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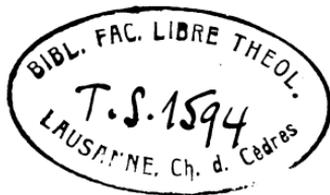
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H. Lee  
of South New



THE  
**Destiny of the Human Race.**

“As it is owned, the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men’s tracing on obscure hints—as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered.”—*Butler’s Analogy*, p. 2, c. iii.

“Correct not my writings out of your own opinion, or out of contention; but from the reading of the Divine Word, or by unshaken argument. Should you lay hold of anything in them that is true,—in being so, it is not mine; but by the understanding and the love of it, let it be both yours and mine. Should you, however, detect anything that is false,—in the error, it may have been mine; but henceforth, by guarding against it, let it be neither mine nor yours.”  
—*Augustine*.

THE  
Destiny of the Human Race:

A SCRIPTURAL INQUIRY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE.”

“The times have changed. \* \* \* At this moment we may be quite sure that no scheme of religious belief will be able to hold its footing abroad in the world, or beyond the walls of closets and saloons, which does not, in some intelligible and coherent manner, make provision for securing our peace of mind in regard to the present lot, and to the prospects, of the human family.”—*Isaac Taylor*.

“Even now, after eighteen centuries of Christianity, we may be involved in some tremendous error, of which the Christianity of the future will make us ashamed.”—*Vinet*.

VOLUME THE FIRST.

LONDON:  
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, AND CO.

1863.

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## P R E F A C E.

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**T**HE present Work, like its predecessor, will be found to consist largely of papers which, during the last three years, have appeared periodically in an editorial form. This circumstance, it is hoped, may be regarded as a sufficient apology for the continued use of the first person plural.

The Introduction will fully explain the object and character of the publication.

To those who are so forgetful of the conditions on which alone truth can advance in the world, as to consider any disturbance of long cherished opinions an unmitigated evil, this book cannot fail to be distasteful; for it proceeds on the assumption that everything in the Bible worth knowing is not yet in our

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possession—that many things are worthy of our most earnest investigation which may, at present, be but partially revealed to us.

Knowledge, in its higher stages, always borders on the obscure. But it is mere perversity to argue, from such an admission, that what is incapable of being made perfectly clear, either in Nature or in Revelation, is not a proper object of our research, or that inquiry regarding it is little likely to issue in any beneficial result.

Yet, in relation to the Bible, such is too often the reasoning of good men, who, *narrowing their minds on principle*, regard with a mixture of pity and suspicion all who stretch their inquiries beyond the well-trodden paths which are so familiar to the devout.

It need scarcely be said that this work, whatever may be its merits or defects, is intended for men of another spirit.

BLACKHEATH, *February*, 1863.

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# Part I.

## INTRODUCTORY.

CHAP. I. PRECISE OBJECT OF THE WORK.

II. MAN A SINNER AND A SUFFERER.

III. CHRIST THE REDEEMER OF HUMANITY.

IV. THIS WORLD A WORLD OF PROBATION.



## CHAPTER I.

### *The Precise Object of the Work.*

WHAT we want to know is simply this,—Whether it has, or has not pleased God to reveal in Holy Scripture *anything* regarding the final destiny of *the human race* viewed collectively and as a whole?

We are not supposing that any difficulty exists as to the teaching of the Bible relative to the future lot of those—be they many or few—who, in whatever form, obtain such an acquaintance with the will of God, that the acceptance or rejection of the salvation offered in the Gospel becomes *with them* a matter of necessity. We are neither directly nor indirectly seeking to uphold what is usually termed “Universalism;” for Scripture itself must, in our judgment, be altogether given up if we either ignore or explain away those portions which relate to the doom of the ungodly.

We are not, for an instant, questioning the existence of a redeemed and elect Church, "chosen" in Christ "before the foundation of the world" (Eph. i. 4); for, open the Bible where we may, *there* we find a doctrine of election, running, like a line of light, through the entire book, illuminating some of its darkest passages, and only disappearing amid the effulgence of a glory which bathes all around in its unutterable splendours.

Our inquiry simply relates, as we have already said, to *the race considered as a whole*; to the men that, in the days of Noah, "filled the earth with violence," and perished amid the waters of the Deluge; to the children of Israel, fallen and apostate in the times of the prophets; to the great idolatrous empires which seduced, and ultimately enslaved them; to the Greeks and the Romans, the civilizers and lawgivers of modern organized society; to the Jew, peeled, and scattered, and unbelieving in all lands through more than eighteen hundred years; to the countless millions of China and India, and of the North, which every thirty years pass away and repeat their numbers; to Africa, with

her endless tribes, and dark and cruel superstitions; to slaves, enthralled either by cupidity or lust; to the Mahomedan everywhere; to that vast mass of humanity, in short, which, at any given period, may be estimated at eight hundred or a thousand millions, and which, multiplied by each successive generation as it comes and goes, at length accumulates an amount of sin and sorrow, of superstition, cruelty, and blood, at the very thought of which the human mind *reels*, until relieved by the recollection that to each separate sufferer God has given *many* animal enjoyments, *some* pure affections relative or social, and a *capacity*, at least, for much that is far higher and nobler than anything that *here* appears to find birth and development.

The question we want answered, in regard to all this multitude of beings, is,—Whither do they go? Christ is the Redeemer of “the world;”—in what sense has He redeemed *them*? The Gospel is, avowedly, “good tidings of great joy, which shall be *to all people*” (Luke ii. 10);—when and how will it become such to these of whom we speak?

Christ is to have "the heathen" for His "inheritance," and "the uttermost parts of the earth" for His "possession" (Psa. ii. 8);—does the "inheritance" referred to include or *exclude* the countless myriads that are already dead and gone? The Lord Jesus came "to *destroy* the works of the devil" (1 John iii. 8);—will an incalculably vast majority of all who have ever lived and breathed on earth be given to the great enemy for ever?

Indifference, or devout timidity, calling itself "submission," may set aside all such inquiries as unpractical, or even dangerous; indolence, under the guise of "humility," may refuse to look at them; spiritual selfishness, wrapt in the mantle of its own supposed security, may forbid such investigations as "presumptuous:" but Christ-like souls can no more be unconcerned as to what may or may not be *revealed* respecting this vast sum of humanity, than they can stand by unaffected when the destitute perish from hunger, or the dying agonize in pain.

The *individualism* of modern thought in relation to the future life is as foreign to

the spirit of the prophets of the Old Testament dispensation as it is to that of the apostles of the New. John "*wept much*" when no man was found worthy to open and to read the mystic book of the Apocalyptic vision. The tenderness that thus expressed itself was neither weak nor blameworthy; it was the pity of the child of God. "He could not be content till he knew more of the destinies of his race, because the Father of that race would not allow him to be content."

Would not allow him,—we say it reverently,—to be content, as modern Christians are, to leave the matter uninquied into, exclaiming, but in a very different sense from that in which Abraham uttered the words, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" A virtuous heathen, in his darkness, might have said as much as they do. In the absence of revelation, such a course—the only one then possible—would be piety. In men who have the Bible in their hands, it is but the cloak of indifference.

It is often urged, and by many regarded

as a sufficient reason for abstaining from all inquiry into a subject confessedly obscure and difficult, that the *existence* of evil is the one great, insoluble mystery,—that there is, in fact, no other difficulty in theology beyond; and that until *this* is accounted for, all investigations into the character and course of the Divine procedure are vain and futile. We deny such a conclusion altogether. We deny that the *existence* of evil in the world *is* the mystery of mysteries. It is made such only as a pretext for deterring men from the examination of theological conclusions as to its eternity and final consequences to the race. It is surely not very difficult to see that to creatures the *knowledge* and the experience of evil is essential to the knowledge and experience of *some of the highest forms* of good; that he who, in a world like this, is led by Divine grace *voluntarily* to choose God as his portion, is higher, far higher, than he who never knew that any other choice was possible.

The grand peculiarity of the Christian revelation is, that it represents God as yearning—if we may so speak—for *human*

*affection.* Abraham is the friend of God; David is the man after God's own heart; "I call you not servants, but friends," says Christ to His disciples; the appeal to all men is, "My son, give me thine *heart.*" It is this revelation of Himself to men,—perfected in the Incarnation,—that renders *love* to God *possible.* For aught we can tell, *love* to God, properly so termed, can be exercised only by redeemed men. Angels, or other high and glorious intelligences, may adore; or admire,—be filled with awe or wonder,—but we have no proof that they can *love* God as a redeemed sinner does, or that they can ever be partakers of the Divine nature in the sense of that oneness with God through Christ which is the peculiar privilege of His people. Evil, and its accompaniments, pain and sorrow, alone render this peculiar fellowship in good *possible.*

Little did Satan suspect, as with boundless malice he tempted our first parents with the words, "Ye shall not surely die,"—"Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil," that he was but uttering an unconscious prophecy

of that which should really come to pass. Little did he imagine that the very process by which he hoped to alienate man for ever *from* his Maker, was the one by means of which man was to be brought nearer than ever *to* his Maker; to rise higher than the angels that never fell, and to exhibit to the universe the sublime spectacle of a life of faith, based on a thorough *appreciation* of good as distinguished from evil, and of God as the fountain of all excellence. The final triumph of evil, in the eventual ruin of the race, would indeed be a mystery. But the Bible reveals no such doctrine. It is a purely human invention.

We may, indeed, never be able to remove *all* that is perplexing or oppressive to the heart in the condition of humanity; we may be obliged, again and again, to fall back upon the assurance that every individual man is in the hands of One infinitely wiser and more loving than ourselves: but we should be unchristian, if not inhuman, were we to feel no interest in the inquiry whether the sufferings of the race will terminate with mortal life;—whether in other worlds they

will be continued as disciplinary, and therefore conducive to improvement; or whether, being simply *punitive*, they will be prolonged and intensified through all eternity.

Yes; this is the question,—the one great and awful question,—which Piety has too long considered insoluble, and to which Priestcraft has ever turned as the pillar of its vile pretensions. *Reason*, indeed, can give us no reply to it; but *Scripture*, perchance, may do so; for, as Butler wisely remarks, “the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; nor is it at all incredible that a book, which has been so long in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered.”

All that we *know* of the Divine character leads us to suppose that *some light*, at least, is thrown *there* on this great question. All that we *feel* of the Divine love within our own bosoms,—the boundless pity it gives birth to, and the benevolence it excites and fosters; all that is involved in the assurance that, while “secret things belong unto the Lord our God, those things which are revealed belong” to us and to our “child-

ren;" that while "it is the glory of God to *conceal*," it is "the honour" of *man* (kings) to "*search out* a matter" (Prov. xxv. 2),—all these alike encourage us, hopefully, earnestly, and humbly, with true and sincere hearts, diligently to employ every faculty in an inquiry which, end as it may, can only lead to fresh assurances that God *is* love,—that Christ *is* Lord of all creation,—and that evil, with its depths of mystery, is now, and shall be evermore, self-destructive, and subordinate to good.

We ask, then, on this, as on every other subject that pertains to the hereafter; simply, "*What saith the Scriptures?*" We seek the response from that holy oracle, precisely as we should seek one from Nature, were we endeavouring to fathom *her* secrets. Not by any supposed "light within;" not by the help of any imaginary personal insight or semi-inspiration fitted to explain or to override the inspiration of prophets and apostles; not by elaborately-drawn inferences, however ingenious or apparently necessary; not by the application, in any form, of a merely human and finite logic to that which has

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relations with "the Infinite and Unconditioned," do we hope, in this matter, to obtain satisfaction for our souls. Child-like simplicity (which may God, in His mercy, grant us), dealing with *revealed facts*\* just as they stand in the Divine record, and interpreting them naturally and by the context, without regard to any system of theology, or to any preconceived conclusion, can

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\* *Revealed facts.* "The revelation contained in the Scriptures extends only to FACTS; not to the theory of these facts, or their original causes. The most important truths are communicated in a dogmatic, not a theoretic, manner. We are taught, on the testimony of Him who cannot lie, *insulated facts*, which we cannot connect with those reasons with which they are undoubtedly connected in the Divine mind. They rest solely on the basis of Divine authority; and we are left as much in the dark with respect to the mode of their existence, as if they were not revealed."—*Robert Hall.*

A SCRIPTURE FACT, then, is to us *a revealed truth*, dogmatically communicated; resting solely on the basis of the Divine authority; and viewed apart from any *reasons* for its proclamation, or any *deductions* which may be drawn from it. And this, be it observed, whether that which is revealed be *an event*, or whether it be what is usually termed *a doctrine*.

alone, we are well aware, lead us to truth and to repose.

Such is the temper and spirit in which we *desire* to carry on our inquiry. That we shall fail, to some degree at least, in doing so, is but too probable. We commend ourselves, therefore, to Him who can alone "keep us from falling," and leave in His hand the result of our pains.

Two objections, which some may regard as *preliminary*, we must not omit to notice.

