to accumulate, and perpetuate its own misery — which makes the weak points in all schemes of Universalism or Restorationism.”⁵

1. Schmid's *Christian Ethics*, by W. J. Mann, D.D., p. 91;↵
2. Preface to *Eternal Hope*, p. 16.↵
3. Theological Essays, p. 61.↵
4. Letter to the "Guardian."↵
5. Dr. John Tulloch, Principal of St. Marys College.↵

8. Universality Of Law.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF LAW as deduced from the facts of experience militates against the theory of reformation and redemption in the world to come. What we observe to be the course of nature here, is the known quantity from which alone can be safely inferred the methods and procedures of the unknown hereafter. Outside of revelation, experience is the sole basis upon which we can build our deductions relating to the untried and unexplored. And as God is one, we have a right to expect unity and consistency in his operations everywhere. The earth is an epitome of the universe, time a fragmentary arc broken off from the circle of eternity. Determine its curvature, and we know the inflection of the circle throughout the whole of its invisible and everlasting sweep. "Go to Mr. Dana, and he affirms that a good textbook on the laws of light would be worth something in the constellation of Orion, and he is sure of that because he is sure of the universality of law. This is one of the sublimest points of view of natural science. 'Our earth, although an atom in immensity, is immensity itself in its revelations of truth.' If I know what natural laws are on this globe, I have a right to walk right out on their ascertained curve, and say that in worlds outside of this those laws prevail, for laws are universal and a unit... Precisely this audacity or scientific caution was exhibited in the parables of our Lord, for, from the experience of men at the fireside and from the sheepfold, He drew illustrations of moral principles, the range of which He swept through the universe, and by which He explained not only our present existence, but the world that is to come."¹

Now, let us bring the light of this principle, the universality of natural and moral law, to bear upon the problem before us. What do the facts teach which come within our present scope of observation? Do they show that repair and reformation are possible at any time, or at any length? Just the reverse. For a time a man may disregard the laws of health. Nature stings and admonishes him with her pains. He has suffered some injury, but by temperance and prudence it disappears. But if he repeat the violation, though

nature long put forth recuperative power, there will come a point when the limit is passed. Health cannot be regained. All moderation and sanitary precautions now fail. The walls of the body have been damaged beyond repair. The crest of the hill has been left behind. The silver cord has been loosed. The fire of disease ravages beyond all control, and death is inevitable. So with the mind. Strained to an unnatural tension, it will hold out for awhile. But if its admonitory signs are unheeded, if there be no rest from excessive labor or from gnawing care, at last the overtaxed tension of the faculties will succumb, and reason sink amid the raving moods of madness.

And precisely the same symptoms are disclosed in the sphere of moral actions. Up to a certain point in transgression there is a possibility of reform. But if vice be yielded to too long, if the lawless appetite be too far indulged, if the forbidden path be followed too far, there is no turning back. The crisis has been reached when repentance cannot be had, though it be "sought carefully with tears." Ephraim then is joined to his idols, and may as well be let alone. We have all met examples of this character — the confirmed inebriate, the deeply sunken voluptuary, the clutching miser, the brazen gambler, and the callous assassin — whose cases gave no possible gleam of hope. They are petrified to all sense of appeal, past all redemption, living moral corpses — death in life. And on the basis of these instances, we can make no other trustworthy deduction than that, from the universality of law, this identical principle will prevail in the eternal world, and in regard to the everlasting salvation or perdition of the soul. Grace resisted to a certain extent will be withdrawn. There is a line cast about the course of every man by the angel of justice, which he may not pass. Let him cross this limit and he is judged already here. His doom is sealed, his fate is inevitable, his door of deliverance is locked, and no hand can open it.

And what right anyone has to assume that in eternity this whole principle will be reversed, and the course of procedure there contradict that which is given for our admonition here, we would like to know? Rather let us not stolidly set our faces against the hard facts of experience. And when we see even on this earth, when we are yet on the stage of probation, that there comes an extremity where no agony of the body, or despair of the mind, or remorse of conscience can excite the pity of God, or avert the inevitable sequence of iniquity, let us none the less expect to encounter the same everlasting law when probation is done, whether then we be treading the golden heights of heaven, or wandering upon the "burning marl" of hell.

TOO LATE! is the direful word graven upon the walls of the future irretrievable doom of those who, with the fate of their souls in their hands, have profanely passed that flaming sword of destiny, which points to this flat of the Almighty: “Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further” (Job 38:11).

1. Joseph Cook — Certainties in Religion, p. 5.↩

9. Eternal Retributions Necessary As Motives.

THAT THE RECOMPENSE of every one's life be fixed and unalterable after death, is likewise necessary as a deterrent from wickedness, and as an incentive to piety. The fear of eternal sufferings, and the hope of everlasting rewards, are the most powerful motives of human conduct. Take these away by holding out a second chance, a new probation after death, and you break the wholesome restraints which debar the wicked from going to the most desperate lengths, while, at the same time, weakening the most powerful inducements to virtue and piety.

BISHOP WARBURTON thus assumed as universally established maxims: "1. That the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments is necessary to the well-being of society. 2. That all mankind, especially the most wise and learned nations of antiquity, have concurred in teaching and believing that this doctrine was of such use."

Smoothly as it may sound to hear the modern descant against fear of punishment as a gross and debasing motive, yet this finesse cannot stand before the iron logic of realities. Fear is one of the most potent checks to evil doing. And as God has implanted it in our being, it is safe to presume that it is not unworthy, but natural, useful, and beneficent. As we cannot do without fear in conserving the public peace and safety, as we cannot dispense with it in the moral training of the children we love, so is the fear of God — a dread of his righteous anger, and a trembling apprehension of a future outpouring of infinite wrath — an eminently salutary and healthful moral stimulant.

There must be in man emotions corresponding to the respective divine attributes. And as God's surpassing love, descending like warm sunshine upon the bosom, nurtures the gentle plant of faith, and causes it to put forth its yearning tendrils, so does the contemplation of his Almighty power, and of his infinite justice, fill the soul with emotions of godly fear and awe. The

best and purest characters, and the sweetest and noblest souls, whose lives have shed lustre upon humanity, have not been exempt from these feelings; and have experienced their beneficent effect in guarding them against the siren witcheries of sin, and in nerving them to a life of duty, self-denial, and battle for the right. It is the sheerest affectation, therefore, and the most vapid sentimentalism, to attempt to ignore this important factor in the motives regulating human conduct.

ST. CHRYSOSTOM well remarks with reference to the value of keeping this subject prominently before the thoughts: "If we are always thinking of hell, we shall not easily fall into it. For this cause God has threatened punishment, for he would not have done so if there was not great advantage in thinking of it. Nothing is so profitable as to converse about hell; it makes our souls purer than silver. For, hear the prophets saying, 'Thy judgments are always before me.' And Christ is perpetually discoursing of it. For it pains the bearer, yet it greatly benefits him." And if it were possible today to convince men that the penalties of the great day would but be terminable, it would open the floodgates of impiety and immorality, as they have not been since the beginning of time. It was the consideration of this very necessity, viz., as a restraint to the excesses and enormities of the unbridled passions of men, that led the Pagan philosophers and religions to insist upon the eternity of future punishments. "Religion is the chief pillar of the State," exclaimed Roman orators and emperors; and this sentiment lingered when all other respect for it had died away, and gave birth, by way of protection to a supposed endangered society, to the barbarous persecutions of the Christians. And we are no more able to dispense with this powerful curb to the lawless appetites than the ancients. Men may defy the extremest penalties of human law, but they still will cower at the prospect of coming before the tribunal of that King of wrath eternal, who has the power to cast both soul and body into an endless hell, and who will so close the ear of mercy to the cry of the incorrigible sinner that not even shall he dip the tip of his finger in water to cool the tongue tormented in flame. It is such a looking for of fiery indignation and wrath as this that will bring even the boldest transgressor to a pause, and deter him from the commission of crimes which he knows will place his doom beyond all hope.

Upon the appalling threatening of eternal pain, woe, and misery against sinners recorded in Rev. 14:11, of which BENGEL says, "This above all measure dreadful threatening is undoubtedly the most severe to be found in

Scripture,” the great German¹ commentator thus fitly remarks: “The ancient CYPRIAN often strengthened his exhortations to steadfastness under bloody persecution from this word. Let us shut it fast in our hearts! The times are drawing nigh when we shall again need such heroic means.”

Besides, if conditions be not immutable after death, and if, in the revolutions of far distant ages, the recklessly wicked, who has reveled in every forbidden pleasure, drained every cup of carnal joy, and rioted in every voluptuousness of time, shall be drinking of the crystal tide of felicity at God’s right hand; while another, who on earth bore the galling cross of sacrifice, and sowed in tears all his weary way, serving his Maker at every cost and hazard, shall then perhaps have forfeited the heritage of grace, and have lapsed into the punishments of the damned; — if such an inversion of destinies as this can be possible in the future, what motive remains to unswervingly follow the right? Which, according to the standards of human judgment, is the wiser of these two? Shall we not say the former? Such, we may be sure, at least, would be the verdict of the common sense of mankind, and disastrous will be the day and black the hour, for the morality and peace and safety of society, when such a belief as this will once be established! It is all very well to say that the right should be followed for its own sake alone. But men are men and not angels, and we must deal with them as they are. Take away the fear of eternal retribution, and the hope of everlasting rewards, and I think we can safely predict that men would cease to see the necessity for churches, and for saving instrumentalities, and for evangelical appliances; and the Church, Christianity, and religion itself would suffer an irretrievable blow; a deadly stupor would paralyze the moral sense of the race. That sturdy Roman of the old-time orthodoxy, PEARSON, has these energetic comments of a robust moral sentiment on this point: “The belief of this Article (as to the eternity of torment) is necessary to deter us from committing sin, and to quicken us to holiness of life. They which imagine the pains inflicted for sin to be either small or short have BUT A SLENDER MOTIVE to innocence or repentance; but such as firmly believe them sharp and endless have a proper and natural spur and incitement to avoid them. The belief of eternal pains after death is necessary to breed in us a fear and awe of the great God, a jealous God, a consuming fire, a God that will not be mocked; and to teach us to tremble at his word.”²

We have thus to some extent taken up the gauntlet of Reason, which, of late, is so frequently and confidently hurled against the Evangelical tenet of

Eternal Punishment. And certainly the result is anything but encouraging to the opponents of this doctrine. Rather does it seem to involve their total discomfiture. The truth is, that reason, basing its deductions, as it must, upon universal intuitions, laws, and facts, ever must here be a potent ally, and an invincible champion, of the orthodox faith. Along, then, with the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, and side by side with the witness of the Christian centuries, Reason lifts up her concurrent voice. There are several cardinal doctrines of our holy faith which are such inscrutable mysteries that reason gives no clear testimony in regard to them, and yet. the acceptance of these, on the sole authority of Scripture, is firmly demanded as a test of heresy or orthodoxy. How much more then is this the case with that pivotal tenet of Eternal Punishment, which reason, even amid the darkness of Pagan times, and much more in this era of quickened and enlightened conscience, affirms to be one of those primal and necessary moral principles upon which stands the fabric of universal right and order!

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1. *Hengstenberg on the Apocalypse*, vol. ii. p. 147.↩
 2. *Exposition of the Creed*, p. 588.↩

Part Four. Fallacies And Evils Of Restorationism Or Universal- ism.

1. Emotional And Vituperative Style.

IN A SURVEY of the literature produced by those on the unevangelical side of this controversy, we are at once impressed by its emotional, denunciatory style. Where doctrines have been so long settled as fundamental; where they are supported by such a long and unbroken catena of authorities; and where they are so inwrought with the very fibers of Christian life and experience; we would look for at least some little show of veneration, and some care to avoid ruthlessness of procedure. But on the contrary, instead of viewing these grave questions in that *lumen siccum*, or impartial light of sober inquiry, which they so eminently demand, we find a frantic appeal to the passions of the multitude. Instead of painstaking, candid and unprejudiced investigation, there is a constant effort to obscure the whole subject by filling the air with clouds of volatile declamation, and seething mists of invective. No blows of denunciation are too severe; no arrows of indignant scorn too flame-tipped; and no weapons of highly-figured rhetoric too swollen and portentous, to be hurled upon the heads of those who dare maintain the ancient faith of Christendom. In fact, the whole vocabulary of abuse is ransacked to provide the epithets and missiles dire, which burn and bristle upon the pages of these wrathful controversialists. To inspect them is to become acquainted with the entire arsenal of logomachy.

The evangelical doctrine is denounced as “pitiless,” “unnatural,” “inhuman,” “intolerable,” “degrading,” “loathsome,” “frightful,” “monstrous,” “awful and unspeakable,” “ghastly,” “horrible,” and “incomparably shocking.”¹

It is further represented as begotten of “acid prejudice” and “tyrannous traditions,” as a “hideous incubus of atrocious conceptions,”² as “that damnable dogma of endless torment,”³ and as “a survival of ancient heathen beliefs showing through the thin Christian varnish.”⁴ It is accused of making God a “remorseless avenger instead of a father;” and of setting him forth as a fiendish master who “purposely raises the wicked from the dead only to torment them,” and thereby gratify his insatiable delight in misery. We are told that “it would be wholly impossible for any wretch among us to be so remorseless as to doom his deadliest enemy to an endless vengeance;”⁵ and we are charged to “fling from us with abhorrence such a creed,” which has no other effect than to “drive men to indignant Atheism,” and which has “rendered the better and tenderer and saintly souls hopelessly wretched even to madness.” There are those indeed, we are glad to say, who evince a different spirit, but an examination will prove how nearly universal is this tone.

Now, of course, if these are the sensational methods by which this question is to be settled, then all hope of deciding it scripturally, rationally, and justly must be abandoned. Certainly, if ever there was a theme which merits at our hands thorough and dispassionate treatment — the remotest possible from such rodomontade — and which we should approach in reverent and listening mood, it is this. We therefore most fully endorse the sentiment of one who says that the “amateur and neophyte” in discussion are painfully visible throughout this whole declamatory treatment, and of another who remarks that “the hysterical passion that rants and screams through Canon Farrar’s sermons must be pronounced utterly unworthy of the place, the subject, and the speaker.”

To all these outbursts of heated passion, and this vehemency of denunciation, it is sufficient to make reply, that we disclaim all personal responsibility for this, to some, offensive doctrine. It is not the business of the Christian ministry either to make or dispute the articles of revealed religion, but faithfully to proclaim them as they have been prepared by the august Divinity. It is not in bitterness, in hate, in narrow bigotry, in “servile adherence to iron-clad creeds,” in delight in torment, or in any other such repre-

hensible sentiment, that we preach this doctrine of future eternal retribution. But in loyalty to the commission of Him who sent us forth, we simply “speak the truth in love” (Ephes. 4:15). Convinced that this is the divine message — is clearly and undeniably a part of the gospel of God — we set it forth to men, that we may “cease not to warn every one with tears,” that “we may by all means save some” (1 Cor. 9:22), and thereby preclude the possibility of their falling into these direful judgments. Rationalists say that it is very impolitic for Christians to represent the everlasting punishment of the wicked as a doctrine of the Bible. This is undoubtedly true. But so Paul felt that it was very impolitic to preach the doctrine of the Cross, a stumbling-block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Greek. Nevertheless he knew that it was not his business to make a Gospel, but to declare that Gospel which had been taught him by the revelation of Jesus. It would be well if all who call themselves Christians should learn that it is not their business to believe or teach what they may think true or right, but what God in his Holy Word has seen fit to reveal.”⁶

He is not the true friend who would suffer his neighbor to walk over a precipice, rather than ruffle his feelings by the alarming news that he is in danger. And so Christian teachers are not to be denounced as “pitiless” and “remorseless,” because they “cry aloud and spare not” (Isaiah 58:11), in order that they may prove themselves safe and trustworthy guides in matters pertaining to the everlasting salvation of the soul. By presenting this as “the dark background of the bright message of grace,” the sole purpose is, that men may be moved to shun the one, and to embrace the other. When the eternal destiny of the soul is at stake, it is a sad time to be winning a transient popularity by catering to the vain desires of the fickle heart; or, by mincing matters, to deceive ourselves and others with thin disguises and illusory sentimentalities.

It is,” as writes the eloquent CLAUDE, a distressing subject; therefore men do not like to think about it. Observe the folly of this conduct, for their condemnation is not the less certain for their forgetting it; they resemble prisoners already in irons and doomed to punishment, who stifle the sense of their misery by plunging into debauchery. They resemble the old world, who were ‘eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage,’ and suddenly (when they least thought of it) ‘the flood came and took them all away,’ (Matt. 24:38, 39). To expose such perilous delusions as these is but

the part of fidelity to the calling of those, who as ‘ambassadors for Christ beseech men in Christ’s stead: be ye reconciled to God’ (2 Cor. 5:20).”

It is a pleasant reflection that the common sense of men forbids them joining, as a rule, in this bitter tirade against those who proclaim the truth, unpalatable to the conscience steeped in worldly lusts though it be; but, in general, they heartily respect the motives of those who but honestly seek their future welfare. Rev. Prof. Plumtre fitly rebukes this extravagant hyperbole of invective thus: “If we are tempted to speak of those who preach the popular eschatology as placing a Moloch in the place of God, the names of Dante, and St. Francis de Sales, and Archbishop Leighton should rebuke the rash and ill-advised utterance.” To these might justly be added such names as those of the “angelic” St. Thomas Aquinas, the mild Melancthon, the gentle Keble, and “a great cloud” of similarly loving and lovable “witnesses.” As Christ himself believed this doctrine, and wept compassionate tears over men sealing to themselves such an irreversible doom, so did these gentle and tender souls proclaim it with unwavering voice, that men might thereby be induced at once and for all to escape it.

But the principal point worthy to be noted here is this: What effect must these sharp revilings of the Church of Jesus Christ have upon those who are without? Take for example these words of Farrar: “I repudiate these crude and glaring travesties of the awful and holy will of God; I arraign them as ignorantly merciless; I impeach them as a falsehood against Christ’s universal and absolute redemption; I denounce them as a blasphemy against God’s exceeding and eternal love.”⁷ If these fierce diatribes are really justifiable; if the Church by common consent for ages has been teaching doctrines which are “falsehoods against Christ,” “blasphemies against God,” “glaring travesties” of truth and holiness — doctrines “intolerable in their ghastliness,” and tending to “degrade” the moral sense of mankind; what kind of an organization is this to undertake the task of reforming and saving the world? Are not non-Christians justified by such wholesale and terrific vituperation in remaining outside of the Church — in denouncing it as opposed to modern progress and enlightenment — and in labeling it a worn-out relic of religious intolerance and superstitious barbarism? The conclusion is irresistible. If the conscience of the Christian world could rest for centuries and centuries under such “degrading” caricatures of God and his righteous will, “as it would be wholly impossible for any wretch” to exhibit, then it is simply preposterous for such an immoral institution to assume to be the di-

vinely appointed model, teacher, and guide to lead men to a morality of heavenly sweetness and purity.

It is well, then, for us to depict these parties in their real characters; to lay bare the role they are enacting; and to understand just what they are doing, and what they are endeavoring to bring about, in their effort to subject the Church to the scorn of the civilized world. For, it must be borne in mind, that not one of them denies that this is the current faith of Christendom today, or that it has been such for at least more than a thousand years! Now, either they are right, and the Church is an ill-disguised monster, seeking a holocaust of souls to gratify her insatiable delight in torment; or those who bring these dreadful indictments are guilty themselves of an utterly unwarranted slander against the doctrines, the faith, and the moral status of the holy Christian and Apostolic Church, which should visit upon them a justly merited exclusion from her altars and pulpits, and relegate them to a place where they, at least, could not use the official robes with which she clothes them, for hurling back their sacrilegious libels upon her divine message, her venerable authority, and her pure and unspotted name.⁸

1. All from *Farrar*.↩

2. *Ibid.* p. 83.↩

3. Emmanuel Deutsch.↩

4. *Salvator Mundi*, Rev. 8. Cox, p. 34.↩

5. *Eternal Hope*, p. 115.↩

6. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol. iii. p. 877.↩

7. *Eternal Hope*, p. 72.↩

8. To show how others have been equally impressed with the offensive features of this anti-orthodox literature, which I have here portrayed, I offer two very eminent testimonies. REV. C. P. KRAUTH, D.D., LL.D., says of the prevalent latitudinarianism: “Much of it in our day is servile and dogmatic, implicit in credulity, and insolent in assertion... Calling upon men to rally about the standard of absolute freedom from authority, it vilifies the fair fame of those whom it cannot force into acquiescence or silence. Claiming to be free from partisanship, it is full of coarse intolerance. It is an inquisition, with such tortures as the

spirit of our age still renders possible.” (*Introduction to Ulrici’s Review of Straus.*)

And PROF. MOSES STUART remarks: “Any one who is conversant with the tracts and books in defense of universal salvation must have been struck with the boisterous manner with which arguments in favor of this doctrine are generally advanced. I have often remarked that some men are positive in their opinions and noisy in the expression of them, either to impose them by a kind of force, or else to conceal from themselves and others the secret doubts which all the while are agitating their own breasts. When will men learn that reason and not noise, that science and not ignorance, that patient and protracted investigation and not hasty and a priori assertions, are the appropriate means of convincing and winning over their fellow men?” (*Exegetical Essay on Future Punishment*, p. 249.)↩

2. Perversion Of Historical Facts.

BUT MORE IMPORTANT STILL are the historical perversions and glaring mis-statements of facts, which abound in this unevangelical literature. The evasion of the most indisputably established, facts, and the dissembling of clearly ascertained historical verities are its marked and constant peculiarities. To find how ample is the ground for this statement, an informed reader has but to examine for himself. One is continually startled at the reckless audacity displayed, and at the disregard of those scruples which conscience at least, should impose.