The *first* is, that the question at issue *ought* to be regarded as already settled, by the general consent of the Church in relation to the teaching of Scripture; nay, that St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans, has, by inspiration, said all that can be said upon it, in telling us that "when Gentiles, which have not the law (*i. e.*, a written law), do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;" while, in the verses that precede

the parenthesis in which the words we have quoted occur, he states distinctly, that "as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law" (Rom. ii. 12—15).

To this we reply, that while the "general consent" of Christians, either now or in past time, should make us *modest* in our opposition, it cannot bind us as an authority. Any plain declaration of St. Paul's certainly ought to do so. We are bound, therefore, to show that the Apostle, neither in the text quoted, nor elsewhere, *has* declared that the heathen, remaining such, cannot be saved.

As, however, we shall have occasion to examine the passage in question at length, it may be only necessary to say *here*, that it is erroneous to suppose that St. Paul, in the chapter from which the text is taken, is declaring *the final lot* of the heathen. He is doing no such thing: he is simply seeking to bring in all men alike guilty before God (iii. 9, 10); showing that neither by the deeds of the law, nor in the absence of law, can any human being be justified before his Maker. He shuts up all alike in sin, that all alike may learn their need of a Saviour;---

*the Jew*, notwithstanding his imagined self-righteousness in obeying the law; *the Gentile*, in spite of the plea that he has had no revelation. The one he convicts of having continually violated the law in which he boasts (ii. 17—24); the other he finds equally guilty of offence against the light of conscience and of nature (iii. 13—16). “*Therefore*,” says he, “by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight” (iii. 20). Considered in themselves, and *apart from the redemption which is by Christ*, all are alike exposed to wrath, “for there is no respect of persons” with God. “As many as have sinned without law shall (apart from Christ) perish without law;” and “as many as have sinned in the law (if without Christ) shall be judged by the law,”—a rule by which all alike are lost.

As this is followed by the glorious announcement that “the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets; *even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ* UNTO (or for the benefit of) all and UPON (or over—*i. e.*, clothing like a

garment) all them that believe: for (between Jew and Gentile) there is no difference" (iii. 20—22),—it is clear that the final ruin of the heathen is not his theme.

The *second* objection is, that investigations of this character only promote doubt; that they are, in fact, inconsistent with that child-like and unquestioning spirit which it becomes us, as sinners, to cultivate.

To this we reply, in the words of a well-known writer,\*—"In what was the life of our blessed Lord consumed, but in continual labour to make the multitude *doubt* the distinctive principles which the highest authorities in their Church had brought them up in?"

"The implicit faith of a child may be very natural and very engaging; but is it the duty of a man to remain a child?—to force himself back to childhood?—to depress the development of that one faculty which constitutes him specifically a man? For what *is* this child-like (say, rather, childish) credulity which is so bepraised? Remember, it is

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\* Sewell's "Christian Morals."

the quality of a child only because (and only just so long as) he is in the stage of mere animal being; while that which constitutes his special humanity is yet undeveloped. We admire this credulity under the term child-like, but its true definition is, that it is animal-like; that it is the instinct of irrational nature,—that instinct which leads all animals to believe without reflection, and even in opposition to experience, that what *seems* to be *is*,—even as the hen will sit again and again upon the same deceptive lump of chalk.”

To these true and forcible remarks we shall merely add a few additional observations of a more general character, and then close this introductory chapter.

No one certainly can well deny that the exercise of the right of private judgment in matters of religion has sometimes been fearfully injurious to those who have enjoyed it, and not unfrequently proved an occasion of stumbling, by multiplying heresies.

For this reason, or rather on this pretext, it has been maintained by many that, in the search after Divine truth, the guidance of

the reason and the understanding should be abandoned ; and that, since the path of humility is the path of safety, it is the part of wisdom to accept without question, at the hands of the Church's appointed ministers, those doctrines which, it is assumed, God has committed to her charge, alike for the temporal benefit and eternal salvation of mankind.

This view of the supposed duty of a Christian man is, by the Church of Rome, as every one knows, openly held, and unblushingly defended. By Protestants it is professedly repudiated ; but there can be no question that, with various modifications, it is maintained in one form or other by almost all Christian communities who attach vital importance to particular forms of religious thought.

To the Romanist, it has generally been deemed sufficient to reply, that any such attempted transference of responsibility, in relation to the discovery of truth, can, after all, only be accomplished by and through an act of private judgment ; for if a man, from whatever motive, resolves to abandon *his*

*own* judgment in relation either to truth or duty, and to place himself without reserve in the hands of others, he is surely as responsible for the wisdom or folly of that resolution, and for all the consequences to which it may lead, as he can be for any other choice or decision.

To the Protestant, who often unconsciously adopts Romanist principles, in consequence of his dread of doubt, his love of system, or his deference to the authority either of dead "Fathers" or living "Brethren," it seems necessary to suggest other considerations, not less important, although very frequently forgotten.

And the first is this,—that the dangers and evils which arise from free thought in matters of religion, do not differ in the least from those which arise from any other exercise of that liberty which is essential to a state of probation, and without which it could not exist. Man, we may rest assured, has not been placed in a world like this, and surrounded by temptations of every kind, without some good reason,—a reason consonant, without doubt, with the highest

wisdom and love. The great end of his being unquestionably is, that he may learn, by Divine grace, to choose the good and to reject the evil, to abandon the false and to cling to the true, "to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever." But how, it may well be asked, can this be done, unless he is at perfect liberty to inquire freely, to search diligently, and to adopt, in all honesty and integrity, whatever he believes to be the good and the true?

A second consideration, also generally disregarded, is, that *the mere acceptance* on authority of any doctrine, true or false, is not equivalent to faith in that doctrine, but *quite a different thing*. Faith is not mere *assent* to truth, but something much higher. It is the reception of it *for a reason*, and a reason powerful enough to command submission; it supposes a conviction of truth so deep and profound, that the persuasion of it becomes, in extreme cases, the ground and justification of martyrdom.

For intelligent men to shrink from the investigation of truth of any kind, however specious may be the pretext, whether it be

called indolence or timidity, or whether it be baptized by the Christian name of humility, is, in fact, to evade the most important part of their moral discipline, and to render the complete development and perfection of human character impossible; for humility, patience, candour, and charity find very little scope for exercise in the mind of any man who accepts his opinions on the authority of a party, or holds them for any other reason than that they are supported by evidence.

Two things undoubtedly tend to make men prefer half convictions to entire ones, and adherence to a party, to personal and independent inquiry. The *one* is, the extreme difficulty,—the pain and labour, the weariness and exhaustion, which often attends honest researches. The *other* is, the *imperial demand* which truth, thus fought, makes upon a man for submission when it is attained.

So long as a man is only half convinced, so long as he is simply yielding to the views of others, he can easily evade the consequences of his admissions; and if they involve anything very self-denying or disagreeable,

easily *put off* his obedience to a more convenient season. But if, after long and anxious investigation, he has arrived at the conclusion that what he professes to have received as Divine is absolutely and eternally true, he has no choice between submission and misery; for if truth, thus received, be not a sovereign good to man, its possession must be a source of constant wretchedness.

In our own day, Christian men shrink from independent investigation, chiefly because they think it *inexpedient*. Certain forms of thought, right or wrong, have, it is said, for generations been regarded as "worthy of all acceptance;" under these forms men have received spiritual blessings of the highest value; in the belief of them they have lived well, and died happily. Why unsettle such landmarks?

The only answer that can be made to such a remonstrance is this: The forms of thought, of which you speak, are either true or false. If true, inquiry will only strengthen their hold on men, and lead to their being still more generally supported and honoured. But if, from whatever cause, the suspicion

has arisen that they are, after all, only *partially* true,—that they are, at the best, only one-sided exhibitions of truth, that they involve fallacies, or that they produce exaggerated, and therefore inaccurate, impressions, they must on no account be shielded from examination; for whatever may be the supposed value of any form of thought, if it involve important error, the support of it, or, which is the same thing, the determination not to undeceive those who hold it, is, in the eye of God, an immoral procedure. The exercise of integrity in this matter may be a fore trial to faith, but we may rely upon it, obedience will, in the end, bring with it its own “exceeding great reward.”

The truth is, *all the difficulties and dangers that attend upon the exercise of private judgment are specially provided for by Him who has thrown upon us the responsibility of its exercise.*

Not, indeed, as some would tell us, by the residence upon earth either of an Individual or a Corporation, who, as Christ's Vicar, can solve all difficulties, and prove an infallible guide; not, indeed, by the bodily presence

of Christ himself as an abiding court of appeal; but by what is far better, the presence and guidance of His Holy Spirit in the hearts of all who desire Him.

And for what end is He thus willing to abide amongst us? To strengthen the natural powers,—to illuminate the intellect,—to place the sage and the simpleton on the same platform,—to do *in reality* what the Roman Pontiff only pretends to do,—to solve all doubts, to make us infallible in our decisions, to render it impossible that we should go wrong in our pursuit after truth? CERTAINLY NOT.

Such a gift would in no important sense differ from inspiration, and *if imparted generally*, would as completely destroy the character of our probation as that indolent reliance on human authority of which we complain. The only difference would be, that, in the one case, infallibility would be a reality, in the other it is a delusion.

Far otherwise is the intent and end of God's great gift; for it annihilates no distinctions, it supercedes no effort, it counteracts no weakness that is merely intellectual. It

is, from first to last, an action on the heart. Under its blessed influence pride departs, prejudice gives way, and selfish passions, in all their endless variety, are weakened and subdued. But it does no more. It leaves us still to search after evidence, to balance probabilities, to be misled if we permit the old enemy to becloud our faculties. For the rest, God has adapted the human intellect to truth, just as surely as He has adapted the eye to outward Nature; and, in either case, we see *truly*, only in proportion as, by His mighty power, films are removed, and the organ of vision purged and purified from *unnatural defilement*.

## CHAPTER II.

### *Man a Sinner and a Sufferer.*

THE FALL OF MAN is the one *great fact* on which all the further revelations of the Bible hang.

Not to man *as man*, but to man *as a sinner*,—as fallen, depraved, alienated by wicked works, and in captivity to Satan,—is the word of the living God addressed.

The message it delivers is, from first to last, REMEDIAL ; it is a message of grace,—the announcement of a provision for the restoration of the lost.

Into *the origin* of evil it is vain for us to inquire. All we know on this point is, that it existed before the creation of man. Of its ill *effects* experience is but too constantly our teacher. Its *bitterness* no human pen can describe.

The *end* it is intended to subserve—for

without an object and purpose its permission is inconceivable—may, more or less, be learned from the pages of Holy Scripture. It is, under God, THE GREAT EDUCATOR of the human family. It is the INSTRUMENT by which man learns how frail, how helpless, how dependent he is.

Therefore it was that our first parent was introduced into a world where evil existed. This fact alone is surely evidence enough that *not* for *unconditional* happiness, but for a *relative* one, more or less connected with moral trial, man was created; that it was as much foreordained that the first man, Adam, should struggle with evil, as that by “the second man, the Lord from heaven,” it should be destroyed and made of none effect.

Sin, like night, is a great REVEALER. Through it man advances to a more intimate acquaintance with the character of God than, *so far as we know*, he could gain in any other way. Without its agency it is hard to see how he could ever be enabled *voluntarily to choose* God as his portion, and goodness as his chief joy; could *ever* be fitted to rise higher than the angels; or, as we have

already intimated, *here* attain to that peculiar affection for his Maker which so strangely, and yet so lovingly, intermingles awe and filial confidence, shame and exultation, abasement and hope. *This kind* of love, unknown, probably, to other beings, is the fruit of sin and sanctification, of guilt and pardon, of the loss and the recovery of the Divine favour. And thus it comes to pass, as Luther well puts it, that “prayer and temptation make the Christian.”

But what a costly educator sin is! The humiliation of the Glorified,—the suffering of the Sinless One,—is, in itself, a dreadful price to pay for its removal. Yet even this is not all; for there are those (God only knows how many) who by it are ruined *for ever*. In no aspect whatever is it possible to contemplate the wickedness, the cruelty, the crime to which sin has given birth,—the sickness, the sorrow, the pain and misery which have followed in its train,—without feeling that it is indeed a stern teacher and a hard master.

One thought only is permissible. Evil is *subject to*, not independent of, God. In no

fenfe whatever can fin reverse the decifions or disturb the equanimity of the Lord of all. Anger, wrath, and jealousy, as connected with fin and finning, are indeed attributed to God in Scripture, as well as love and grief, longfuffering and repenting. But these are only *translations* into human fpeech of things that cannot be conceived of by us except under a phrafeology adapted to finite beings.

Confidently may we affume that the Fall can never *permanently* derange the purpofes of God; that the *ultimate defign* He had in view in the creation of man, whatever that might be, will eventually be carried out; that Satan can *do* nothing which, if it fhould feem good, God cannot utterly *undo*; that, under any circumftances, the Divine intentions, however accomplifhed, will finally be brought about with the leaft poffible amount of lofs confiftent with the honour of the Creator and the welfare of the creature.

*More* than this we do not know; *lefs* than this it is impoffible to believe, without something like an implied reflection on the wifdom and goodnefs of the Father of us all.