What, for example, must we say to the assertion that “*ἄϊῶνιος* means that which is of or for an age,” and “that this large and important class of passages [in which it occurs] does not carry us beyond the bounds of time,”¹ to which reckless assertion the scholar’s, as opposed to the empiric’s, reply is that of Ex-President WOOLSEY in the letter published in this volume, viz., “*ἄϊῶνιος cannot* [italics ours] denote pertaining to an aeon or world-period. I know of no evidence that *ἄϊῶνιος* ever had its sense so modified. *In no passage of the New Testament* can that idea be fairly or plausibly intruded.” Or, what is our astonishment to hear that the Pharisees at the time of Christ knew nothing of the doctrine of endless punishment, and therefore could not possibly have understood him to teach it; or that Josephus, the great historian, is a totally unreliable and incompetent witness as to the religious tenets of the Jews; or that the doctrine of eternal punishment was unknown to the Christian fathers of the first three centuries, and was an invention of St. Augustine, and an outcome from the darkness of the Middle Ages; or that the tenet has never been accorded a place in any creed, general or particular; or that the Roman Catholic fiction of purgatory is a punitory fire by means of which the wicked escape the eternal pains of hell, when, as We have already seen, purgatory is alone designed for the complete purification of the pious, while the wicked, according to Roman Catholic eschatology,

no less than Protestant, are doomed to endless punishment! And yet on this notoriously false assertion, lecture after lecture is read to Protestants on the superior mercifulness of the Roman Catholic system.

Are not such palpable contradictions of overwhelmingly attested historical facts altogether without defense in honorable, not to say Christian, polemics? And yet the writer's examination of the authors who oppose what they call "the common view," or "popular eschatology," compels him to bear witness that, almost without exception, they actually base their whole systems upon such fictitious and groundless assumptions as those given above. As special instances of this may be taken the loose massing of authorities in support of his view made by Farrar; for most of those cited in his list utterly repudiate his position in the most emphatic terms, and some of them only diverge from the commonly received faith of the Church on such minor details as are undecided and indifferent;² and so also, his assertion that, of fifteen recent clerical writers in the *Contemporary Review*,³ "all but two" sustained his view, whereas, upon a careful reading of these correspondents, the author (as can be demonstrated by extracts made) discovered that eight, a majority of the whole, took ground diametrically opposed to Farrar, criticizing him with unsparing severity for his unscholarly methods and "emotional exposition," and essentially vindicating the current faith. And even this virtual equality of numbers was effected by the editorial selection of those known to hold opposite views, that the readers might hear both sides; otherwise the champions of the restoration tenets would, by their own admission, have scarcely been entitled to representation at all. And yet by this misleading statement the impression is sought to be made that nearly all the ministry are drifting away how the old moorings on this doctrine.

I desire particularly, however, to single out one such historical perversion, as especially deserving reprobation. It is in regard to the Opinion of

Luther On Eternal Punishment.

In Farrar's *Eternal Hope*, p. 218, this assertion is made: "Even LUTHER, like almost every great and true-hearted teacher, on this subject... slides unconsciously into more hopeful expressions: 'God forbid,' he says, 'that I should limit the time for acquiring faith to the present life! In the depths of the divine mercy there may be opportunity to win it in the future state.' Letters to

Hansen von Rechenberg, 1522.” Through the kindness of DR. KRAUTH, Vice-Provost of the University of Pennsylvania and member of the Old Testament division of the Bible Revision Committee, the original letter is before me. It appears in the various editions of Luther’s works, e.g. *Jena* edition ii. p. 266, *Leipzig* xxii. 303, *Walsh* x. 2314, *Erlangen* xxii. 32, etc. It is also given in *De Wette’s Luther Briefe* (Letters of Luther ii. 452), from which I quote. It appears under the title: “A letter of MARTIN LUTHER on the question, whether anyone who dies without faith can be saved.” The question is only as to the salvability of the heathen, or of those who in this present life never had an opportunity of believing and salvation.

This important limitation, it will be observed, at once essentially changes the whole aspect of the case; for the impossibility of future salvation to those who died impenitent, after having the gospel preached to them in time, is not even touched, but is assumed as settled beyond all dispute. But in reference to those going straightway to everlasting condemnation, who never had any knowledge of the gospel or opportunity to be saved in time, Luther naturally enough sees that difficulty will be raised, and he thereupon comments: “If now God saves anyone without faith, he does it contrary to his own word, he convicts himself of falsehood, yea, He denies himself, which is impossible. It would indeed be another question: Whether God could give to SOME in dying, or after death, faith, and thus save them through faith; who would doubt that he COULD do this? But that HE DOES IT NO ONE CAN PROVE (Aber dasz er es thut, KANN MAN NIGHT BEWEISEN).” LUTHER thereupon proceeds to give his opinion of the question he has raised by practically confuting the false interpretation of texts by which the attempt was made to show that God really would do so.

All that this letter therefore teaches is, that, while it is certain that those who heard the Gospel are lost irretrievably, we cannot say that God would not have the power to give an opportunity between death and the judgment for those to exercise saving faith who knew not of Christ here. But that He really will do so, Luther thinks is disproved by Scripture.⁴ Certainly the Reformer’s orthodoxy is here strict enough for the most rigid. But the words which Farrar (who in all charity we must presume had never seen the original) pretends to quote from the letter do not appear in it at all. Is it not then the most flagrant perversion to thus seek to turn Luther’s testimony directly against itself, and to attempt to use his express disavowal of heretical opinions as a prop for those identical opinions?

DR. KRAUTH, whose distinguished learning gives the greatest weight to his critical views, in a note to the author, thus expresses his judgment on this wanton prevarication: “The letter is DECISIVE AGAINST FARRAR, in whole, and in particular. There is not a sentence in it, of which the words of Farrar are a translation, either literally or as to the general sense. But. the whole letter is expressly contradictory of any such theory. If Farrar has not been misled, either by his ignorance of German, or by somebody else’s ignorance or perverseness, he is deliberately falsifying. I CANNOT RECALL A MORE IMPUDENT PERVERSION OF FACTS.”

Assuredly, a cause must be intrinsically weak, which requires to be buoyed up by such discreditable arts as these. The only solution of it is, that when history is hopelessly against us, and we have not the candor to make the admission, we must fly into the teeth of its plain records, and dissemble or pervert its testimonies. But certainly this is a sad resort for Christian teachers. The purpose of it all, however, is sufficiently clear. It is designed to stir up the prejudices of those who are not directly cognizant of the facts by personal inspection, — the laity for example, — and who would not suppose it possible for any writer of character to be capable of such misstatements of plain historical verities. Such practices, aided by meteoric showers of rhetoric, may win a temporary success in partial communities; but, assuredly, in the end, they will recoil with a double confusion on those who resort to them. As history repeats itself, so are the words of ATHANASIUS, uttered fifteen hundred years ago, applicable to this same feature in our day. “And strange it is, that while all heresies are at variance with one another concerning the mischievous intentions which each has framed, they are united together only by the common purpose of deception. Wherefore, the faithful Christian and true disciple of the Gospel, having grace to discern spiritual things, and having built the house of his faith upon a rock, stands continually firm and secure from their perversions. But the simple believer, not thoroughly grounded in knowledge, is drawn away by their wiles.”⁵

1. *Salvator Mundi*, Rev. S. Cox, p. 110. ←

2. “Most of the writers quoted hold either ‘Conditional Immortality (Annihilation). or Universalism,’ two views inconsistent with each other, and both of which the Canon disclaims and rejects. Such a heaping of

- names may be a convenient missile in an assault on implicit faith and traditional orthodoxy, but its only natural tendency is to substitute a greater evil a theological chaos of utter uncertainty and confusion of thought, and an utter shipwreck of all practical faith in the warnings of God.” — Rev. Canon Birks.↵
3. “Is it not a significant fact that, of the fifteen divines, Irish, Scotch, and English, who have been invited to criticize my sermons, all but two agree with me in refuting the main points,” etc.? — Canon Farrar, in *Contemporary Review*, June, 1878, Article Eternal Hope.↵
 4. For one among many express and solemn testimonies of Luther on this subject, couched in his terse and energetic style, see his confession concerning the Lord’s supper, Works, Erlangen edition, vol. xxx. p. 372: “Finally, I believe the resurrection of the dead on the last day, both of the pious and the wicked, that every one may receive in his body according to what he deserved; and consequently the pious shall live forever with Christ, and THE WICKED SHALL DIE FOREVER (ewiglich sterben) with the devil and his angels. For I do not approve of those who teach that even the devils will finally be saved. This is my faith, and thus all true Christians believe, and THUS THE HOLY SCRIPTURE TEACHES.”↵
 5. *Encyclical Epistle against the Arian Heretics*, chap. i. § 8.↵

3. Latent Skepticism.

THE LATENT SKEPTICISM manifesting itself in the authors opposing the orthodox faith respecting future retribution is one of their most significant characteristics. This, indeed, has ever been remarked as the natural tendency of those holding these views. Herzog's *Real-Encyclopädie* thus notes the intimate connection between these heretical tendencies by stating (p. 184), "that the eternity of future punishment has been rejected alike by the Origenists, the Mystics, and the Rationalists." Dr. Rigg thus writes: "The same Universalists who speak great words about the universal fatherhood of God, not unfrequently hold the doctrines of free love." Dr. E. Beecher likewise, in his "History of the Doctrine of Future Retribution," observes: "Universalism in America has generally been connected with a denial of the Trinity, and the evangelical views of atonement, depravity and regeneration." So another, "Universalists and Unitarians at the present time, both conservative and radical, hold to Restorationism. Likewise most of the philosophy of the day is tinctured with it."¹ And still another, writing of the era of our fathers, when rugged doctrine, evangelical power, and the demonstration of the Holy Ghost were more characteristic of Christian pulpits than they, we fear, are now, remarks: "The denial of the Eternity of Future Punishment was then generally noted as the first step which led by a rapid descent to the abandonment of the cardinal mysteries of the Gospel."

But if these tendencies were noticeable in the past, they are none the less distinctly marked in the present movement. No one having the real Christian spirit can glance even cursorily through the anti-eternal punishment literature, — the outgrowth of the present agitation, — without the emotions of surprise and regret being excited by what he finds on almost every page. Such irreverent handling of the Word of God; such rash treatment of divine mysteries; such bold and summary rejection of the most precious and universally attested articles of Faith at the merest guess of the moral sense; and such assertion of principles destructive of the whole system of Revelation, show him at once that a "stranger and foreigner" is dealing with the sacred

Christian verities, and that it is the ways and methods of a fatally hostile criticism which confront him. Everywhere lurks a latent skepticism, sometimes skilfully disguised, and sometimes breaking forth defiantly from its mask. As an instance, take the expressions of a "Layman" in the June number for 1878 of the "Contemporary Review": "Hell always has been, and still is, the standing joke of the multitude... I have been a little surprised to note the hold which the 'first fallacy' of Protestantism [that God's word is infallible — Author] still has upon people's minds. You will find, among educated and thoughtful persons, a few here and there who cannot at once see, or will not admit, that the idea of an infallible Book is as absurd as that of an infallible Pope." And lest anyone should think that this profane reviler of God's Word, and everything distinctively Christian, is by no means a just representative of the spirit of his party, Canon Farrar pronounces this decisive eulogy of him as one of the most consistent and forcible exponents of his teachings: "This is one of the papers which most powerfully supports what I desired to maintain... The remarks of the 'Layman' deserve the very earnest consideration of all who desire above all things to be faithful, honest, and true."

I select another instance from the pen of Rev. E. White, author of "Life in Christ": "That man by falling became a mere mass of absolute evil, so that he could be saved only by the legal fiction of the imputed righteousness of another, — but this MONSTROUS TEACHING is false... to all our moral sense and practical experience." Here the epithet "monstrous" is applied to that grand central doctrine of the Reformation — Justification by Faith. In answer to this, it is sufficient to quote from a letter of St. Augustine to St. Jerome: "I have learned to render to the inspired Scriptures alone the homage of a firm belief, that they have never erred; as to others, I do not believe in the things they teach, simply because it is they who teach them." Again, Bishop Ewing of Argyle, speaking of the tenet of future restoration, thus summarily sets aside all Scripture testimony in the controversy, by deciding it absolutely by the dictate of reason: "To disbelieve it would be for me to cease altogether either to trust or to worship God." Yet again; we are told in chorus by writers of this class, that it is absurd to try to build this doctrine on "such a miserable foundation as the disputed meaning of a Greek adjective,"² which is only used in nine or twelve instances to declare the doom of the wicked, and actually does not occur at all in that direful connection in several of the gospels and epistles! — just as if, by a parity of

reasoning, the Trinity, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, etc., would not have to be abandoned because they rest upon "the miserable foundation of Greek" terms whose "meanings" have been "disputed" in a thousand fierce contests; and as if we would not then have to renounce the whole fabric of the Gospel, because it all rests upon those same miserable Greek words, whose meanings somebody at some time or other has disputed, and whose repetition some nine or twelve times amounts to nothing at best!

Now, anyone at all familiar with the history of Christian doctrines, and with the heresies and schisms that have in various times crept into the Church, sowing wide the poisoned seeds of error, and even of total apostasy from the faith, will not fail to recognize at once here the genuine rationalistic or skeptical spirit. " In general, Rationalism is that tendency which, in matters of faith, makes reason the measure and rule of faith. In this general sense rationalism is met with in the history of all positive religions, and in the most varied forms."³ The arrogant assertion of the moral sense as the sole criterion of God's word, the rejection of the propitiatory sacrifice of our Lord on precisely the same grounds that made it "unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness," and the paring down of all the Christian mysteries until they can be entirely sounded, labeled, and digested by the intellectual capacity; these are its unerring marks. How totally diverse is this spirit from the evangelical criterion laid down by Barrow in his "Defense of the Blessed Trinity"⁴ "These are notions which may well puzzle our reason in conceiving how they agree, but should not stagger our faith in asserting that they are true; upon which we should meditate, not with hope to comprehend, but with dispositions to admire, veiling our faces in the presence, and prostrating our reason at the feet of wisdom so far transcending us."

The two methods, anyone will see, are as widely remote as the poles, as light and darkness, as truth and error. They simply represent the fundamental and eternal antipodes between faith and skepticism. The opposition to a reception of the doctrine of Eternal Punishment does not rest, in most instances at least, upon the honest doubt of a Scriptural basis to support it. It is but in a modern garb the specious skepticism which was thus keenly rebuked by ST. ATHANASIUS of old: "They usurp the glorious name of our Saviour, and deck themselves out in the language of Scripture, speaking indeed the words, but stealing away the true meaning thereof; and, so disguising by an artifice their real views, they become the destroyers of the souls

of those whom they lead astray.”⁵ Indeed, many of the staunchest opponents of this tenet virtually admit that the sacred oracles bear too heavily against them to be explained away. This opposition, in general, is therefore simply a phase of Rationalism. Rev. Phillips Brooks both characterizes with striking accuracy and indicates also the cure of this “party of pity” thus: “It is natural for sentimentalism and skepticism to go together, like the fever and the chill, and the same mixture of deeper faith and more conscientious duty must be medicine for both.”⁶ It is, only under another guise, the identical spirit which in Germany, a half century ago, gathered all its forces for a deadly attack upon Inspiration, the Trinity, etc., which in England assumed the skeptical garb of Deism, and which finds quite as much difficulty with the Incarnation, Miracles, and every supernatural element and incomprehensible truth in Christianity, as it does with this tenet respecting retribution. Such is the conviction of those who have most clearly examined the spirit and tendencies of this movement. Thus says Dr. H. N. Owenham, in his able work on Catholic Eschatology: “And in the next place I should like to know how many of those who are clamorous for the suppression of this doctrine, would be content with the surrender of one article only of our belief. A modern American Universalist, who inveighs fiercely against the doctrine, frankly assures us that we must be prepared to abandon with it the whole redemption plan, including the incarnation, the atonement, the bodily resurrection, and the grand climacteric of the Church scheme, the general judgment. In short, we must begin by making a holocaust of our Bibles and our creeds.”

Nor should it at all surprise us that heretical views go thus hand in hand. The gospel “is not an accidental aggregation of independent atoms, but a coherent whole. Revelation may be accepted or rejected, but you cannot pick and choose, and take as much or as little as you like.” The Christian faith is a connected system. Its fundamental truths constitute a symmetrical edifice. Accordingly, the subversion of the one necessarily involves the unsettling of the other. Each pillar is equally essential to the security of the superstructure; and if we permit a damaging assault to go unrepeled upon one, we must also upon another; and the inevitable result will be that the whole Christian temple of faith, from foundation to turret, sooner or later, must fall, a crumbling, shattered mass, to the ground.

To show how all these errors and heresies are but different branches of the parent tree of a rationalistic spirit, we need no better illustration than

that of Origen, the father of Restorationism. For in connection with that heresy he held the pre-existence of souls; that there was a double meaning in the Scriptures, and the literal was not the true one; that Christ was to be re-crucified in the next world; that the sun, moon, and stars were endowed with rational souls, etc., etc.⁷ As a further illustration, Prof. Hoppin, of Yale College, in an able and discriminating article on Prof. F. D. Maurice, in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. xxii. p. 678, while viewing that eminent Restorationist in the mildest light possible, yet gives this as the result of a critical study of his writings: "Those great spiritual truths of divine sovereignty, law, vicarious sacrifice, pardon, reward, and punishment, and their correlated truths of probation, free-Will, sin, and justification, which form the foundations of moral truth, laying their strong hands upon the conscience; these certainly do not stand out clear in his theology. We fear that a soul under his teaching would never wake from its sleep of sin to see the glorious things of which he tells. His system wants power, is in fact superficial." (It is not unworthy of mark in this connection that the father of Maurice was a Unitarian minister.)

It is not then the mere outposts but the very citadel of faith itself which is the real object of these covert efforts. Yielding a little to the enemy, soon the innermost sanctuary will be broken into and desecrated. If today we abandon what may seem indifferent, tomorrow we will be summoned to surrender the very fundamentals. As, therefore, eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, so is it the only safeguard of the precious treasure of faith; and it behooves Christians to be fully awake to the real animus of this modern attack upon the fabric of Christianity, which seeks to veil itself under a Christian name. All the more insidious is the injury effected by the enemy who refuses to confess himself a foe. Never is the spirit of unbelief so dangerous as when it "masks under a surplice." And so is our common heritage of Christianity today exposed to far greater peril from these assaults of a latent skepticism, lurking unseen in the very midst of our sanctuaries and sacred retreats, and which under the guise of religion would lull its defenders asleep, and lead unsuspecting Christians, before they are aware, into the quagmire of infidelity, than it is from such confessed, bold, and outspoken antagonists as Elizur Wright, Frothingham, and Ingersoll.

1. *Lost Forever*, p. 402.↵
2. Farrar, *Eternal Hope*, p. 199.↵
3. *Kuhn's History of German Protestantism; The Theology of Illuminism*, p. 168.↵
4. *Works*, vol. ii. p. 150.↵
5. *Encyclical Epistle against the Arian Heretics*, chap. i. sec. 6.↵
6. *Yale Lectures on Preaching*, p. 245.↵
7. For a list of these errors see Mosheim's *Church History*, vol. i. p. 168.↵

4. The Practical Outcome, Universalism.

THIS MODERN ONSET on the old faith practically amounts to Universalism. That is either its consistent logical outcome, or else it has no intelligible outcome. "Canon Farrar's hearers," says one, "felt that he was preaching something not to be practically distinguished from Universalism." This conclusion Farrar indignantly disclaims, and yet let us see how impossible it is, by his own words, for him to escape it. He says: "It may be said that four main views of Eschatology are now prevalent, viz.: I. Universalism, or as it is now sometimes termed Restorationism. II. Annihilationism, or conditional immortality. III. Purgatory. IV. The common view."¹ In summing up in regard to all these, he thereupon announces this conclusion: "I dare not lay down any dogma of Universalism. II. Nor can I at all accept the theory of Annihilationism (conditional immortality). III. Nor again, can I accept the Roman doctrine of Purgatory." And then he proceeds to pour forth ' his anathemas upon "the common view."

But how illogical is this! While denouncing the current faith, and devoting his entire volume to the effort to extinguish it by scorching torrents of rhetoric, yet, at the same time, he declares himself opposed to any of the other possible hypotheses, either Purification after Death (Purgatory), Annihilationism, or Universalism! He will tear down the old faith, but he has nothing whatever to set up in its stead. His Whole effort, then, is, to bring about a negation of existing belief! It would be well here to remind the Canon of the significant remark of Reveillaud, the French critic, in his recent pamphlet: "As to Christianity, we shall never be able to overturn it — as to suppressing the Gospel, we cannot even attempt it, for, as philosophers, we have nothing to put in its place." Archbishop TRENCH also justly remarks: "Inasmuch as no one can resist the truth by a mere negation, he must offer and oppose something positive in the room of that faith which he assails and endeavors to abolish." Farrar Very much mistakes the temper of

the times, if he thinks Christianity has so little hold upon men that they will consent to the overthrow of one of its fundamental tenets, involving the integrity of the whole Gospel, without having even a shadow substituted in its stead. Even the careless world demands some definite theory or other respecting future retribution; and he cannot expect it to be content with such an utter chaos of uncertainty upon the momentous problem of its future destiny.

But the true explanation of the Canon's dilemma is this: He teaches Universalism, but is not willing to admit it. He knows full well that that system and its legitimate fruits have been over and over again repudiated by the Church as unscriptural and immoral, and he cannot bring himself to a straightforward avowal of his real position. Therefore, while he insists with frantic energy upon the premises of Universalism, he disclaims against the legitimate and necessary conclusions. Now, what else is it but practical Universalism to which the opinions of Farrar and his party conduct? What is Universalism?

“UNIVERSALISTS.² — Those who believe in the ultimate salvation of all mankind, the wicked as well as the good. This opinion was held in ancient times by the Origenists.”

“UNIVERSALISTS.³ — A religious denomination holding the final destruction of evil, and the restoration of all souls.”