## CHAPTER III.

*Christ the Redeemer of Humanity.*

THE promise involved in the mystic prophecy that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, in due time found its fulfilment in the birth of the Redeemer.

Ancient seers had long anticipated the advent of this Deliverer, in language glowing with expectation and delight. His coming is the restoration of the Paradise that was lost. "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks : nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. ii. 4). "The government shall be upon his shoulder : and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government

and peace there shall be no end." "Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. xi. 5—9).

The angels announce His birth to the shepherds as "good tidings of great joy, which shall be to *all people*." Heaven echoes with the song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to *man*." He is "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel" (Luke ii. 32). He is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of *the world*" (John i. 29).

Such is the gladdening and UNIVERSAL ASPECT of man's redemption.

But it has also an INDIVIDUAL AND EXCLUSIVE side,—one for *the believer* only.

"He that believeth is not condemned:

but he that believeth not is condemned already, *because he hath not believed* in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John iii. 16—18). Not to all, but to "*as many as received him*, to them gave he power (or privilege) to become the fons of God, even to them which believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 12, 13). "No man," says Christ himself, "can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw (attract) him" (John vi. 44). And yet, "except a man be born again, he cannot see (know or perceive) the kingdom of God" (John iii. 3).

Further,—the privileged must also be the *perfected*. They are to be "poor in spirit," "meek," "merciful," "pure," "peacemakers," the "salt of the earth," the "light of the world." They are *relatively* few,—everywhere the minority; for the gate is "strait," the way "narrow," and "few there be that find it" (Matt. vi., and vii. 14).

*To these* belong the higher mysteries of the Gospel.

“Unto *you* (the disciples) it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God : but unto them *that are without*, all these things are done in parables : that seeing they may see, and not perceive ; and hearing they may hear, and not understand ; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them ” (Mark iv. 11, 12).

*For these*—we had almost said for these alone—the Redeemer prays.

“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come ; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee : as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal *life to as many as thou hast given him.*” “I have manifested thy name *unto the men which thou gavest me* out of the world. I pray for them : *I pray not for the world*, but for them which thou hast given me ; for they are thine. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, *as we are*” (John xvii.)

Such, and so striking, is the apparent *contrast* between the two sides of Redemp-

tion, — between the anticipations of those who waited for the advent, and the actual experience of those who witnessed it.

It seems impossible for any candid man to read the Scriptures fairly without being struck by the fact, that everything revealed *prior to the introduction* of Christianity would lead to the expectation that the triumphs of the Redeemer would be *immediate and universal*; while everything relating to its development, either in its earlier days, or during the eighteen hundred years of its existence, as clearly indicates *delay and limitation*.

Theories in explanation have never been wanting; but they are all utterly unsatisfactory. We turn from them to THE BOOK. *There*, if anywhere, shall we find the true solution of the problem that oppresses us. From no other quarter can even a solitary ray of light fall upon our darkness. We ask, therefore, for a purged eye and a purified heart, to enable us to discern in Revelation itself the hidden harmony which unites THE ELDER BROTHER OF THE ELECT WITH THE REDEEMER OF THE RACE.

## CHAPTER IV.

*This World a World of Probation.*

**T**EMPTATION, the Fall, sin, suffering, and Redemption, all alike suppose the present condition of mankind to be probationary. The language of Moses to the Israelites seems to embody the great principle which underlies all human existence. "The Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord" (Deut. viii. 2, 3).

What other ends the TEST to which God subjects His creatures may be intended to subserve *beyond this*, it may not be easy for us to decide. Butler, in his great work, regards the probation of man as analogous

to that early education and discipline by which he is fitted for the obligations and services of mature life; and intimates that it may probably be intended to preserve us from *falling* in other states of existence,—a supposition founded on the admission of at least a possibility that such future state may not be free from temptation; and that it may demand the exercise of tempers *akin to*, if not identical with, resignation, submission, and faith.

Whether this be so or not, or for whatever service in other worlds man may now be fitting, it seems at least clear that, in some form or other, the application of *a test* is, *in this world*, essential to his development and training as an intelligent and responsible creature.

We judge thus, because we have a right to suppose that *otherwise* God would not expose His children to the dangers involved in trial; and we partly see the reason of this proceeding in the apparent impossibility of revealing man to himself, and making him fully conscious of his weakness and dependence, without a test.

Yet, on the other hand, nothing is plainer than that a large portion of the race, dying in infancy, or in an otherwise irresponsible condition, escape everything in the form of trial *here*, and pass into the unseen world without having had any opportunity of developing, even in the slightest degree, the nature and tendencies connected with their birth.

Again, it is quite certain that the probation of those who live to mature years in the enjoyment of unimpaired faculties, differs so widely both in kind and extent, that it is difficult, if not impossible, to speak of mankind generally as subjected to trial in any sense which carries with it the notion of a *common* discipline. Everywhere Probation comes before us as *a thing of degree*, involving more or less, according to the various conditions and circumstances of different men.

Facts like these, regarded by themselves, *in the absence of any revelation to the contrary*, would certainly seem to imply that in other worlds Probation *may* be extended to those who have not been subjected to it here, or *continued* in the case of others who have

but imperfectly been brought under its influence.

Further, since all probation implies *risk*,—the risk of failure, with its attendant consequences,—it would seem equally evident that its all but infinite diversity in character and extent must carry with it a corresponding diversity in the actual responsibility and future condition of those who are subjected to the discipline it involves.

In the retirement of the closet, thoughtful and devout men rarely shrink from admitting that “the Divine standard of man’s accountability is a scale of all but unlimited graduation; that the place of every man in the future world will be the exact counterpart of his moral character here; that while some will be ‘beaten with many stripes,’ there will be for the minimum of guilt the minimum of punishment;”<sup>\*</sup> and such like.

But it is otherwise in the pulpit. There, or on the missionary platform, it seems to be accounted dangerous to admit this diversity;

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\* Dr. Harris’s Note on a Letter from John Foster.—Foster’s Corresp., vol. ii., p. 446.

for the appeal, whether to the individual sinner, or on behalf of the heathen world, is almost always made on the assumption that every child of Adam is destined either for heaven or hell; that the only alternative in the case of each separate man is, everlasting blessedness or eternal misery.

But opposite views cannot be equally true. Either the conclusions of the closet are erroneous, or the declamations of the platform are unwarranted. Surely it becomes us to inquire which is right and which is wrong; *or*,—if the two apparently conflicting modes of thought are *both* Scriptural, and therefore reconcilable,—whether that reconciliation is to be sought, as so many are now seeking it, in the denial of an *objective* hell altogether,—“the mind being regarded as its own place,” and therefore making its own hell; or whether it is not rather to be found in those portions of Divine Revelation which seem to teach that the destinies of the Elect Church and those of the World are, in many important respects, different; that the one class is intended to form the court, and the other the commonalty, of the world (or

age) to come; that the former, in glory, is to be identified with its Lord at His coming, and *therefore* with Him to judge both men and angels; while the latter, each one according to his works, is to be placed in that position which will form the appropriate retribution of his belief or unbelief, of his love or scorn of the Gospel, and of his kindness to, or hate of, the little flock while on earth,—whether that retribution involve degradation or death, few stripes or many stripes, grievous loss or the lake of fire,—*all but* the irreparably lost being, on this supposition, again brought under influences which involve a further and probably less severe\* probation, terminating either in restoration or the second death.

We pass no opinion, at present, either on the one view or the other. We desire to commence the inquiry with an earnest

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\* “Less severe,” because *good* government, and that in the highest sense, will then be established; because *wiser and better teachers* than can now be found will then abound; and because many, if not all, the outward temptations which now overcome man, will then have disappeared.

endeavour simply to ascertain the Truth so far as it is recorded in Holy Writ, and, unless greatly deceived, with a perfect willingness to bow at once and for ever to the decision of that Sacred Record, whatever it may be.

One word only would we add. An indolent, careless, or superficial inquiry will be of no avail to any one. It has been well said, in relation to natural science, that "safe conclusions can only be founded on the most microscopic examination, since Nature never proclaims her secrets with a loud voice, but *only whispers them.*"\* It may with equal confidence be affirmed of many things in Divine Revelation, that they can only be known by being "searched out,"—sometimes amid dangers which call for incessant watchfulness, humility, and prayer, and always with labour concentrated and severe. Distinctly are we told in the Divine Record itself, that he who would find truth or wisdom *there* must, as the condition of its discovery, seek it "as silver," and search for it "as for hid treasure" (Prov. ii. 4).

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\* Prof. Owen.

## Part II.

### SCRIPTURE TESTIMONY.

CHAP. I. SIN, VIEWED FROM THE CHRISTIAN STAND-  
POINT.

II. THE REVELATION OF THE WRATH OF GOD.

III. THE UNCONVERTED, AND "VESSELS OF  
WRATH."

IV. THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT.

V. CONVERSION, AS DISTINGUISHED FROM RE-  
GENERATION.

VI. REGENERATION, OR THE NEW BIRTH.



## CHAPTER I.

### *Sin, as Viewed from the Christian Stand- point.*

**B**EFORE proceeding further with our task, it seems desirable, if not necessary, to state most distinctly that the inquiry is commenced under the deepest conviction,—held, indeed, to be indisputable,—that every individual of that great aggregate which we call the race, has within him an immortal spirit, capable either of happiness or misery in that world to which all souls are tending; and that its possessor, whether heathen or Christian, is justly responsible to the God who made him, both for the beliefs and for the conduct that have *here* tended to fashion the character of that soul, and to make it what it is.

Such is undeniably the teaching of the Bible. It becomes us, therefore, first of all,

to direct our attention to what is revealed there regarding sin, and concerning the state of mind, so to speak, with which God is said to contemplate it.

“SIN is the transgression of the law” (1 John iii. 4). “All unrighteousness is sin” (1 John v. 17). It is so, because the law is a *righteous* law, “holy, just, and good” (Rom. vii. 12). It is so, because the law is emphatically a law of love. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets” (Matt. xxii. 35—40). And yet so infatuated is man in his disobedience, that wrong-doing is at once his habit and his joy.

The Saviour came to put an end to this state of things; and though, to human eye, He seemed to pass away without accomplishing His purpose, it was not really so. For among the latest words that He uttered to His sorrowing disciples before He left them, were these:—“When He (the Comforter) is

come, He will reprove (or convict—*Marg.*) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, *because* (or rather, *since* or *seeing*—*οτι*, Luke xxiii. 40) they believe not on me; of righteousness, *since* I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, *since* the prince (or ruler—*ὁ αρχων*) of this world is (has been—*κεκριται*) judged” (John xvi. 7—11).

To understand this saying of our Redeemer’s aright, it is necessary to bear in mind that it was uttered to the disciples *for their consolation*,—to impress them with the conviction that it was better *for them*, and, therefore, for the cause they all had at heart, that He should go away.

*They*, naturally enough, had imagined otherwise. If He leave us, they might well say, *who* is to show mankind their “sinfulness”? for who but He can unmask the heart of man? *Who* is to set forth *real* worth, since He alone can infallibly distinguish it from innumerable counterfeits? *Who* is to awaken men to a sense of their responsibilities, and to bring before them the certainty of a “judgment” to come, when

He has departed in whom all judgment veils?

The answer of the Master to these natural disquietudes is simply this,—“*I* go, in order that the objects you desire may be accomplished. *He* cometh who will achieve the victory.” “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven” (Luke x. 17, 18). “How can one enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man?” (Matt. xii. 29). Heard ye not the voice from heaven, which “came not because of me, but for your sakes? Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out” (John xii. 30, 31).

Such were the words of the Saviour. Yet how imperfectly have they been received! Is not Satan, it is urged, *still* the prince of the power of the air, ruling as despotically as ever in the hearts of the disobedient? (Ephes. ii. 2). What evidence have we that either his power or his malignity is diminished? Is it not plain that the reproof spoken of is simply *judicial*?—that the Spirit convinces the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, only that He may thereby

the more strikingly manifest the hardness and impenitence of the human heart? Is it not but too clear that the only result is greater condemnation?—aggravated ruin?

We reply, If it were so, it is difficult to see how the disciples could have received *comfort* from the intelligence; since it would, in that case, have merely confirmed all their fears, by announcing the hopeless ruin of mankind. If this be all, they might well have said, “*Where* is the ‘glad tidings’ that were to be to ‘all people’?—where the *remedial* character of the dispensation of mercy?” No! words must change their meaning, and the heart of the Saviour change too, before tidings so dismal can be called consolation, or such a result be entitled a victory over Satan.

Let us accept, then, the stand-point Christ has given us, as that from which a Christian man should now look upon a sinful world and its wicked ruler. The usurper is *de-throned*; the world is not *abandoned* to its iniquity; the advent of the Redeemer has *changed* all the relations of sin and of humanity.

At first sight this may not appear to be very obvious; for truly enough iniquity still abounds, and man too often seems to be as much as ever under the power of evil.