“UNEVANGELICAL.⁴ — Under this head we shall range those sects that either renounce or fail faithfully to exhibit the fundamental and saving truths of the Gospel. Neither would we be thought to put the Unitarians on the same footing with the Universalists. The moral influence of the preaching of the former, and their standing in society, make them far more valuable than the latter as a component part of the general population. . . Both Murray (the founder of the sect in America) and Winchester held the doctrine of restoration, that is, that after the resurrection and the judgment, the Wicked, after suffering in hell for a time, and in a measure proportionate to their guilt, will eventually be recovered.”

Again, What is Restorationism, the present form of opposition to eternal punishment?

“RESTORATIONISTS. — A sect of American Universalists, who maintain that modified form of Universalism which is said by them to have been the original principle of the sect, viz., that the wicked will be restored to holiness and happiness after a temporary punishment in the future life.”⁵

That is, we find in these distinguished authorities that Universalism, Origenism, and Restorationism are used as interchangeable terms, and are considered practically synonymous — substantially the same thing. The Universalists, in fact, are to a large extent simply Restorationists. Their founder, Rev. John Murray, and two large parties among them called Impartialists and Restorationists, hold that punishment, more or less prolonged, will take place after death; only that it will some time end, and ULTIMATELY all will be saved. Now, if this is not, in effect, the teaching of Farrar, why does he hurl such sharp denunciation upon the orthodox, current view; and what, in the name of all that is intelligible in thought and definite in language, does he teach? When he asks: “If it would be wholly impossible. for any wretch among us to be so remorseless as to doom his deadliest enemy to an endless vengeance — are we to believe this of God?” Then he certainly does not believe that God will do what this wretch would not, and the only conceivable result, therefore, is that all will ultimately be saved, as he expressly disavows Annihilationism. Or, when he says further: “Shall God not be able to make anything of his ruined souls — shall we be willing to pardon our prodigals and to call them-home — and shall he not be willing ’(and able) beyond the grave?”⁶ Does he not say in express terms that God shall recast again the destinies of “His ruined souls,” and that the “prodigals beyond the grave” shall still be gathered to their Father’s eternal home? And in what essential respect does this scheme differ from Universalism? The common sense of every reader will tell him that its practical outcome is the same.

One cannot hold up his hands in devout horror at the idea of God “at death passing upon every impenitent sinner an irreversible doom;”⁷ and then, in the same breath, indignantly deny that he means to say that God will not do this identical thing. If such patent contradictions and transparent inconsistencies are allowable, then all thought, discussion, and definite ideas are at an end. The unavoidable conclusion, then, is that a party in the Church is now — While seeking to veil its design under another name — engaged in the effort to promulgate Universalistic sentiments. This is all that it is important for us to ascertain.

As to Universalism itself, it is altogether needless, as it is quite out of our scope, to enter into any argument against it. The undivided voice of ’the Church denounces it as heretical. It exists as a separate and independent society. It makes no pretense to be an apartment of the orthodox household,

nor is official intercourse held with it by any evangelical denomination whatever. To the one, accordingly, whose convictions have undergone a fundamental change on this tenet, the path of duty is clear and imperative.

This is an era of the largest religious or irreligious liberty — the doors of Universalism are open; and thither should anyone to-whom the old faith has become “shocking and monstrous” resort; and there he can consistently hold and proclaim views, which order and conscience alike forbid his doing within the Evangelical Church.

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1. Preface to *Eternal Hope*, p. 13.↵
 2. *Dictionary of Sects, Heresies, Ecclesiastical Parties, and Schools of Religious Thought*. By Rev. John Henry Blunt, M.A., F.S.A.↵
 3. *New American Cyclopaedia*.↵
 4. Baird’s *Religion in America*.↵
 5. *Dictionary of Sects, Heresies, etc.*, Blunt.↵
 6. *Eternal Hope*, p. 114.↵
 7. *Eternal Hope* (Preface), p. 14.↵

5. Marring Of Christ's Redemptive Glory.

A FURTHER OBJECTION to these unscriptural teachings is the manner in which they contract the redemptive agency and mar the redemptive glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing can ever fitly explain the incarnation of the Son of God, and throw a bright ray of surpassing gladness upon that else darkest tragedy of time — the crucifixion — unless it be the wondrous Gospel story, that thereby was effected the purchase of the soul from a death and misery everlasting. The natural meaning of the Scriptural declarations, as any child would understand them, specifically sets this forth. It was that the whole future destiny of man was at stake, and there was none other remedy in heaven or on earth to save 'the lost soul from an irrecoverable wreck of its hopes. This is told in simple words —but Words that have graven themselves upon the human heart in letters of living light that can never be effaced. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). “Perish,” certainly, does not here mean temporal death, for the gift of Christ has not rescued a single mortal from that; but it can mean nothing else than the opposite of that “everlasting life,” i.e., happiness, with which it is contrasted, viz., everlasting death, i.e., misery. This is conclusively shown by other passages where that death is explained as one of conscious suffering, e.g., “He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him,” John 3:36.

The solution, then, of the otherwise impenetrable mystery of the suffering, dying Son of God is this — that, as man had incurred an infinite guilt and an everlasting ruin, there was no other redemptive method, plan, or means, than that One clothed with a divine nature should give a price of “infinite satisfaction, which Christ alone could afford,”¹ and thus set “an infinite good over against an infinite evil.”² It was requisite that an infinitely precious victim should expiate an infinitely woeful penalty of guilt.³ But let

us look at this Atonement in the light of Universalistic, or Restorationistic, views; and how does this 'all undergo a radical change! To have doomed men to endless death and infinite misery, for any crime they could have possibly committed, say these theories, is absolutely interdicted by the moral sense. To entertain such an idea would lead one "to cease altogether either to trust or to worship God." It is "false," "blasphemous," and "monstrous" for us to tolerate such "ignoble thoughts of God." We must peremptorily dismiss such "atrocious conceptions." Well, then, there was no eternal death for Christ to die for. If infinite love must render impossible such an everlasting condemnation to woe, why did not Christ "let that necessary bar stand in the way between men and perdition, instead of coming himself and exposing his own infinitely precious soul and body to the stroke of Almighty wrath, until a cry of nameless agony was wrenched from his lips, and the very heavens grew black with appalling horror at his infinite woe? Why, then, that joy, unfathomed in depth, which fills the world like a wave of golden peace rolling down from the eternal heights, at the birth of the Saviour of Mankind? If we were not "lost," not undone forever, not ruined beyond other remedy; if we do not see herein our escape from unending perdition, and our ransom from the worm that never dies, — if all these Gospel presentations are but shadows, nightmares, superstitions, and pious frauds, impossible with a just God,— then our whole conception of Christ's incarnation, death, and atoning work will be essentially contracted, narrowed, and marred.

Or if Purgatorial pains — the glowing billows of a purifying lake of fire — are to do for us what Christ's blood was powerless to effect; then something is more efficacious, saving, and precious than his blood; and the hereafter, and hell, where He is not, are a better stage for redemption, than this world where He is, to endow with his personal efficacy the agencies of grace.

It is, then, when we take our stand in the presence of the Crucified One, and when we plant ourselves upon the Evangelical doctrine of the Atonement, — which more than any other Gospel truth has touched the stony heart of mankind, — that we see the dangerous, baleful, and far-reaching impairment in which these erroneous views involve the whole scheme of divine redemption. Yea, "how completely does all this rob the cross of Christ of its glory, its grandeur, its true moral efficacy!" It mars the brightest effulgence of divine love; it silences the sweetest strain of celestial song that

ever floated its glad tidings. of hope into the ears of a world bowed down in the darkness of despair; it plucks the very diadem ineffable from the brow of the King of Sorrows; and it hushes the deepest note of thanksgiving rapture in the everlasting song of the saints as they recount the story ' of their rescue from eternal death, and ascribe it to the Lamb, saying: "For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood" (Rev. 5:9).

This is far from being the language of emotion. But we present the barest skeleton of fact when we say, that to dispute the right and the fact of condemnation to everlasting misery, and the possibility of the impenitent soul yet falling into its hopeless depths, is to take away the distinctive and crowning significance of the incarnation, passion, and redemption of Jesus Christ our Lord, and to reduce that surpassing work to but the payment of a temporal, finite debt, which could have been accomplished equally as well by a human, or at least an angelic agency.

It is the explicit truth, therefore, as remarks the devout MARTENSEN, that "The Christian consciousness of salvation would lose its deepest reality, were the doctrine of eternal condemnation surrendered."

Resort to all subterfuges, devise all evasions, and cover, it up by all concealment that we may, it must then come to this at last, that, if the moral sense unconditionally negatives everlasting punishment as impossible, no matter how specific the Scriptures may testify in its favor, then men would not have been doomed to endless misery, even though Christ had not died; and then Christ is no more a Redeemer from remediless and infinite pains; and through all eternity this consideration must radically mar the glory, the preciousness, and the surpassing beauty with which his person and his name infinitely thrill those who. look upon him as their ransom from everlasting burnings.

Was it not, then, with the fiery billows of a wrath infinite as God, and a death endless as eternity, that our Saviour was struggling with all his divine majesty, while passing through the sea of his Passion; and was it for anything less than their everlasting weal that he strove so hard to bring his burden of immortal souls to the shores of triumph, that they might shine forever as stars of rejoicing in his heavenly diadem?

He who answers this question in the negative — whether he mean it or no — yet thereby does darken the brightness of the infinite victory of "the only begotten of the Father," and does impair the fulness of the truth that—

“Redemption is the science and the song
Of all eternity.”

“This belief is necessary to teach us to make a fit estimate of the price of Christ’s blood, to value sufficiently the work of our redemption, to acknowledge and admire the love of God to us in Christ. For he which believeth not the eternity of torments to come, CAN NEVER SUFFICIENTLY VALUE THAT RANSOM by which we were redeemed from them, or be proportionately thankful to his Redeemer, by whose intervention we have escaped them. Whereas, he who is sensible of the loss of heaven and the everlasting privation of the presence of God, of the torments of fire, the company of the devil and his angels, the vials of the wrath of an angry and never-to-be-appeased God, and hopeth to escape all these by virtue of the death of his Redeemer, cannot but highly value the price of that blood, and be proportionately thankful for so”plenteous a redemption.”⁴

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1. *Schmid’s Doctrinal Theology*, p. 374.↩
 2. *Ibid.*↩
 3. Commenting upon those weighty words in Heb. 9:14, “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works?” SEB-SCHMIDT beautifully says: “Jam vero cum hic Spiritus aeternus adeoque infinitus sit, utique pandas moriti at satisfactionis, quod ab eodem Spiritu est, aeternum at infinitum est. Quod si aeternum et infinitum sit, no quidem infinita Dei justitia in so aliquid deciderari potuit.”↩
 4. *Exposition of the Creed*, Pearson, article xii. p. 589.↩

6. Encouragement To Postpone Repentance.

AGAIN: The result of this endeavor to abrogate the distinctive force of the evangelical warnings respecting divine punishment can have this only result, to hold out encouragement to men to postpone repentance. It will but serve to allay their anxiety concerning their future eternal condition, to flatter their carnal hopes, and to steep them into a yet profounder moral apathy. Once satisfy men that postponement of their opportunity will not hazard its loss forever, and they will be infallibly certain to follow their present inclinations, and defer the taking up the cross until tomorrow. Full easily now are the souls of men beguiled by Satan's voice; but no more enticing siren than this does he want to "send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned" (2 Thes. 2:11), without making scarce even an effort to resist his wiles. When the multitude are once convinced, as says one of these writers, that "the divine work of discipline goes on behind as well as before the veil," or that the "redemption of Christ," as says another, "will operate under more favorable conditions" and surely with "more power and happier effects" in the next world than in this, they will be far less concerned about attending to that discipline here, and far more inclined to procrastinate repentance and abandonment of their sins.