A comprehensive view of the great facts of the world will, however, lead us to a different conclusion. Satan is *not* now what he once was. He can no longer exercise that *direct* power over men which he so long wielded. He can no more take *forcible possession*, as he once did, either of their bodies or their minds. He cannot even *tempt* them, as he tempted their Lord and Master. Perhaps it is not too much to say that he can now do little more for our injury than evil men can do. He can seduce; but so can they. He can misrepresent God; but so can they. He can blaspheme; but so can they. Like them, he can *co-operate* with our evil inclinations,—avail himself of our sinful weaknesses, and pander to our follies; but he can no longer appear before God as our accuser, and he can no longer interfere with or control any one of our voluntary actions.

But is this all? Far from it. Admitting, as every Christian must, the broad distinctions

which, in the eye of God at least, separate the Church from the world, the regenerate from the unregenerate, the "new creature in Christ Jesus" from the man "dead in trespasses and sins," it is impossible to deny the fact, that, *outside* the Church,—extend the term Church as we may,—among persons whom it would be folly to speak of as converted, to whom no one, with even the appearance of propriety, could apply such terms as "holy brethren," "partakers of the heavenly calling," there *does* exist an amount of virtue, goodness, reverence, awe, trust in and recognition of Christ as a Saviour, which cannot *scripturally* be accounted for on any supposition save that of a work of the Spirit.

We are quite aware that some persons will be startled by this assertion. Nevertheless, we fearlessly say,—whatever theological difficulties may seem to be created thereby,—that men *do* thus feel, and that, in a country like our own, where the light of Christianity is so widely diffused, *it is no uncommon thing* to find men whom it is impossible to regard as "regenerate," exhibiting in their daily life

many of the virtues which are recognized in Scripture as "fruits of the Spirit," although too often in sad combination with much more that is as obviously worldly and sensual.

Let us not tremble or be timid in making such an admission. The *great facts of the world* never really contradict the *great truths of Scripture*. If they ever *seem* to do so in any particular, it is time for us to re-examine our views, in order to see whether we have not either misapprehended the supposed fact, or mistaken Scripture in relation to the point in question.

The excellence of which we speak must have *a root*. It either springs out of unrenewed human nature, and is apart altogether from grace,—which is inconsistent with the teachings of the Gospel respecting man's fallen condition; or it is inspired by Satan,—which is to make Beelzebub divided against himself; or it is the work of that blessed Spirit from whom "proceedeth every good and perfect gift." Hesitation, in such a case, seems treason to God and goodness. But if it is His work, it has *an object*, and will have *a completion*.

Now, that which is true of *individuals* in favoured Christian communities is, *in degree*, true also of mankind at large. A consciousness of sin, and feelings of sadness arising therefrom; the recognition of a righteousness extending far beyond mere conventional morality; and thoughts of a judgment to come, already flinging its shadows before, now pervade every nation, and, more or less, find a home in every heart. Superstition may overlay, or philosophy try to undermine these convictions,—the world may laugh, or pleasure administer its opiates,—but there they are still; in silence and in sorrow ever rising up to witness against the transgressor, making many a Felix tremble, and many an Agrippa to exclaim, half in terror, and half in scorn, “Wouldest thou persuade *me* to become a Christian?”

*Few*, probably, now love evil *for its own sake*. Perhaps it is not too much to say that within almost every man, if he could but be withdrawn from the influences of the flesh, from the passions and their objects, there is *something*—a kind of better self—which acknowledges the supremacy of right. The

history of the civilized world, since the days of the Apostles,—its moral life, its manners, its laws and institutions, form one grand and continuous illustration of the Spirit's influence as exercised in society at large. "It has made Christ the recognized Lord of every people eminent either for knowledge or power."

Are we, then, to conclude that all this is in vain and for nought?—aimless and objectless, unless it be to aggravate guilt and to deepen condemnation? We *must* do so if we set out with the persuasion,—utterly incapable, however, of being sustained by any comprehensive view of Scripture, and deriving all its plausibility from the isolation and exaggeration of particular texts,—that *because* Christ has a redeemed Church, "chosen from the foundation of the world," *therefore* none else can be benefited by the redemption He has wrought; that *because* "he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned," *therefore* they that have never heard, and they that have heard amidst, shall be all alike involved in one common, wide-spread, and everlasting ruin; that *because* he that is in Christ is "a new

creature," *therefore* all who do not become "new creatures" here, are for ever shut out from hope, denied mercy, and finally abandoned to Satan and his angels.

Such are the conclusions to which we are forced; not, indeed, by any statement of Scripture, for then it would become us simply to bow before the awful mystery; but, as we have before said, by the isolation and exaggeration of particular texts, or by that inexorable logic which has for ages usurped dominion over thought, and trampled at once on the heart of man and the character of God.

We do not question our Lord's own words, "No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw (*i.e., attract*) him" (John vi. 44); but if any man found thereon the assertion that the sinner has no ability to seek his Redeemer, and so lead others to infer further, that men cannot be justly condemned for neglecting such a duty, we feel no scruple whatever in declaring both conclusions to be erroneous.

We know that by a similar process, and by a logic apparently as faultless, nothing is easier than to demonstrate that man, as a

creature governed by motives and influenced by circumstances, *cannot* be responsible either for his opinions or his conduct. But when the process is complete, and the demonstration perfect, we feel assured that the result cannot be trustworthy. It is not that we dispute the great dialectical maxim that logical inferences must be true, if legitimately deduced from what is true; but we deny the *legitimacy* of the deduction; and we do this, not because we can point out the flaw which invalidates the reasoning, but because the whole subject is beyond the reach of the human faculty; because truth never violates the moral instincts of the heart, which conclusions such as these certainly do; because, as Archer Butler somewhere beautifully remarks, "our liability to error is extreme, when we become immersed in the holy obscurity—the cloud on the mercy-feat—of the Divine mysteries;" because it becomes us to remember that the conditions of human thought do not, on sacred subjects, admit of our apprehending the length and breadth of the questions involved in the decision.

Mysteries abound on every side. That

one man should be born in a savage, and another in a civilized community; that one should inherit health and competence, and every mercy that a loving God can give, and another be born to sickness and poverty, to ignorance and evil example; that children should suffer for their parents' sins, and vice entail misery on the innocent; these, and many other things, are to us unquestionably mysterious and perplexing; but they are difficulties which may be met by the remembrance that "things are not as they seem;" that He who, like the "potter," fashions all, has, and ought to have, power over the clay, to make one vessel to honour and another to dishonour; that happiness and misery are much more equally divided than we sometimes imagine; that mankind are not isolated individuals, but a race; that this world is only preparatory to another; that human probation is as diversified as the human countenance; and that all things, under the control of infinite and everlasting love, are working together for the glory of God, and the best interests of the creature: but darkness and blackness, and

infinite despair, is the only and inevitable result of theories which contemplate, as irreversible facts, the endless wickedness and everlasting misery of the myriads who now live, or have in times past lived, on the face of the earth.

Happily, these theories are only *human*. Not such is the teaching of Scripture. *There* all things ripen in their time,—the wicked for destruction, the righteous for glory, the world for judgment. Truth is, indeed, there seen imparted to one, and withheld from another; but love rules over all. *Some*, to whom neither conversion nor healing can suitably be conveyed by the Lord while on earth, are spoken to “in parables;” while to others, who can both “hear and understand,” it is “given to know the mysteries of the kingdom.” Over the first the Saviour mourns tenderly, for they are as “sheep without a shepherd;” the last He has continually to rebuke for the hardness of their hearts; but in relation to the lot of both it may be said with equal certainty, “Mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace embrace each other.”

## CHAPTER II.

*The Revelation of the Wrath of God.*

IT may, perhaps, be said, that the view taken in the preceding chapter of sin is inconsistent with those portions of Scripture which declare, in the most unequivocal manner, that the wrath of God resteth on the children of disobedience.

We propose, therefore, in the present chapter to inquire into the precise teachings of the Bible on this point.

The word "wrath," as expressive of the Divine indignation, occurs first in connection with the death of Nadab and Abihu (Lev. x. 6). It finds expression *there* in an awful judgment on the sons of Aaron, which comes forth from God as *the theocratic Governor of Israel*, on account of disobedience. Similar examples are recorded in the Book of Numbers (xvi. 32—35; xxi. 6), and in other places.

In the Book of Joshua (x. 20); in the Second Book of Chronicles (xix. 2); and in other portions of the Pentateuch, judgments of a like character are seen to fall on the Canaanites, on Jehoshaphat, and on various offenders.

In the Prophets, the word "wrath" is applied to *different degrees of punishment*, whether inflicted, or only threatened. Isaiah speaks of "a little wrath" (liv. 8), as he looks forward to the time when Israel shall again enjoy the Divine favour. He *implies* the same thing when he represents God as saying to Israel, "In my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy upon thee" (lx. 10). Jeremiah, describing the scattering of the people, calls that judgment "great wrath" (xxxii. 37). Zephaniah, looking forward to a special punishment about to fall on Judah, regards its approach as "a day of wrath," and "the great day of the Lord" (i. 14, 15). Habakkuk, under similar circumstances, prays God "in wrath to remember mercy" (iii. 2); and the Psalmist, looking forward to the second and triumphant coming of Messiah, says, "He shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath," and

that " His enemies shall perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little " (Psa. ii. 12 ; cx. 5).

In all these places we observe the wrath spoken of is temporal, and inflicted *in this world*. Even that which is to be executed by the triumphant Messiah is regarded as poured out upon persons who are *in the flesh*, and *in arms*, so to speak, against His authority. It is judgment proceeding against a people who, in their "rage," are vainly imagining they can break loose from the rule of a visible Christ, and cast away His restraints from them. (Comp. Psa. ii. with Rev. xix. 11—21.)

It is difficult to see that these passages have any relation to the judicial decisions of the world to come, or that they can be justly applied to the careless and ignorant around us. Yet Sunday after Sunday are they used, in all earnestness and sincerity, *as if they did*.

That they involve a great principle, belonging alike to all times, and to all worlds,—viz., that the law of God cannot be trifled with ; that sinners are, in one way or other, and in one world or other, as surely punished as that saints are blessed ; and that

no man is able successfully to contend with his Maker,—cannot be doubted; but they throw no light whatever on the question, What is the precise condition of an unrenewed man, *as such*, in the fight of God?"

Perhaps the only passage in the Old Testament in which Divine judgment is exhibited to us as affecting man in a *future* state, is that in which Isaiah, speaking of "the new heavens and the new earth," in which the "seed" and "name" of Judah shall "remain" before God, says, "They shall (then) go forth, and look upon the *carcasses* of the men that have transgressed: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh" (lxvi. 24). The criminals, whoever they may be, are here represented as dead,—their corpses perpetually corrupting and perpetually consuming,—the objects not of pity or horror, but of *abhorrence*. It is the loathsomeness of corruption, symbolizing the loathsomeness of the sin, which had deprived its victims of eternal life, and made them everlasting objects of disgust and dislike. It is this passage which our Lord quotes when He would

teach the Jews what He meant by "Hell" or Gehenna.

There is not a syllable in the Old Testament which leads us to suppose that the nations *outside* of Israel were all without hope and without God,—simply condemned criminals. The history of Abimelech, of Melchizedek, of Laban, of Joseph, of Jethro, of Balaam, and others, all teach a different lesson. Everywhere we discover *traces* of a pure worship, although too often mixed up with different forms of corruption and idolatry. These outside nations are not, indeed, like Israel, the elect of God; but they are neither disowned nor deserted by their heavenly Father.

The first passage in the New Testament in which "wrath" is spoken of *as future*, is in Matthew (iii. 7), where John the Baptist is represented as calling upon the people to "flee from the wrath to come." But there is no reason to suppose that the Forerunner here spoke of the judgments of eternity. It is obvious that he used the phrase in the sense in which our Lord afterwards applied it; viz., as a warning of the approaching

ruin of the nation: "These be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. There shall be great distress in the land, and *wrath upon this people*" (Luke xxi. 22, 23). Dean Alford says, "John is now speaking in the true character of a prophet, foretelling the wrath soon to be poured on the Jewish nation." (So also Dr. Gill and others.)

The precise word "wrath," as indicative of the *Divine* displeasure, does not appear again in the New Testament until we find it used by St. Paul, when writing to the Romans. It occurs in that Epistle repeatedly. It is here said to be "revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, *who hold* (or, rather, keep back) *the truth in unrighteousness*"—those to whom God hath "showed" what may be known of His being and character, but with no other result than the production of greater wickedness (Rom. i. 18—32). In harmony with this teaching, the Apostle goes on further to affirm that *practically bad men*, whether *professing* Christianity or not;—men who addict themselves to the vices of the heathen ("doing

the fame," ii. 3);—men who "despise the riches of God's goodness and forbearance," and cherish "hard and impenitent hearts," treasure up unto themselves "wrath against the day of wrath,"—the day when they that *reject* the truth, and "obey unrighteousness," shall suffer "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish" of soul (Rom. ii. 5—9). Nothing can be clearer than his assurance that retribution is in reserve for the wicked; and that judgment shall fall with peculiar emphasis on the idolatrous, the immoral, the persecutor, the despiser of grace, and the concealer of truth in unrighteousness of life: but not a syllable to lead us to conclude that the worshipper of the true God, the virtuous and the just, if careless, and unspiritual, and unrenewed, are involved in *precisely the same* condemnation.