Or, when Farrar, addressing sinners, cries to them, in terms that startle one familiar with the strangely diverse and awakening tone that pervades the gospel: "Think noble things of God, be sure that Christ's... plenteous redemption means the conversion of earth's sinners, far off it may be, but at last into God's saints;" and when, growing bolder, he actually holds out this invitation to them to go on in sin: "Have faith in God: there is hope for you; hope for you, even if death overtake you before the final victory is won,"¹ what moral teacher familiar with the desire of the carnal spirit to be lulled into security, can see anything else here than a strong and seducing encouragement for the sinner to put away all concern of the thought of death over-

taking him in his sins? And when Rev. S. Cox asserts, of the tremendous words uttered by our Lord of the hopeless doom of the wicked, that they can mean no more than “a punishment or discipline, which does not extend beyond a definite, and probably A VERY SHORT PERIOD OF TIME,”² will not the great majority take advantage of such softly voluptuous invitations to pluck all the sweets of time, assured that with very little trouble afterwards, they will get the blissful pearls of eternity notwithstanding?

JONATHAN EDWARDS truthfully remarks, of the drift of such flaccid conceptions of guilt and its punishment as these, that “the same habit of mind that is the main ground of the cavils of many of the modern freethinkers against the extremity and eternity of hell-torments, if given way to, would cause them to be dissatisfied with almost anything that is very uncomfortable in a future punishment. In short, there will be no satisfying the infidel humor; anything that men are very averse to bear... would be opposed as exceedingly inconsistent with the moral perfections of God.”³

The tendency of such rash proclamations certainly then can be none other than to stupefy the moral sense, and to sink it yet the deeper in that mire of sinful indulgence which even now almost totally immerses it. “The preaching of the Universalists,” says Baird’s *Religion in America*, “positively exercises no reforming influence on the wicked, and what worse can be said of it?”

And this is a reflection at which even the most reckless herald of such views should come to a pause. If the design of preaching is to quiet the apprehensions, to lethargize the conscience, to lay vigilance asleep, to render men content with their present condition, and to hold out a prospect of salvation though they die in a state of impenitence, would not such preaching as this better be dispensed with altogether? This is the question to consider. Is it at all necessary or wise to encourage the postponement of repentance? Does not the old enemy within the soul, and the voice of the carnal heart, sufficiently preach this to the young and worldly and sensual, as well as to all classes, already? Is there any special necessity for a Church with all its ministers and sacraments and services and costly equipments, and toiling, sacrificing bands of incessant workers, merely to pour with indignant voice into the sinner’s ears that contradiction of the admonitory voice of God, which Satan ages ago whispered into the ear of Eve: “Ye shall not surely die?” (Gen. 3:4).

But rather is not such false and ill-advised preaching accessory to the eternal damnation of the soul? A solemn thing, indeed, it is to proclaim repentance, purification, and salvation after death to men too anxious already to believe such a bewitching fable: and when the great day has come, and the books are opened, and the awful sentence goes out from the great white throne, which adjudges Death and Hades with all their countless souls to the lake of fire, which is the “second death,” the death that never dies, and in whose burning deeps they “shall be tormented day and night forever and ever” (εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων), Rev. 20:10; will not these souls be a withering witness against those whose illusive counsels deceived them, and, though they have died in their iniquity and their ruin is irreversible, yet will not God require their blood at that watchman’s hand, who blew not the trumpet to warn them of their danger, but misled them with seducing strains of peace and safety? For even thus it is written: “When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die, if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand.” Ezek. 33:8.

But even aside from its awful future bearings, why those professing to be Christian ministers should have such a zeal to bring men to the Opinion that they can risk the postponement of repentance and piety to a period beyond the present life, it is impossible to comprehend. Is there not enough of moral supineness in the world? Is there not quite too much disregard of conscience, and too little trembling at the monitions of God’s word? Are there not too many persons now who have neither the fear of God nor of man before their eyes, and who trample with equal ruthlessness upon laws human and divine? Is not the tide of infidelity and ungodliness rolling full strong and high everywhere, threatening to engulf the very fabric of social life and virtue in its vortex? and what is there to intimidate it except those everlasting menaces which the messengers of God are to announce as impending over the ungodly, and ready to be executed by the devouring sword of Omnipotence, unless they speedily turn from their evil ways, wash their hands clean from bribes and lusts and blood, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance?

An eloquent modern divine well says: “No exhortation to a good life that does not put behind it some truth as deep as eternity can seize and hold the conscience.” And so, he who goes to the wicked and hardened and vile with any admonition which stops short of saying, “Today” repent, or tomorrow

die “forever,” fails to present the divine message backed by its awful sanction of eternity; and but confirms the sinner in that moral indifference which will hold him in its spell until he opens his eyes to a fate fixed beyond recall.

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1. *Eternal Hope*, p. 88.↩
 2. *Salvator Mundi*, Rev. S. Cox, p. 75.↩
 3. *On Endless Punishment*, Works, vol. i. 642.↩

7. Shall We Abandon The Old Gospel?

IT REQUIRES no astuteness of mind to see how totally all this is removed from the old Gospel — the Gospel which upon the tongues of apostles caused men to fall trembling upon their knees, crying out, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” — the Gospel, which upon the lips of martyrs nerved them to expose their quivering limbs to a but temporary contrasted with “that unquenchable fire” — the Gospel, which has moved missionaries of the cross to lay “the life that now is” upon the altar of sacrifice that they might proclaim the priceless news of salvation to those in danger of losing “that life which is to come” — the Gospel, which our fathers preached, and under whose benign and not “repelling,” as we are now to be told, influence, were originated all those modern charities, beneficent activities, and evangelical societies which are today the glory of civilization — the Gospel, under whose colors Christianity has made its entrance upon this world’s theater, under which it has fought all its stupendous battles, and won all its splendid triumphs in the past, by which it has ever been known to foes as well as friends, and in whose name and by whose identical truths we humbly trust it shall go on, until the remotest time and the furthest inhabitable space can alone compass its mighty dominion!

This old Gospel told men that “sin” was in very truth the worst of all maladies, the direst of all offenses; that its “sting” was “the law” of divine doom against it to everlasting misery; that its just desert was a penalty immeasurable in degree and duration; that nothing less than an infinite sacrifice, even the eternal Lamb of God, was adequate to effect the release of these penalties; that through this all-prevailing ransom alone God became reconciled to offending man, and to those exercising faith and repentance — conditions to be complied with inside a certain limit, styled “the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2) — a full pardon was freely extended.

"Plunged in a gulf of dark despair
We wretched sinners lay,
Without one cheerful beam of hope,
Or spark of glimmering day.

"He spoiled the powers of darkness thus,
And broke our iron chains;
Jesus has freed our captive souls
From everlasting pains."

"Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:11), this old Gospel "persuaded" men in hot haste to "flee from the wrath to come," before that ominous morn unveiling its "vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7) had broken upon them, which would Whelm them in a "Sodom and Gomorrah" of destruction, from which they should rise no more. And its proclamation was followed in those who had not hitherto known it, by an awakening in which the infinite guilt of sin was revealed, and then by a grasping of God's unutterable love in Christ, which filled the soul with a peace passing understanding, and inspired it by a sense of holy zeal to rescue fellow sinners from that direful woe, which by God's abounding grace it had escaped.

And who shall tell the powerful motives, the sharp contritions, and the blessed satisfactions which this Gospel has ever brought to the heart transfixed by it? Or, who shall describe the comfort it has offered to the weary, and struggling; the strength to the weak and feeble knees; and the unspeakable consolation to the dying, as, instead of threatening untold millenniums of purgatorial agony as the path to future blessedness, it held up to the vision of the soul going down into the darkening shadows of the vale of death "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, which cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7), and through which he could enter at once into the heavenly Paradise?

Yea! verily, this Gospel had power, — the pious it cheered with the entrancing spiritual beauty of "the Rose of Sharon," and led them to "feed among the lilies" of the "valley" of delight, to them the "lips" of its precious counsel "dropped as the honeycomb," and "a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon" (Cant. 4:15), were its voices of life; but to the wicked was its "neck clothed with thunder," its warnings were "like as a fire and a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces" (Jer. 23:29), and its sharp and powerful denunciations were a "two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow" (Heb. 4:12), and a "stone" that "ground to powder" the stiff-necked

soul upon which, at last, its dire maledictions were ordained to fall. It aroused the conscience; it melted the heart; it girded up the will; it terrified the profane; it inspired the zeal of the saints; it was the leaven of society; the moral conservator of mankind; and a lawgiver whose authority, even as the sceptre of God, was revered alike by those who hated as well as by those who loved it.

And are we quite ready to exchange this old Gospel, — with its moral backbone, with its stern realities, with its sword in one hand and cross in the other, with its foot firmly resting upon those tremendous verities which go down to the everlasting deeps of God's natural and moral creation, — for the languid sentimentalities, and the pacifying phrases, of this modern evangel which seeks to supplant it? Are we, at this date, in the nineteenth century of the history of the Gospel, to begin to hedge, and soften, and adapt ourselves to the arrogant demands of “the latest criticism,” and make peace with the skeptical spirit of the times, by telling the world that it must not tolerate such “ignoble thoughts of God,” as to believe that he would proceed to extremities with sin; that it must cherish “a larger hope” than apostles, evangelists, and martyrs knew; that we must have “faith in God that, even if death overtake us” before we have made our calling and election sure, it will still be well with us? If so, then the Gospel, which of old time clave for itself a pathway of living light through the nations of the earth, parts with its muscular fiber, and is shorn of its Samsonian locks by the Delilah of modern effeminacy. Then farewell to old-timed evangelical conversion; then the stress, and conflict, and throes of the new birth will be felt no more; then Christianity ceases to be the moral lever of the world, and it will be laid by as worn out, effete, and in its dotage; while a new religion (which will, by no means, be Universalism, Restorationism, or Annihilationism), with a moral unequivocacy and vigor which will make it adequate to the wants of men beset by real dangers, confronted by real and un pitying enemies, and needing real consolation, will take its place. What better word can we append here than the warning voice of ST. HILARY (354 A.D.), one of the most eminent and godly fathers of the Primitive Church, given in a letter to the Emperor Constantine? Who can read it without feeling the singular propriety with which it addresses itself to the dangers, and rebukes the tendencies of our times: “Recognize,” says this father, “the FAITH WHICH IS OF OLD. For while they, from whom this is required, write their own notions, and do not preach those things which are of God, they have brought around

with them the eternal circle of error, and of the conflict always returning upon itself.. It is very dangerous, and even pitiable, for us, that there should be as many paths as there are inclinations, and that there should be as many doctrines as there are varieties of morals, while either forms of faith are written as they are Wished, or are understood as they are wished. And whereas, according to the one God, and one Lord, and one baptism, there is but one faith, we depart out of that faith which is the only one, and while many faiths are being made, it has begun to come to this, THAT THERE IS NO FAITH.”

But as this Gospel has been the anchor of hope and safety to Iran in all generations, as it has proven its power to assuage those griefs and heal those diseases for which no other remedy could be found, mankind will not suffer it to be lost, but will cling to it with a devotion which will ratify the eternal fiat that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

MATTHEW ARNOLD, who represents one of the very highest points of a humanitarian culture, and who rejects much of what he is pleased to term the “semi-scientific apparatus” of Church doctrine, yet considers that in this intense reality of human needs, and in that remedy which the Gospel alone can bring, lies that secret power of Christianity for mankind, which invests it with the “germ” of a life that cannot die. He says: “A cure, a divine cure, for the bondage and the misery [of men] has been found for nearly two thousand years to lie in the word, the character, the influence of Jesus. In this cure resides the power and the permanence of the Christian religion. The power and permanence come from Christianity’s being a real source of cure for a real bondage and misery?”¹

We may safely rest, therefore, in the convictions thus eloquently expressed: “We live amid closing histories, and amid falling institutions; there is an axe laid at the root of many trees; foundations of fabrics have been long giving way, and the visible tottering commences. A great volume of time is now shutting, the roll is folded up for the registry, and we must open another. Never again — never, though ages pass away— never any more under the heavens shall be seen forms, and fabrics, and structures that we have seen. The mold in which they were made is broken, and their successors will be cast from a new mold. But there will remain the Christian Creed and the Christian Church to enlighten ignorance, to fight with sin, and to conduct men to eternity.”²

1. *Mixed Essays*, by Matthew Arnold, p. 114.↩
2. *University Sermons*, Rev. J. B. Mozley, D.D., p. 24.↩

8. “Pale Negations.”

ONE OF THE MOST suggestive thoughts is the failure of a Revelation emasculated of its positive elements, to satisfy the objections or propitiate the hostility of its opponents. As long as the name of Faith is worn, even enemies demand that such supernatural claims he insisted upon, and such super-rational doctrines be held, as will make Revelation a proper Individuality, — a vitalized Form, — a Body, clothed in flesh and blood, — in stead of an unsubstantial specter, whose shadowy features come and go, deepen and vanish, like the dancing streamers of an aurora. Even the skeptical world feels the need of the leaven of a real religion as a healthful counterpoise to the hopeless contradictions, incongruities, and emptinesses of unbelief; and accordingly it looks with contempt upon a religion too time-serving to maintain courageously its distinctive dogmas, too weak to stand by miracle and mystery; and it turns longingly to one which will speak with the positiveness and certainty and authority of a messenger from God.

That incisive thinker, RALPH WALDO EMERSON, in a recent article in the “North American Review,” well reflects the existence of this sentiment as follows: “The religion of seventy years ago was an iron belt to the mind, giving it concentration and force. A rude people were kept respectable by the determination of thought on the eternal world. Now men fall abroad — want polarity — suffer in character and intellect.. Luther would cut his hand off sooner than write theses against the pope, if he suspected that he was bringing on with all his might the pale negations of Boston Unitarianism. I will not now go into the metaphysics of that reaction by which in history a period of belief is followed by an age of criticism, in which wit takes the place of faith in leading spirits. I will not now explore the causes of the result, but the fact must be conceded as of frequent recurrence, and never more evident than in our American Church. To a self denying, ardent Church, has succeeded a cold, intellectual race, who analyze the prayer and psalm of their forefathers, and reject every yoke of authority and custom with a petulance unprecedented. It is a sort of mark of probity to declare

how little you believe, and we have punctuality for faith, and good taste for character.”

What could be a more painful reproach than that strong thinkers like these outside the Church must mourn over the decadence of faith within the Church? And what could be a more suggestive monitor to Christians that the emasculation of the faith, the mutilation of the sacred canon, the softening down of sharply defined doctrines, and the trailing in the dust of the lofty Christian standards, are the last means which will disarm the opposition of unbelievers, win their respect, or induce them to the acceptance of the Gospel? On the contrary, their antagonism is not to the faith, because of its being such a faith as it is, but because it is faith, and if they shall ever yield to its claims at all, they will far sooner be conquered by a faith proper, — with supernatural characteristics, with a historic unity linking together the conservative past and the progressive present, with a voice that speaks with ‘an authority divine, with a positiveness that gives the soul something to rest all its doubts and misgivings and fears upon, — than they ever will to a Religion so volatilized in the retort of Reason that it is the mere vapor of a Faith.

The deeper moral earnestness of an age clinging to positive religious beliefs, which Mr. Emerson here so aptly characterizes, is also remarked by Dr. Kahn in a strong and beautiful passage, delineating the religious life of the seventeenth century, the era of doctrinal formations: “During almost the greater portion of the seventeenth century, in all the evangelical countries of Germany, from the prince down to the beggar, it was thought to be of paramount necessity to know in whom one believed, and to walk according to this faith. In the houses, Bible and hymn book were the first and the last, the most faithful advisers in all the events of life, a rod and staff in the path of tribulation and death. In the higher, as well as in the elementary schools, the Confession of the fathers was considered as the chief knowledge; to be regular in attending the house of the Lord, and in coming to the table of the Lord, formed part of the public honor. All the ordinances of rank, of law, of state, were connected with religion. The ministerial order could, with the word of God, reprove delinquencies with which no human candor could venture to deal. In short, religion was the rule of domestic and public life. But since [‘the breaking up by negative criticism in the eighteenth century’], we see this power of religion over life disappearing more and more.”¹

Pale negations are not what the hungering spirit of man seeks. Skepticism has all too full a supply of these already. Take, for instance, the light buffoonery of Voltaire's indifferentism: "Worshippers of one God, friends of men, forbearing with the superstition which we reject, — we honor every society, do violence to no sect; we never speak with mockery or contempt of Jesus who is called Christ. On the contrary, we consider him as a man distinguished by his zeal, by his virtue, by his love to his brethren. We lament over him as a reformer, perhaps somewhat too inconsiderate," etc. Or the cold and withered garlands with which a noted modern infidel (Ingersoll) decks the cheerless stone that marks his brother's grave: "Every life, no matter if its every hour is rich with love, and every moment jeweled with a joy, will, at its close, become a tragedy as sad and deep and dark as can be woven from the warp and woof of mystery and death. Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry. From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead there comes no word."

Ah! verily, none know so well, down in their deepest experiences, as do the votaries of Reason how unsatisfying their idol has proved, and how utterly powerless she has been to minister to man's deeper and eternal wants. And, accordingly, the soul starved upon such barren mountains of belief, can only be drawn down into the valleys of Religion by the warm sunshine, the cheering bloom, and the rich harvests of a faith living, vivid, and real. It is well for us to see that this is the deadliest danger of Protestantism. Why is it that so highly cultured an age as this should, when it does turn away from the dreary spectacle of unbelief, so often cast its gaze in the direction of Romanism, with its glaring superstitions and its outward glamors, as a bourne to which the chafed and baffled spirit looks for repose? Because when the heart does believe it believes implicitly; it believes with all its might; and it must then have celestial mysteries, doctrines which fill and overflow the narrow receptacle of reason, — an authority which for the very same cause that it compels respect also conveys assurance. And if Protestantism, by showing a false charity to these negative movements, will exhibit too little of the distinctive features of a veritable and supernatural religion, then the famished human spirit will go to Romanism; for, to the true disciple, always rather too much than too little. Let us see to it that we do not by a tendency of compromise with the critical spirit of the times justify the charges of

Bossuet's Variations of Protestantism, or that we do not Warrant the critique pronounced by the subjective philosopher, Fichte, upon the so called Protestant Nicolai, who, in the name of liberty of thought and of Protestantism, opposed every thing which 'had any depth whatever: "His Protestantism," says Fichte, "was a protestation against all truth which pretended to remain truth, against all that is above our senses, and against every Religion which by faith puts an end to dispute. His liberty of thinking was freedom from all that was and is thought, the licentiousness of empty thinking without substance and aim."

Let us not then when men "ask for bread give them a stone," let us not come to them in their temptations and moral perils with mere negations of future punishment, and glosses of the direly terrible realities of God's word, but let us hold out to them as they struggle in the billowy sea of uncertainty "a more sure word of prophecy" (2 Pet. 1:15), — the lifeboat of the gospel — the ship of the Church, the ark of God, launched ages ago; unchanged by time; saving sinners from the ocean of death; and saving them by that divinely ordained plan which is "the same yesterday, today, and forever"; and without which deliverance there remains nothing for them but a destruction woeful as everlasting. The vortex of utter unCertainty and blank infidelity into which we will be drawn by deserting this only tenable ground, the sure foundation of Scripture, is remarkably illustrated by the conclusion to which one of these modern interpreters is brought by his latitudinarian methods: "We find in the word of God no clear disclosures of the final estate, whether of the good or of the bad. The New Testament HAS NOTHING to say of our final estate."² Thus step by step, every truth, every reality, every hope is to be frittered away, and pagan darkness to return. I cannot forbear here adding a similar note of warning from a quarter so unexpected that it bears a peculiar significance: "The very thing we need most to shun, is the dogmatism of mere negations. Mere anti-Trinitarianism cannot by any possibility make me reverent or devout, and a ministry of negations is utterly fruitless; nay worse, harmful, demoralizing, contemptible. A Church which lays intense emphasis on what it does not believe, and whose members know not how to express any article of faith without a negative particle, is a nursery of skepticism and infidelity, and nothing better."³