The twentieth verse of the first chapter is, indeed, commonly quoted to prove that the heathen everywhere,—the benighted African and the idolater of the South Seas,—are "*without excuse*," inasmuch as in creation and providence alone, a revelation may be found, clear enough to involve all alike in resposi-

bility and ruin. But this is not the meaning of the text. It refers clearly to men who have known the truth, and still *know* it, but keep it back by unrighteousness. The guilt of these persons is aggravated by the fact that God has, for their warning, *witnessed* to the truth, both in their hearts, by "showing" it to them; and in nature, by His wondrous works. Whatever may be the fact of the case, it is certainly not asserted *here* that creation and providence are adequate to instruct a heathen in the knowledge of the "invisible."

In relation to *the race* generally, the Apostle argues thus: By law—the law given from Mount Sinai, *both moral and ceremonial* (for he does not separate them)—viewed simply *as law*, and apart from any work of Christ, cometh "wrath" (or judgment); "the law *worketh* wrath;" for "sin is the transgression of the law:" hence, "where no law is, there is no transgression" (Rom. iv. 15). But from this *general* condemnation (for "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God") Christ *saves*: "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (v. 8).

On this general redemption of humanity,

whatever it may involve, he finds an argument in favour of the special blessedness of the elect. If, says he, Christ died for us all, while in sin, and impenitent, "how much more shall BELIEVERS, who are" justified through His blood, "be saved from wrath (judgment) through Him." "For if, when we were enemies (in our unconverted state), we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, *much more*, being reconciled (*i. e.*, conscious of reconciliation by and through faith), we shall be saved by His life" (ver. 10). And then he goes on to rejoice in the fact, that as "*the many*" were made sinners by Adam, so, by the obedience of Christ, shall "the many" be made "righteous;" while they which receive "*abundance of grace* and of the gift of righteousness shall REIGN in life by one, Jesus Christ" (ver. 17—21).

To us it seems clear that Paul teaches that God *does not* now look upon mankind as condemned in Adam, but, on the contrary, as brought by Christ—even while enemies and in an unconverted state—into a new relationship, "reconciled to God by the death of His Son."

In only one other place in this Epistle does the word "wrath," as applied to God, occur; viz., in the ninth chapter (ver. 22), where the unrepenting Jews, then *on the eve* of their destruction as a nation,—for the Apostle was writing only a few years before the event took place,—are spoken of as "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction,"\* by whose condemnation the riches of God's glory, in the calling of the elect Church, would be made known both to Jews and Gentiles; or, as it is expressed by our Lord himself, that the Gentiles might see, and the Jews be blinded (John ix. 39).

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, renewed men are bidden to remember that they are "by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (ii. 3); and in that to the Colossians they are further reminded that once (viz., in their unrenewed state) they *walked and lived*

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\* So Doddridge and others. The best commentators, both ancient and modern, are agreed that *the Jews* are here meant. There is not a shadow of reason for supposing that the expression, "vessels of wrath," is to be taken as indicating individuals intended by God for eternal punishment.

in the indulgence of the very vices and abominations *on account of which* "the wrath of God" fell upon them (Col. iii. 6).

Two things are here distinctly taught us. The *first* is, that by nature (*i. e.*, apart from Christ's redeeming work) *all* men are alike condemned by law and liable to judgment; or, as it is expressed elsewhere, "dead in trespasses and sins;" the *second* is, that "the wrath" or judgment of God is poured out upon men, *not* on account of their natural corruption through Adam; not on account of their being thoughtless, careless, or unspiritual; but on account of actual vice and idolatry; "*for which things' sake* the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience" (Ephes. v. 6). Whatever may be the condition of the unrenewed in heart, *as such*, it is clearly unwarrantable to say that *here* the wrath of God is revealed as resting upon *them*.

In the First Epistle to the Thessalonians the Jews are again spoken of, in reference to the coming ruin of their nation, as a people upon whom "wrath is come to the uttermost" (1 Thes. ii. 16).

We proceed now to notice what is emphatically called "the wrath of the Lamb" (Rev. vi. 16, 17). This phrase, which is found only in the Apocalypse, is essentially connected with the second advent of the Lord, and is exclusively used to express the judgment which, at that period, will fall upon the men who are in direct conflict with the authority of the Redeemer. It is of this day that the Apostle Paul speaks, when, recognizing the *possibility* of Christ's immediate return, he says to the Thessalonians, "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." "For ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief" (1 Thess. v. 9, and ver. 4). It is *to this day*, or to its immediate precursors, that those passages must be referred which speak of the *filling up* of "the wrath of God" upon the earth, of the "pouring out of the wrath of God," and of the "treading the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Rev. xv. 1; xvi. 1; xix. 15).

In all these cases, let it be observed, the wrath falls upon men *in the flesh*, and while

on earth; and the persons who experience it are the *active opposers* of Christ's rule.

A careful review of the words translated "damnation," "condemnation," or "judgment," do not lead us to any different conclusion.

The Scribes and Pharisees—"hypocrites"—are told by our Lord himself that *they* shall receive "the greater damnation" (Matt. xxiii. 14); that it is difficult to see "how" *they* can escape Gehenna; that *he* who blasphemes against the Holy Ghost is in danger of eternal condemnation; and that *they who have done evil* shall at the last day "come forth unto the resurrection of damnation"\* (John v. 29); but there is not a word to intimate that this is, after all, the lot of the entire race, with the exception only of the Church.

St. Paul tells us, regarding those licentious Christians who, in his day, said, "Let us do evil, that good may come," that "their condemnation is just" (Rom. iii. 8); and of the

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\* Christ is here clearly referring to men such as were those to whom He was speaking,—Jews who "fought to kill Him" (ver. 16—18),—persons who had rejected and hated light, "because their deeds were evil."

apostates who shall be on the earth at the second coming of the Lord, that "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but *had pleasure in unrighteousness*" (2 Thes. ii. 11, 12). We do not say that in any of these cases the word "damnation," "condemnation," or "judgment" *necessarily* means the highest form of it,—the damnation of Hell, or Gehenna; although, in *some* of these declarations, we think it undoubtedly has that interpretation. The fact that our Lord adds the words, "of Gehenna," when He speaks of the Pharisees, alone shows that the word "damnation" does not always and necessarily imply that doom. Be that as it may, it is clear that, in relation to men generally—to the race—Paul says that "the ministration of death" (that of the law, given from Mount Sinai) is "done away" (2 Cor. iii. 11); that it has now "no glory, by reason of the glory that excelleth;" and that, "with open face,"—without reserve of any kind,—he seeks to manifest this truth "to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (iv. 2).

We are not inclined to dispute that many an amiable but unconverted man is practically an unbeliever, and that, as such, he has too often "pleasure in unrighteousness;" but no one, surely, can pretend that this is what St. Paul *means* either in the epistle to the Romans, or in that to the Thessalonians.

On what, then, it will be said, does a doctrine which seems to lie at the very root of our Evangelical theology—forming, in fact, the basis on which Christ is commonly preached—really rest?

We reply, Certainly *not* on any direct and explicit Scriptural declaration faithfully interpreted, but on INFERENCES; on inferences, we allow, that are *supposed* not only to be legitimate, but *necessary*; on conclusions which are drawn chiefly from the words of Christ himself; but still on human inferences. The doctrine in question is one which, like many others, although not to be *read* in Holy Scripture, may, it is believed by Christians generally, be clearly *proved* therefrom.

We do not say that anything is to be *rejected* simply because it cannot be found in so many direct words in Scripture; or that

nothing should be believed which is arrived at only by a process of deduction. But we do say that no doctrine which is based on *inference* can ever have *the same authority* as that which rests on *fact*,—using that term as indicative of direct and explicit revelation.

The reason is obvious. In all inferential conclusions, a human and therefore imperfect element is introduced, which carries with it, of necessity, the liability to err. We hold, therefore, that all conclusions thus arrived at are open to question, in a sense which by no means applies to any plain declaration made either by Christ or His Apostles.

In the next chapter we propose seriously and reverentially, but in an independent spirit, to examine the texts from which it is concluded that every unconverted person trembles on the verge of “the second death.”

## CHAPTER III.

*On the Doctrine that every Unconverted Man is a Vessel of Wrath, fitted only for Destruction.*

**I**N relation to this question, we propose now to examine, carefully and reverentially, those texts which are supposed to imply—nay, to *involve as of necessity*—the doctrine that every unconverted man is to be regarded as a sentenced criminal, daily and hourly in danger of eternal woe.

They are the following :—

(1) “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark xvi. 16),\*—a declaration of Christ himself, immediately following the command, “Preach the Gospel to every creature.”

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\* Internal evidence is very weighty against Mark's being the author of that portion of the chapter (*viz.*, ver. 9—20) in which this statement occurs. (See Dean Alford.)

(2) "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii. 36),—words addressed by John the Baptist to the Jews.

(3) "He that believeth on Him (the only begotten Son) is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John iii. 18),—part of our Lord's discourse to Nicodemus, and to be taken in connection with the declaration (ver. 3), "Except a man be born again (born from above—*Marg.*), he cannot see the kingdom of God."

(4) "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Gal. vi. 15).

(5) "According to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus iii. 5).

These passages, with many others that might be named, will be sufficient to show the ground on which the Church of Christ has come to the conclusion that, apart from the regeneration of his nature by the Holy

Spirit, *no man* can escape the damnation of hell; that, in short, if he that believeth *hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed *from death* unto life (John v. 24), *then* he that believeth not cannot have life, but remains *in the death* from which he might, if he would, by faith, have passed.

This inference, of course, carries with it the further conclusion that, *as unconverted*; the virtuous and the vicious stand, in the eye of God, on precisely the same platform; that, as Dr. Chalmers puts it, "a character distinguished by all that is lovely and soothing in humanity,"—a heart "furnished, not merely with the finest sensibilities of our nature, but with its most upright and honourable principles,"—a man "whose every word carries security along with it; who, amid all the varieties of fortune, has nobly sustained the glories of an untainted character,"—is, if not renewed in the spirit of his mind—endowed with a new nature, and so made a son of God,—the subject of "entire and unmitigated depravity," a hater of God, and a child of hell.

How can it, it is said, be otherwise, since "the Bible everywhere groups the individuals

of our species into two (and only two) classes, —vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy;” since it employs these terms in a meaning so extensive, that “by each couplet of them it embraces all individuals;” since there is no trace of any middle department (*i. e.*, between the elect Church and the eternally lost) to be met with in the New Testament; since *every man* will, at death, “be pronounced meet for the fellowship of God through eternity, or be turned into hell” ?\*

Nothing can be more brilliant than the declamation in which Dr. Chalmers, with regal eloquence, maintains this ground, regarding the conclusion at which he arrives as a necessary consequence of “the emptiness of natural virtue, and the natural enmity of the mind against God.”

But is it a true conclusion? Is it Scriptural? That is the question.

If it be, Christ can bestow no blessing upon any child of Adam short of absolute union with Himself; His redemption is, *practically*, of no avail to any but to the elect; He is in

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\* Tron Sermons.

no fenfe whatever the Saviour of *the world*; Bethfaida and Tyre, Capernaum and Sodom, the young ruler whom the Redeemer loved, the children whom He bleffed, the multitude over whom He mourned, and the hypocritical Scribes and Pharifees whom He denounced, all, if unrenewed, ftand on one level, and are, in the eye of the Judge, *alike*.

Now, we frankly fay, Scripture does not leave this impreffion upon us. Everywhere we fee, in the Divine Record, God's wrath, executed on earth, and in the future ftate threatened againft vice and wickednefs *as fuch*. Moft diftinctly are we taught there, that *degrees*, both of reward and punifhment, will mark the decifions of the laft day. But there can be no degrees of forrow *in hell*; nor can there be any fhades either of honour or happinefs in heaven, worthy of confideration, if each individual man becomes, at death, the companion either of angels or of fiends.

On this point, the fort of felf-deception that men pafs upon themfelves is fingular. They believe, or think they do, that everlafting torment in hell, and eternal abfence from God, is confiftent with "few ftripes."

They imagine that every man becoming *as happy as his nature will admit of*, is the result of being "saved so as by fire;" that the difference between the greatest saint and the most inconsistent professor—on the supposition of both being kept out of hell—is, that the one has a higher capacity for bliss than the other; that the difference, in short, is that which may be observed in individuals here—the difference, for instance, between the happiness of a child and that of an adult. And on this follows the supposition, that the future lot of a very inconsistent Christian taken to heaven, and that of a virtuous heathen in hell, may, after all, be very much alike. The confusion of thought, the absolute incapacity of realizing either the one state or the other, which this sort of reasoning implies, would be incredible, if it were not witnessed every day.

Further, in no other sense than that of a future and *discriminating retribution*, exactly apportioned to the opportunities and privileges enjoyed, is it possible to understand such declarations as these,—“The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this

generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here" (Matt. xii. 41); or again, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes" (Matt. xi. 21—24).

We say, it is impossible to reconcile statements like these with a theology which proceeds on the assumption that every man who is unconverted is a vessel of wrath, and will, at death, be adjudged to perdition; for, unless violently explained away, the language of the Lord plainly teaches that future judgment will affect the inhabitants of certain cities *as such*,—a declaration by no means strange to persons who believe in a "new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness;" but utterly beyond the comprehension of those who hold that each separate individual, who dwelt in the cities spoken of, is at this moment either in heaven or hell.

Equally impossible also is it, on this showing, to make anything at all intelligible out

of St. Paul's assertion, that "all Israel shall be saved;" for it is clear, from the context in connection with the passage, that the Apostle does *not* mean a "remnant." It is equally clear, from the entire tenor of Scripture, that, in relation to the retributions of the world to come, the Jew and the Gentile will be dealt with on precisely the same principles; and while it is asserted again and again that Christ is the Saviour of *the world*, and a *propitiation* for its sins, it is equally clear from other passages that universalism can find no sanction in the teachings of revelation.

What, then, *can* we conclude, but that "all," as used by St. Paul in reference to Israel, means, as it does almost everywhere else, the race—the whole; with such exceptions only as cannot be excluded without a violation of the principle that man is voluntarily wicked, and, therefore, personally responsible.\*

But THE TEXTS,—there they stand, and

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\* Dr. Owen, although for a different object, takes this view. He says, after pointing out many passages in which the word "all" has a restricted meaning, "Therefore, from the bare word, nothing can be inferred to

who shall question their truthfulness or force? Certainly we shall not. We shall deal only with the inferences drawn from them, and the application made of them by mortals as weak and as erring as ourselves.

First, then, we observe, that the ordinary interpretation always proceeds on the supposition—taken for granted as unquestionable—that “the Bible everywhere groups the individuals of our species into two (and only two) classes, vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy (*i. e.*, receivers of favour, and endurers of judgment); that by each “couplet,” as Dr. Chalmers says, it embraces all individuals; that every man will, at death, be pronounced meet for the fellowship of God through eternity, or be turned into hell.”

This we dispute in its professed character of *fact*. It is not true that the Bible teaches any such doctrine. It is nowhere asserted in so many words; and it cannot fairly be

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enforce an absolute, unlimited universality of all individuals, to be intimated thereby.”—*On the Death of Christ*, quoted by Dr. Bonar, in the “Prophetical Landmarks,” p. 118. See also Part III., Chap. V., of the present volume, on “Limitations in Scripture.”

deduced from a careful and accurate survey of the entire teaching of Scripture relative to the future.

We cannot here bring forward the evidence on which we rely. It runs through the whole revelation; it is in harmony with the tenor of the entire book; it is sustained by a careful examination of the very texts which are usually adduced to prove a contrary doctrine. Scripture, when accurately and calmly weighed, is found everywhere to teach three things. *First*, that Christ has an Elect Church, composed of the renewed of all ages, who shall be one with Him through eternity. *Secondly*, that there are those who deliberately and resolutely reject Christ—a rejection which arises out of the fact that they *love* darkness better than light, because their deeds are evil, and for whom, therefore, there is no further hope. *Thirdly*, that *the race*, regarded as a whole—*man*, as separated, on the one hand, from those who, by grace, “receive power or privilege to become sons of God,” and, on the other, from despisers and persecutors—*man*, therefore, regarded as embracing, in all ages, the heathen, the

ignorant, the captives of superstition, the careless, the indifferent, and the ungodly, is, in relation to Satan, *a redeemed creature*; that everything that is involved in that deliverance depends, not on his actual reconciliation, but on the RECONCILER; not on the faith exercised by the sinner, but on the work of THE SAVIOUR, wrought for every man while he was yet an "enemy by wicked works."

But, it will be said, does the New Testament anywhere speak of a deliverance apart from personal faith in the Deliverer? Is it possible to conceive of a salvation which needs not, as a condition of its taking effect, to be received by the sinner? We simply reply, that Christ's redemption is of avail, "for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Rom. iii. 25). Dean Alford interprets "sins that are past,"—"The sins of the whole world before the death of Christ." In this case, without doubt, there is a salvation irrespective of personal faith. We need scarcely add that, on any other supposition, infants and idiots must be regarded as lost.

The more reasonable question is, In what

does such a redemption consist? What does it involve as a practical consequence? We reply, *a future probation*, in some respects corresponding to that *probation of grace* which the elect of earth have enjoyed here; in other respects different. *Similar*, inasmuch as it will involve the power voluntarily to accept of the Redeemer, or wickedly to reject Him. *Dissimilar*, inasmuch as it will be under more favourable auspices; since, then, men will be delivered from the "captivity" of Satan; the great enemy will be bound; and trial will show that it is but too possible for man to fall, even apart from the influence of outward temptation. Probation *now* is for a kingly crown; probation *then* will be simply for citizenship. Then, we trust, the fallen will be *few*; for "the veil of the covering," that is now over all nations, will be taken off, and "death will be swallowed up of victory" (compare carefully Isa. xxv. 6—8 with 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55).

Need we say that such a deliverance, *accomplished only through and by death*, must, from its very nature, be totally distinct from that high and blessed union with the Re-

deemer, which is effected by the Holy Spirit *here*,—which is, in fact, "a present salvation;" the passing from death unto life *now*; a precursive victory over Satan; the pledge and the foretaste of a blessedness which will be consummated when, as perfected co-workers with God and with Christ, in the love and service of the world to come, such saved ones enter upon that joy of their Lord, which they have, in some slight degree, anticipated while on earth? Perhaps we might say the difference is like that which is shadowed forth, in the parable of the Prodigal, between the "son" and the "hired servant." The one is the loved and *trusted* in the father's house; the other is only permitted to serve.

Viewed in this light, the texts in question become clear, and are seen to harmonize with every other portion of Holy Writ. For, *first*, they all take for granted that the persons of whom they are spoken have *heard* the Gospel, and either accepted or rejected it. He that "believeth not" is the antithesis to "he that believeth;" neither the one phrase nor the other applying to those who have never known the Gospel in such a sense as to

have either loved or hated it, accepted or rejected it. *Secondly*, the wrath that abideth—the condemnation already pronounced—is as evidently that which is incurred or confirmed by an actual rejection of grace. The man is condemned, it is expressly said, “*because he hath not believed.*” These words were addressed to men who, with the Scriptures of the Old Testament in their hands, and professedly honouring the Prophets, whose predictions they despised, were daily witnessing *miracles* of beneficence; men on whom overwhelming evidence only produced ever-deepening hate; men who not only rejected and crucified Messiah, in spite of His undeniable claim to their homage, but consciously and deliberately persisted in the wrong, because their deeds were evil. There is nothing whatever to show that the passages referred to are intended to distinguish the regenerate from the unregenerate, or the spiritual from the worldly. On the contrary, they distinctly point to the wicked persecutor, and to the *hater* of light. *Thirdly*, the “new birth,” and “the kingdom,”—the “new creature,” and “eternal life,”—the “renewing of

the Holy Ghost," and freedom from liability even to judgment,—as evidently go together. They indicate the blessedness of those who, in the age to come, shall be one with Christ, kings and priests, sharers alike in His throne and His priesthood. To this dignity Nicodemus, who probably regarded it as his *birthright*, could not attain, or even discern its character, without the new birth. Israel *as a whole* may, indeed, be "saved," but nowhere are we told that it shall attain to the position that it might have occupied had the nation made its "calling and election sure."

Other passages of Scripture indicate this distinction still more clearly. "To as many (*i. e.*, of the Jews) as received Him, to them gave He power (or privilege—*Marg.*) to become the *sons of God*, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 12, 13). To such "there is *now* no condemnation" (Rom. viii. 1). "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" "In all things we are more

than conquerors through Him that loved us' (ver. 33—37). "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned (judged) with the world" (1 Cor. xi. 32). To apply these texts indiscriminately to every man who escapes the final doom of the impenitent, is to destroy their force, and to deprive them of meaning.

The *true inference* to be drawn from the texts we have been considering, and from Scripture generally, is, in our view, *not* that the Divine vengeance still impends over the race; *not* that *man, as man*, regarded apart from the enjoyment of a special indwelling of the Holy Spirit, is simply a vessel of wrath; *not* that the mere fact of the Atonement aggravates the guilt of those who never heard of it; *not* that Paul's Gospel—yea, "the very substance of it"—consists in his teaching how "wrath might be averted, and God pacified;"\* *not* that Divine grace is but an expression of the mercy that snatches here and there a sinner from the horrors of interminable woe,—but that there is "*a prize*

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\* *Christian Observer*, Dec., 1861, pp. 945—50.

of our high calling in Chrift Jefus," which may be gained or loft; that there is, for every man, a world of difhonour, or one of honour; a freedom from judgment, or a being liable to it; a future blifs, or a future forrowing; a prefent falvation, or a future condemnation; a hell for the irreclaimably impenitent; a heaven for the newborn fons of God; a probation, yet to come, for the helpiefs and the weak; a world of retribution *fo exact*, that no diversity of character, no accident of pofition, no favouring or unfavouring circumftance, fhall, in the flighteft degree, affect the juftice of its decisions, or the integrity of its awards.

Far be it from us to deny that an element of fear mingles with the element of grace in the Gofpel. If it were not fo, it would be a gofpel out of harmony with the moral inftincts of the finner. For whence the *unrest* which diftinguifhes him in life, or the profpective alarm which no casuiftry can fhut out in death, if it comes not from the deepeft convictions of his foul, however neglected or crufted, that life, viewed without reference to futurity, is a failure, and that man is both

a sinner and an exile? Whence, but from the instinctive consciousness that earth is but vanity, and the world that is invisible the only reality, comes that "sublime homesickness," as it has been well called, which makes the young, as a rule, die so happily?

We repeat, "a religion altogether dissociated from fear" must be, man being what he is, "emasculate and unavailing;" but, on the other hand, a religion based on fear, or one the *chief element* of which is terror, can, in itself, never bring forth better fruit than a selfish dread, or an equally selfish hope. That much, very much, of our popular Christianity is of this kind can scarcely be doubted; but we firmly protest against the Bible being made in any way responsible for so monstrous a result.

We fully admit that much secular excellence may, and often does, exist, where the love of God, as the supreme good, may be wanting; that moral beauty in the character by no means necessarily implies the possession of a new heart and a right spirit; that it is, in itself, no evidence whatever that the man thus rendered loveable to his fellows is also

one with Christ, or could, in any fitting sense of the term, be styled "a saint," a "faithful brother in the Lord," or one "chosen from the foundation of the world," and predestinated to "eternal life."

But we do hold that such are not to be confounded with the opposers of all righteousness, or the persecutors of the Church; that we have *no right to assume* that, in the production of a lovely character, the Spirit of God has had *no part*; or that because, in such, there may be an obvious unfitness for the higher employments of the unseen world, that *therefore*, they can be fit for nothing better than the eternal companionship of the devil and his angels.

Yet to these extravagances are even the best of men driven in support of the theory,—theological, but not Scriptural,—that the unconverted, although, in a sense, the objects of the Divine pity, are yet *practically*, and for ever, the subjects of undying wrath.

## CHAPTER IV.

*On the Doctrine of the Atonement.*

THE Atonement is a *great fact*. The philosophy of it is a *profound mystery*. It is with the fact alone that, as sinners, we have to do; the philosophy involved we may safely leave to higher intelligences and other states of being.

The word "atonement" occurs but once in our English version of the New Testament (Rom. v. 11), and there only through a mistranslation; for *καταλλαγή* unquestionably ought to have been rendered, *reconciliation*. It is so rendered in other places (*e. g.*, 2 Cor. v. 18, 19; Rom. xi. 15), and should have been in this also, since no argument whatever *as to the method* of reconciliation can honestly be founded upon it. To ordinary readers, "atonement" conveys the idea of *substitution by sacrifice*, and so far its use is, without question, misleading.

Other words, however, supposed to *imply* the doctrine in question, frequently present themselves, such as "propitiation," "oblation," and "sacrifice,"—words which, like the announcement of John the Baptist, "Behold *the Lamb* of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29), and the declaration of St. Paul, "Christ, *our passover*, is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. v. 7), become unintelligible, if they are not to be regarded, in some measure at least, in connection with the blood-shedding of the Old Testament economy.

Unhappily, theologians will not allow us to rest on Divine facts. They insist that it is as necessary to hold a true philosophy of the Atonement, as it is to believe in the fact of one. "The *doctrine*," says a recent prominent defender of the faith,\* "is the *inference from the fact*, and without the doctrine the bare dry fact is nothing. The question is, *in what way* Christ's death effects its purpose? Upon our answer to this depends the nature of our religion."

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\* Rev. C. Hebert, M.A., in reply to Maurice, Davies, Jowett, and others.

It never seems to occur to such reasoners that the revealed fact\* is alone Divine; that all inferences deduced therefrom, true or false, are purely human; and that, therefore, on their theory, "the nature of our religion depends," not on the simple reception or otherwise of a Divine testimony, but on a purely logical process, which, owing to the unfitness of the human mind to deal with matters stretching into the infinite, is at least *as likely* to be wrong as right.