"Pale Negations" have had their day; time and again they have made a noisy diversion on the world's theater, but as often they have perished by their own inanity. It is always a positive faith that wins the day. What could

have been more threatening than the onset of English Deism made by such a brilliant galaxy as Herbert, Hobbes, and Spinoza (Holland) in the seventeenth century, and Hume, Gibbon, and Ealingbroke of the eighteenth century, sustained by such princes in the literary world as the French Rousseau and Voltaire? So propitious indeed seemed the prospect for the speedy and utter extinction of Christianity in that frivolous and licentious age, that the latter even dared to prophecy that in ten years Jesus would be cast down from the throne of human thought. Likewise in the eighteenth century in Germany, how dreary was the outlook with the Wows, and Bahrds, and Kants, and Lessings, hurling their thunderbolts of destructive criticism against inspiration, miracles, the Trinity, and all the supernatural claims and doctrines of revelation? Almost solitary amid the devouring floods and exciting but derisive sneers stood the evangelical Harms uplifting the simple banner of old. And yet before that lowly ensign emblazoned with the cross of Christ, and bearing the legend of the faith of all time, the hosts of German Illuminism (and of English and French Deism as well) have long since been scattered to the winds, so that of the thirty Universities “in that most learned land of the globe,” all but one are now Evangelical in spirit. A feature peculiar to the contest in Germany, however, was that there skepticism took shelter in the Church, and from that entrenched position sought to betray the Christian doctrines over to the insolent demands of a hostile criticism. “The one purpose of these different kinds of rationalism was to form a barrier against the revival of Reformation faith; for liberty of thought and doctrine seemed to those who had appropriated only the negative side of Protestantism to be threatened by a restoration of Evangelical Church order. Encouraged by the movement dating from Strauss, they united themselves into an association known as ‘Friends of Light,’ and claimed, as enemies to all ‘constraint of symbols,’ an unlimited freedom of doctrine WITHIN THE CHURCH.”⁴ The result — one that every thoughtful Christian should take to heart — was, that, while only contempt was excited in the camp of unbelief, the Church herself suffered almost a paralyzing blow; and not until a return was made to the high evangelical standpoint of the Reformation era, did she escape the well-nigh mortal peril, and regain her old-time ascendancy over princes and people, as well as over critical scholars and skeptical philosophers themselves. And it is just the same today. The assault from without is ever inherently impotent. Says Joseph Cook in one of his Boston lectures: “Has skepticism ever printed a book that has gone into a second edition? I

do not know of a single infidel book over a hundred years old that has not been put on the upper neglected shelf by scholars.” It is not then this thin and “pale” skepticism that is to be feared, but the true danger is when the Church herself displays signs of weakness. Let then her sentinels stand firm. The old faith alone will conquer; the old creeds will still prove the impregnable’ bulwarks; the positive doctrines must stand out again in their sharp and unbroken outlines; and the beliefs of Christendom, as cast for us by Christ and the apostles, and as defined in the early centuries, and brought forth and brightened in the Reformation period, will stand fast and prevail when all opposition has been shattered and when the raging tempest has died away into the stillest of calms.

What is required then is unfaltering confidence and unwavering fidelity upon the part of those public representatives who are pledged by their holy ordination vows to maintain the evangelical doctrines. When these begin to falter upon the old affirmations and to attemper their voice to an echo of the skeptical chorus, then, and then alone, is Christianity in peril. Both in ancient and in modern times has the Church encountered this evil. Witness the solemn admonition of Jehovah: “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you; they make you vain; they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord. They say The Lord hath said Ye shall have peace: and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you.” Jer. 23:16, 17. Speaking of the prevalent and convenient fatalism of the day as thus “conducting to the absolute abandonment of” any idea of judgment or accountability whatever," a noted evangelical preacher fitly says: “What preaching can you meet it with? It must be positive preaching. There never was an age when negative preaching, the mere assertion of What is not true, shows its uselessness as it does today... You must preach positively, telling man What is true, setting God before his heart, and bidding it know the Lord.”⁵

Such also is the testimony of the vigorous and cultured thinker DR. MOZLEY: “It is Christian doctrine which lays hold on the human heart. If We would have the tone of society elevated, greater conscientiousness imparted to trade; greater liberality in one class toward another; more public spirit; more benevolence; if we would have the covetous and grasping temper of commerce curbed; more contentedness in society; more peace and good-Will; the blessed result must come from the preaching of Christian doc-

trine.”⁶ How contrary to this is the negativeness of the Restoration preaching, of which take this instance: “This is merely negation of belief, not assertion. It does not allow me to say that I do believe in the restoration or in the annihilation of the wicked, or in anything else, as an affirmative thought about them. I simply do not know enough to have an opinion. I have no faith in any proposition.”⁷ Elsewhere this divine even declares the “chance” of the Pagan “Metempsychosis” preferable to being “impaled on the bare points of orthodoxy”!

This is the lesson for the time, a positive tone in our faith and in our preaching. The Christian citadel does not want defensive negations (the more especially when they are a surrender of her vital doctrine), but positive affirmations, aggressive assaults, hurling the force of everlasting truths, threatenings, and promises upon the hardened hearts of men; forewarning them of the judgment to come; of life eternal on one hand, and death unending upon the other; not yielding the gospel to human caprice; but compelling the willful caprice of men to yield to it, and bow to its infinite authority, unchangeability, and power.

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1. *History of German Protestantism*, p. 281.↵
 2. *Salvator Mundi*, pp. 198—9.↵
 3. Professor Peabody (of Harvard University) in *Unitarian Review*, January, 1877, pp. 72-74.↵
 4. Dorner’s *History of Protestant Theology*, vol. ii. p. 399.↵
 5. *Yale Lectures on Preaching*. Phillips Brooks, p. 224.↵
 6. *Sermons preached before the University of Oxford*, by J. B. Mozley, D.D., p. 290.↵
 7. *The Valley of the Shadow*, Eight Sermons on Future Punishment, by Charles H. Hall, D.D.↵

9. Conclusion

UNSPEAKABLY SOLEMN is the theme of this investigation. So momentous are the consequences dependent upon its right solution, that one cannot contemplate them without profound emotion. Wonderful is this Universe, material and moral; wonderful the situation of man in time; and surpassingly wonderful his destiny in the future! Strange are the truths — sublimely strange, and subduing the soul with awe — that compass us on all sides; but none so tremendous as those, dependent upon the lapse of the river of Time into the ocean of Eternity. Eternity, fearful thought! —

“What is eternity? can aught
Paint its duration to the thought?
Tell all the sand the ocean laves,
Tell all its changes, all its waves,
Or, tell with more laborious pains,
The drops its mighty mass contains;
Be this astonishing account
Augmented with the full amount
Of all the drops that clouds have shed,
Where'er their wat'ry fleeces spread,
Through all time's long protracted tour,
From Adam to the present hour;—
Still short the sum, nor can it vie
With the more numerous years that lie
Embosomed in eternity.
Attend, O man, with awe divine,
For this eternity is thine.” — Gibbons.

What care, what patience, what accuracy should we then display in our inquiries as to the Scriptural statements and warnings pertaining thereto, that we may not be building our eternal house upon a foundation of sand! Upon such a theme, we have just reason to infer that those oracles ordained for our everlasting guidance would give forth no uncertain sound.

And we think that we have demonstrated that there is not the slightest ambiguity in their testimony. We have “searched the Scriptures” in their

pure original, and have found their declarations definite, positive, corroborative, and multitudinous. We have heard the prophecies of old, — we have hearkened to the words which fell from the mouth of the Divine Teacher himself, — and we have examined the writings of evangelists and apostles. And to settle indisputably the force of the words they employed, we have summoned to our aid the critical authority of the most eminent philologists and lexicographers. We have ascertained from the views prevalent among the Jews in the time of Christ the construction which they would be most likely to put upon his words, — we have read the glowing pages of the pious fathers of antiquity, — we have heard the voice of the Church in her primitive purity and fidelity, in that era when she shone forth as the ideal for the imitation of all future ages, — we have listened to the words of the holy martyrs, pronounced by lips quivering with the agony of the flames, — we have cited individual confessions presented to the Roman emperors, — we have called in review those OEcumenical creeds of the early unsevered Church, whose unquestioned and universal authority are still the sublimest monuments of Christian unity, — we have had recourse to the particularistic creeds of the Reformation era (Protestant, Roman, and Oriental), — we have presented as witnesses the beliefs of the various branches of Christendom in the present day, — we have sought out the light which Reason or Natural Religion casts upon the problem, — we have, too, investigated the objections of opponents; — and all concur in the one, unanimous, accordant, unequivocal testimony that the eternity of Future Punishment is a vital doctrine of the Bible, a tenet universally held and confessed by the evangelical Church, and an article fundamental to the integrity and completeness of the Christian Faith.¹

To let go this article of Christian doctrine, our hymns must be re-written, our prayers re-composed, our liturgies re-modeled, our creeds re-cast, our evangelical doctrines of Sin and the Atonement re-adjusted, our historic unity with the Church of all ages and of all lands broken off, our faith, our fears, and our hopes vitally re-molded, and our Bible itself must be expurgated, not only of its deepest and weightiest words, and of its most intensely significant individual passages, but of a warp of implication which runs through its every page from Genesis to Revelation. And are we, in the face of the overwhelming testimony to the contrary, ready for such a sweeping, wholesale, and radical holocaust of cherished and venerated faiths? The voice of the Christian world thunders back, No! Those who are prepared to

entertain the total abandonment of Christianity may be ready for such a procedure, but not others.

We may rest quite assured, then, that where the Church has always stood, she will continue to stand. She has witnessed, the rise of many an attack of unbelief; she has withstood the onset when the assault raged the hottest; and she has lived on to the hour when the tempest died out harmlessly at her feet. And thus will it be again. This same great lesson shall be repeated before our eyes. When this present confederated assault has spent its force, Christendom will be found, as before, still united in that consensus of all the centuries of Christian thought which has characterized her belief on this article of the Revelation of God. And may her unanimous preaching of so tremendous a truth, accompanied with its equally significant truth of a redemption provided. have the effect to render men speechless before that ever-unanswered challenge of St. Paul: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Heb. 2:3. And thus convicted, may they escape the second and never-dying death of eternity now, while the Door of Rescue stands wide Open, and while "the Spirit and the bride say Come." Rev. 22:17.

Our task is done. To us, indeed, it has not been a pleasant, but a sad one. But fidelity to the message of the Great King, and a conscientious obligation to declare the naked truth to the souls of men, that they might not die under a strong delusion, have been our single motive. Meanwhile, let not our emotion over these truths, so thrilling to contemplate, take the form of repining. Their true effect should but be to break the spell of moral apathy, and quicken holy zeal to run well the Christian race. For, let us ever remember, that, as the rainbow spans the storm, so in the forefront of all this deep-background of mystery glows this radiant truth, that "God is love," — pure, unmingled, surpassing, and infinite kindness and beneficence. And further, that "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all," 1 John. 1:5; and therefore our faith may rest in sure repose, even though the Universe quake with the righteous and terrible judgments of the everlasting Monarch, that He is ordering all things according to a course infinitely wise, good, and blessed; and that all the doubts and fears and shadows that darken the horizon of our thoughts here, will be at once and forever dispelled by the glorious light which will break upon us in the mighty morning of Eternity.

1. Bishop Pearson thus expresses the result of his painstaking researches upon the same subject: “To conclude this branch of the Article, I conceive these CERTAIN AND INFALLIBLE DOCTRINES in Christianity: That the wicked after this life shall be judged and condemned by Christ, and delivered up under the curse, to be tormented with the devil and his angels. That their persons shall continue FOREVER in this remediless condition, under an EVERLASTING pain of loss, because there is no hope of heaven.” — *Exposition of the Creed*, Art. xii. p. 584.↩

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Originally published 1880 by Nelson S. Quiney, Philadelphia.

Cover image: Gustave Doré's illustration to Dante's Inferno. Plate XIV: Canto V: "The infernal hurricane that never rests; Hurtles the spirits onwards in its rapine." 1857.

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759 – v5

ISBN: 9798591886998 (paperback)

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