Into the various controversies that have arisen out of this perverse disposition to be "wise above that which is written," we shall decline to enter.

We assume, as undeniable, that the Old Testament prophets predict a coming Messiah, and that they describe Him in two aspects; *first*, and chiefly, as "a priest upon a throne," under whose glorious reign all nations shall be blessed; and, *secondly*, as a "man of sorrows," humiliated and suffering, yet not

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\* As we have already distinctly stated what we mean by a revealed FACT, it is only necessary to refer the reader to the note appended to p. 13.

for any sin of His own (Jer. xxiii. 5 ; Isa. liii. 3—12).

The fortieth Psalm, taken, as it must be, in connection with its exposition in the Epistle to the Hebrews (x. 5—14), is, perhaps, of all these prophecies the most remarkable, since it gives us the *reason* for Christ's coming,—the inefficiency of the blood of bulls and of goats to take away sin ; and the *result* of the coming,—the honouring of the law : “ Lo, I come *to do* thy will, O God.” “ He taketh away the first ” (sacrifice and offering), “ that He may establish the second ” (perfect obedience). To this remarkable prophecy, and its inspired exposition, we naturally look for an explanation of the facts of the Gospel history, so far, at least, as explanation is needful.

These facts are simple, and speak for themselves.

A Jewish maiden, miraculously conceiving by the Holy Ghost, becomes the mother of a child born without sin,—free from the slightest hereditary taint of evil. This child, subject to all the weaknesses and infirmities of humanity, grows up, like any other child, obedient to his parents, faultless in life, and

marked by a moral thoughtfulness rapidly deepening into a wisdom far above his age.

For thirty years he lives in obscurity; toils, as other young men toil; and, so far as the sacred narrative informs us, is in no way distinguished from his contemporaries, except by wisdom and goodness.

At length a great prophet, — John, — appears, declaring himself to be the forerunner of Messiah, and calling on all men to repent, and be baptized into the belief and expectation of this great event. In obedience to the call Jesus approaches, is recognized by John in his true character, yet submits to the rite, and is by a voice from heaven proclaimed to the Baptist, the “beloved Son,” in whom God is ever well pleased.

For three years more he moves about Judea, words of wisdom dropping like pearls from his lips, and miracles of beneficence thickening about his path. At length, betrayed by a familiar friend, he falls into the hands of his enemies, and finally expires in the agonies of a shameful and cruel death. The sun darkens at the sight, and an earthquake rends the veil of the temple; but

*Gentiles* alone (the centurion and his band) fear greatly, and say, "Truly this was the Son of God" (Matt. xxvii. 51—54).

So far, and to the outward eye, nothing appears beyond *the advent* of a great prophet, and *the commission* of a great crime.

But this is not all. The teaching of Christ is as peculiar as His life. John, as we have before observed, announces Him as "*the Lamb* of God, that taketh away the sin of the world;" Caiaphas, apparently unconscious of the weight of his words, utters a mysterious prophecy, "that it was expedient that (this) one man should die for the people" (John xviii. 14); He himself declares, that "after three days" He will "rise again;" His disciples have been taught that He but goes before, to send "gifts," to found "a kingdom," and "to prepare mansions" for His faithful followers; and yet the garden of Gethsemane is the scene of a mighty and mysterious struggle, and the cross is connected with the cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"\*

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\* The question is, Were these words the cry of

Connecting these things with other revealed facts,—such as, that He came “to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt. xx. 28); that He laid down His “life” for His “sheep” (John x. 15); that He shed His “blood” for “the remission of sins” (Matt. xxvi. 28); that He “redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us” (Gal. iii. 13); that “with His stripes we are healed” (Isa. liii. 5); and that through eternity the song of the redeemed will be, “Thou art worthy: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood” (Rev. v. 9),—nothing surely can be plainer than that He died *vicariously*—for others; that He died *voluntarily*,—“I lay down my life of

despair, or were they uttered *for the comfort* of the surrounding disciples, who were then and there to learn the true meaning of that Messianic and finally triumphant psalm (xxii. 1), *of which it forms the initial verse*, and *in which* they would find the explanation of all they witnessed. Whether the Lord repeated the whole psalm may be doubtful, but it is clear He said enough to enable His followers to do so. “Even at this day, to repeat in the same manner but the first line of a common hymn, would be understood as a reference to the whole.”—*Coleridge*.

myself;" that death was most *unwelcome* to Him, and *submission* to the cross the severest of trials,—“Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;” that all this pain, ignominy, and suffering *might have been avoided* by a wish,—“Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?” and, finally, that there was such a *necessity* for the endurance, that under the united pressure of duty and love, “He sweat as it were great drops of blood” in resisting the temptation to avoid it.

All this we gather from the narrative; but there is no assertion that He was, in any sense whatever, *punished*; that he endured anything at the hand of God as a *Divine infliction*; or that He was ever looked upon by the Father in any character save that which really belonged to Him as the Holy and the Blest.

That He was, in a sense, “stricken of God and afflicted,” is as certain as that He was made “perfect through sufferings” (Heb. ii. 10); that in all, He “bare our sins and carried our sorrows,” is as true as that He

redeemed us from Satan; that, without the endurance of this cruel and ignominious death—without the actual laying down of His life, the shedding of His blood—the work of redemption could not have been consummated, is a clearly revealed fact; but that this was the effect of “Divine anger,” or that it was “necessary to the *avenging* of the violated law,” is a conclusion which, whether true or false, is the result of human reasoning, and not the direct teaching of the Bible.

If it be said,—as it probably will,—Why, then, was Christ, a sinless and unfallen being, ushered into a world of fallen creatures, and made subject to the consequences of a disobedience in which He had not participated? Above all, Why was He God as well as man? We have not far to go for an answer.

To the *first* of these questions we reply, in the words of our Lord himself,—“Even so, Father, because it seemed good in thy sight.” Enough is it for us to know that the Redeemer lived and loved, and suffered and died, *to do the will of God*.

Whether, in any sense, He bore the penalty

of the violated law, we know not. Whether *vengeance* was *needed*, in order to its vindication before the universe, we do not presume to affirm. But of this we are quite sure,—it required to be *obeyed*. Broken and dishonoured before all creation, vain were the penalties by which, in all ages, it has avenged itself on offenders, to restore the dignity it had lost. Obedience, perfect and sinless obedience, made manifest in the flesh, could alone restore it to honour. *This* Christ achieved, and, in achieving it, became to man a “second Adam,” the head of a redeemed people, the Saviour of a lost and ruined world.

In relation to the *second* question, it is surely enough to observe, that no *creature* could *do for man* what Christ has done, or *be to man* what Christ is, without becoming the object of idolatry. It was needful that the work of redemption should be a Divine work,—that the deliverer of man should be his Creator,—that his Saviour should be his Judge; since He who secures, on man’s behalf, *such* blessings,—who is *to him* “the way, the truth, and the life,” and who

obtains *for him* everything that renders life desirable,—*could not* be other, either to the eye or to the heart, than an incarnate God; and if not the proper object of worship, would necessarily become to myriads the overpowering occasion of sin and shame.

To us it seems a strange conclusion that, because Christ came into the world *to die*; that because it is *His blood* which cleanseth from all sin; that because He is our “sacrifice,” our “passover,” and our “propitiation,” *therefore* the virtue of His sacrifice lies in the *material blood* shed on Calvary; its efficacy, in the assumption that He died under the “anger of God;”<sup>\*</sup> or that reconciliation with

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\* Mr. Hebert puts the matter in the plainest form when he says, “The death (of Christ) *under the frown of God*, under *the weight of His wrath*, due to me for my sin, is the great difference between us and the Socinians.” (Second Edit., pp. 80, 81.) We fearlessly assert, it is no such thing. An assertion so hasty and ill founded, is calculated to do much mischief. Mr. Hebert surely knows that the doctrine of propitiation, *as now held* by orthodox Churches, is the doctrine of Anselm; that until his time this doctrine had not taken *the form* in which it is now usually presented; that to the Primitive Church, the central point of the spiritual life was the incarnation;

the Father was not *possible* without the crime and the cruelty of the wicked men by whose evil agency the Lord of life was "crucified and slain." That it pleased God to admit this agency is certain; that Jesus was "delivered" into the hands of His murderers "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," is true also (Acts ii. 23); but that this wicked act had anything to do with the redemption of man, beyond consummating at once the Saviour's work and the judgment of the Jewish nation, is nowhere taught in Holy Writ.

Dean Alford has truly said,—“Never do we find in Scripture, Old Testament, or New Testament, any such expression as the Father was *propitiated* concerning our sins, on account of *the death* of His Son; or, Christ *propitiated* God or God's wrath by *His blood*; never, God was reconciled.” (Note on Heb. ii. 17.)

Why, then, should we *theorize* at all on a

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and that the cross was for centuries regarded rather as *the culminating fact* of the atonement, than as the atonement itself.

subject so much above us? Why should we be so afraid to admit that the sacrifice of the Redeemer, while in one sense *a counterpart*, is in another *a contrast* to those of the Old Testament economy? that it is at once the *substance* and the *supercession* of the sacrifice of animal life, by the higher sacrifice of the spirit,—“Thou shalt make *His soul* an offering for sin” (Isa. liii. 10)? that it is the *putting away* of material blood, to make room for the shedding of a life spent in holy and spotless obedience? that it is *the establishment of*, “Lo, I come to do thy will,” in the place of mere deliverance from the *consequences* of sin by the substitution of a victim? “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (Psa. li. 17). This surely is the sense in which Christ, “the perfect Son,” becomes “the perfect sacrifice,” and “the Saviour” of that mystical “body,” the members of which He is ever drawing by His grace into fellowship with Himself.

But we check ourselves, for we are on “holy ground.” Good Richard Baxter truly says,—“The things of God are like snow,

and man cannot touch them without leaving on them the print of his handling."

That a question should ever have arisen as to the *extent* of the Atonement; that Christian men, with the Bible in their hands, and its plainest statements before them, should ever have ventured to assert that Christ died *only* for the elect; that if He "bought" others, such "purchase" is for them "no ransom or redemption, fairly so called;" that He has bought them, only "that He may so dispose of them as to glorify the retributive righteousness of God in their condemnation;"\* that faith is the act of "*a new faculty*,"† a Divine act, "implying the communication of a Divine *capacity*,"‡ and yet that all who do not possess it are irrecoverably lost, is to us one of the most melancholy proofs we have ever met, of the tendency of the human mind to claim for its own weak and erring *inferences* an authority which really belongs only to the direct teachings of God.

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\* Candlish on the Atonement, pp. 193, 194.

† *Ibid.*, p. 379.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 388. We quote from Morison's Vindication.

The true solution of the theological difficulty which has led to these sad aberrations from truth will, we are satisfied, ultimately be found in the simple reception of the apostolic declarations to Timothy, when instructing him as to what he was to teach,—“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save *sinners*; of whom I am chief” (I Tim. i. 15); that “God our Saviour will have *all men* to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (ii. 4); and that while He is “the Saviour of all men,” He is “*specially*” so “of those that believe” (iv. 10). “*These* things,” says the Apostle to him, “command and teach” (iv. 11).

## CHAPTER V.

*On Conversion, as distinguished from  
Regeneration.*

CONVERSION (*επιστροφή*), which literally means *turning round*, is a term used in Scripture sometimes to express an entire and radical change of *conduct*, following renewal of heart; and sometimes to indicate return from a temporary course of wrong doing. It is used in the former sense in the Acts (xv. 3), where Paul speaks of the "conversion of the Gentiles;" it is used in the latter sense by our Lord, when He says to Peter, "When thou art converted (*επιστρέψας*), strengthen thy brethren" (Luke xxii. 32). In Peter's case the conversion was sudden, and effected by a look: "The Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly"

(Luke xxii. 61, 62). Under ordinary circumstances, conversion (although not without exceptions) is an outward and visible thing, and, generally speaking, is, by the Divine blessing, identified with human effort and influence.

Regeneration, on the other hand, as implying a "new birth," and regarded as the first and transition step from death unto life, is the work of God *alone*; it is probably in all cases an instantaneous, and it is certainly a *secret* one.

Conversion is a process which may be repeated again and again; each successive spiritual impulse forming a new era in the history of the soul. It is *action* rather than life; it is commonly the result of a definite form of human agency; and it is generally brought about by influences which act upon the nature of man under all the ordinary conditions which affect responsible beings. When our Lord says to *His disciples*, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xviii. 3), He is not enforcing the doctrine of the new birth, but

simply teaching the necessity of *turning away* from those false notions which had led them to ask who should be greatest.

Regeneration, on the contrary, is, from its very nature, complete, and commonly involves a *present* consciousness of forgiven sin ; it is a change transcending all ordinary laws ; it is generally independent of outward circumstances, and it is always *anticipative* of future bliss. It is, in short, the peculiar donation which God bestows on the elect, who thus receive "power (or privilege) to become the sons of God ; which are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 12, 13). It is the accomplishment *on earth* of a change of nature, which, in other cases, may or may not be effected in the world (or age) that is to come.

Conversion, although equally the work of Him from whom cometh "every good and perfect gift," is not *in the same sense* supernatural, inasmuch as it may be, and often is, but temporary. If a man exchange a life of sin for a life of obedience ; if earnestness and feriousness in religion take the place of

habitual indifference ; if pure and blessed tastes and affections are obviously superseding those which are low and depraved, we may safely speak of such an one as converted, and *hope* that the outward and visible change indicates the inward condition of the soul,—that it implies the regeneration of the whole nature by the power of the Spirit of God. But months, nay years, may elapse, during which it would be neither safe nor right for us to form any practical decision on the question ; for, on the one hand, differences in degree are very apt to be confounded by us with differences of kind ; and on the other, changes, the most important in a man's character, may be accomplished *so gradually* that no human wisdom is competent to decide when they took place, or *so suddenly* that their reality and value cannot be tested. Even in cases where the change is the unquestionable result of religious impressions, it is often impossible to decide upon its precise character until proved by its fruits.

These distinctions, which derive all their value from being Scriptural, are of great

practical importance when viewed in connection with the various agencies God has appointed for the conversion of the world.

The question must often occur, both to the minister of the Gospel and to the private Christian,—What is the actual value of the influence that can be exercised by one man over another in relation to his spiritual interests?

Sometimes it seems as if it must be rated very low indeed: "I have no encouragement to preach," says Mr. Cecil, in his "Remains," "but the belief of a continued Divine operation. To bring a man to love God, to hunger and thirst after the mind that was in Christ,—with man this is impossible! But God has said it shall be done, and bids me go forth and preach; that by me, as His instrument, He may effect these grand ends: *and therefore I go.*"

An eminent American divine (Dr. Edward Griffin) puts the same sentiment still more distinctly and forcibly. After arguing that as it was necessary for Moses to stretch out his arm, or the Red Sea would not have divided,—for the trumpets to have been

blown, or the walls of Jericho would not have fallen,—for the voice of Ezekiel to have been heard, or the valley of bones would have been undisturbed,—he thus proceeds: “God sent Ezekiel to say, ‘Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord,’ when He knew that the bones would never hear without His supernatural interposition. And the command was a sufficient warrant and encouragement to the prophet. If God should bid *me* go and preach to the dead in yonder graveyard, I would go. *With no other encouragement*, I now stand over *this* valley of the slain (the congregation he was addressing), and say to the dead of my people and kindred, ‘Come out of your graves, ye bones that are very dry. Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.’ ”\*

We do not know that evangelical preachers generally would like to express their views in precisely these terms, but we are quite sure that the words embody the sentiments of

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\* “Lectures delivered in Park Street, Boston, U.S., by the Rev. Edward D. Griffin, D.D.” (Third Edition.)

thousands and tens of thousands of the most excellent Christians the world has ever seen. Only let it be granted that regeneration and conversion mean *in Scripture* the same thing, and that none but the regenerate are saved from eternal ruin, and it follows, of course—regeneration being supernatural—that what are usually called means of grace, while appointed *antecedents* of conversion, are not second causes; that if an earnest exhortation makes a deeper impression than a frigid one, it is but a *coincidence* between the supernatural and natural order of Divine operations; that the only end of preaching is to produce *attention to truth*; and its only use to prepare the way for a Divine work on such souls as God has foreordained to save. An Arminian would of course put the case somewhat differently, but on the supposition of his being a believer in the supernatural character of regeneration, the result cannot be different. *Such are the inexorable demands of logic in theology.*

This view of the Gospel, and of its work in the world, proceeds, of course, on the supposition that Divine sovereignty decides the

eternal condition of *all* men—decides it, not in the sense in which God decides all human affairs, viz., as *that great final cause* without whom no creature can live or move, and by whose *permission* alone it is that either sin or suffering can exist, but *as the ordainer* of a destiny over which, however appearances may indicate the contrary, human volitions have no power.

We are quite aware that the faithful minister of the Gospel, however “high” his theology, always labours to show that this fixed Divine purpose in no way interferes with the freedom of the human will, or with the efficiency of human effort; that God hears the prayers of the living for the dead; that every man might, if he would, arise and receive light and life; that human powerlessness is but another name for human sin; that no man finally perishes, save by his own suicidal act.

Such reasoning, inconsistent as it may seem, generally commends itself to the devout mind; for its defects are all lost sight of in the relief which is felt at finding that even the sternest theology cannot venture to ignore those irre-

preffible instincts of the heart which assure us that God is just, or those plain statements of Scripture which declare that He is Love. Yet, after all, we cannot but feel that preaching of this character, if not a riddle, is a torment; and that its perplexity must be occasioned, either, on the one hand, by some strange perversion of the teaching of Scripture, or, on the other, by vain attempts to reconcile those partial and fragmentary revelations of the Infinite which we alone possess, with the demands of a logic which is, at best, but finite and human, and *may*, therefore, be an altogether inappropriate medium for the exposition of truths which are super-human and illimitable.

We believe that much of the difficulty in question arises from a complete misapprehension of those portions of Scripture which reveal the existence of an elect Church; from extending to all mankind statements which are intended to apply only to the subjects of the Divine predestination; from the consequent assertion—implied, if not expressed—of a doctrine of reprobation; and the final evolution of a system which no

ingenuity can ever make consistent with human responsibility, with a judgment according to works, with "few stripes," or with "many stripes."

At the foundation of this error lies the notion we are endeavouring to controvert; viz., that in Scripture regeneration and conversion mean the same thing; that both alike are sovereign and superhuman; that election from the foundation of the world is the distinctive characteristic of every soul of man who escapes the damnation of hell; that when St. Paul speaks of the power of the "potter" over the clay, "to make one vessel to honour and another to dishonour," he teaches *not*, as one would naturally suppose, that the same God who here, without injustice, makes one a peasant and another a prince, may also, in the world to come, give or withhold dignities at His pleasure—that would be intelligible enough—but, incredible as it may seem, that they intimate His right, as sovereign, to *ordain* to eternal misery *all* who are not the subjects of His electing grace. To support this theory, the choice of Jacob, even before his birth—an illustration

used by the same Apostle—is held to have had relation, not to the birthright only, but to all spiritual blessings.

WE have not so learned Christ. We believe as firmly as any in electing love, and in the regeneration of those who are made partakers of it. We have evidence of the fact in what such men do and dare in vindication of their high calling; justifying it, *sometimes*, at the price of all that the world calls good or great—comfort, reputation, human love, nay, even life itself; *always* at the cost of much self-denial, in the crucifixion of sin, the mortification of every evil desire, the abandonment of many of the objects of this world's ambition, and the constant sacrifice of self-will and self-gratification to the obedience of Christ and the love of the brethren.

These we hold to be the *invariable characteristics* of the man who is born, not of the flesh, but of the Spirit; and if such persons form, as they certainly do, a very small proportion indeed, even of those who are surrounded by the purest light, and who enjoy the highest advantages, we cannot but conclude that *beyond* these there will be found a

multitude whom no man can number, to swell the song of redeeming love, and to celebrate the victory of the God-man, when He shall have "the heathen for His inheritance," and "the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession."

We believe, therefore, in CONVERSION, even though it may not be accompanied by the regeneration of the entire nature. We believe in it, as the result of human influences co-working with God; co-operating with that blessed Spirit who not only gathers His elect, but is ever convincing "*the world* of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." We believe that the work of the Church *is now*, as it will be in the world to come, the conversion of sinners to the Redeemer; that its *real*, as distinguished from its apparent success, will always be proportioned to its zeal, and love, and *truthfulness*, both in word and deed; that its only sword is "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God;" that just in proportion as the Church *illustrates* the faith it preaches by a holy and consistent life, must be its power to elevate and to bless; that while nothing is too large for its ex-

pectations, nothing should be too small for its thankfulness; that as its one *message* is, "Be ye reconciled unto God," and its one *encouragement* the assurance of the deliverance of the world, through Christ, both from the power and punishment of sin, so its one *object* should be the moral and spiritual advancement of all with whom it comes in contact; that every step in this direction, taken how or by whom it may, is to be regarded as of inestimable value; that every putting forth of *desire* after the good and the true, and especially after Him who is embodied truth and goodness, is to be welcomed as a work of the Spirit; and since every *good* thing which is begun here will be carried on hereafter, every shade of improvement, either in society at large, or in the individual transgressor, is to be rejoiced in as evidence that in no case whatever does God's Word return unto Him void; that it always accomplishes that which He pleases; that it invariably *prosper*s in the thing whereto He sends it (Isa. lv. 11).

## CHAPTER VI.

*On the Doctrine of Regeneration, or the  
New Birth.*

THE precise phrase, "Regeneration" (*παλιγγενεσία*), occurs only *twice* in Scripture; once in the sense of a change of *profession by baptism*, "the washing (laver or pool) of Regeneration" (Tit. iii. 5); and once in the sense of *resurrection*, "the Regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory" (Matt. xix. 28). The term is used by Greek writers to express the *re-birth* of all nature in the spring; and by Josephus, when describing the edict of Darius, by which the Jews were permitted to return to Jerusalem, it is applied to the "regeneration" of his country.

Kindred phrases, however,—such as being "born again," "born of the Spirit," becoming "new creatures in Christ Jesus,"—occur re-

peatedly in the inspired volume, and generally indicate that great, inward, and effectual change in the heart and character of a man, which is wrought by the Holy Spirit in connection with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and under the influence of which *self* ceases to be a man's centre, and God becomes such.

The doctrine is not peculiar to the *New Testament*. The prophet Ezekiel (xi. 19) assures the Jews that a time will come when God "will give them one heart," put "a new spirit" within them, take "the stony heart" out of their flesh, and give them "an heart of flesh." Yet, very soon after (xviii. 31), regardless of what we should consider logical consistency, or the force of necessary inferences, he calls upon the same people to cast away their transgressions, and to *make themselves a new heart* and a new spirit. Further on, (xxxvi. 26, 27), he repeats the promise that God will one day do it; but places the fulfilment far in the future, and soon after connects it with the resurrection (xxxvii. 13, 14). It was to these passages that our Lord probably referred when, speaking with Nicodemus on the new birth, He says, "Art thou a master

of Israel, and knowest not these things?" (John iii. 10.)

It is in this interview with Nicodemus that we have the first intimation of the applicability of these strong figures to Jews or heathen embracing Christianity. And our first inquiry is, What impression did the conversation there recorded *finally* make upon the Jewish ruler? We say finally, because, in the first instance, it is clear the language of the Lord was either *misunderstood*, or regarded as a saying *too hard* to be received. Which of the two may be uncertain. If the former, Nicodemus exhibits the most astounding ignorance of figurative language; if the latter, he considers it impossible that any change so radical as that intimated, could be necessary at his age, and in his position.

Set right on both these points;—*first*, by the intimation that the term was used in the same sense in which it had been used for ages (John iii. 10)—the sense, in fact, in which the Jews applied it every day, when they baptized profelytes from heathenism; and *secondly*, by the reiterated assurance of

its absolute necessity to the Israelite as well as to the Gentile (ver. 5, 6);—the question still remains, How did Nicodemus understand it? Did he suppose that the Lord meant to say that he, a ruler of the Jews, was yet an unconverted man, in the darkness of unbelief? or did he rather understand Him to teach that *the fact of coming* to Christ at all was, in itself, a proof of the new birth, since the Lord assures him that it was not the working of miracles that had convinced him, but (whether he knew it or not) that higher work of the Spirit, without which no man could “see (*i. e.*, discern) the kingdom of God”?

We believe that neither the one nor the other supposition *fully* expresses the truth. We see no reason whatever to suppose that Nicodemus had any thoughts or feelings corresponding to those which *we* invariably associate with the term being “born again.” He was a Jew, a ruler of the Jews; and nothing in the record indicates that he was either hypocritical or self-deceived. He came timidly, indeed, and by night, but with a true aim; and he came, not simply as an indi-

vidual, but *as the representative of a class*. "WE (the rulers of the better fort) *know* (he says) that Thou art a Teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him."

The reply of Jesus is explicit:—"Except a man be born of water" (*i. e.*, except he *openly* avow me by a public profession, in baptism—the baptism of John\*), and except he be "born" also "of the Spirit," he can neither truly discern the character nor enter into the fellowship of the kingdom of God. For this kingdom involves much more than at present appears—much that will be hard to receive; *viz.*, the lifting up of the Son of man, and the salvation of the world, Gentile as well as Jew, through Him (John iii. 11—21).

Whether Nicodemus ever got beyond his

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\* "The Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, *being not baptized of him*" (Luke vii. 30). "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John xii. 42, 43).

timid half-heartedness—whether he ever was baptized, and confessed Christ openly—is very uncertain; the probability is that he did not, for he appears to be precisely the same man at a later period, when, in his place among the chief priests and Pharisees, he counsels justice and moderation (vii. 50—52); nor does the fact of his uniting with Joseph of Arimathea (another secret disciple) in the burial of Christ indicate more than is expressed in his first nightly visit. It is possible that both these men might be amongst those who were converted after Pentecost; but no assurance of the kind is conveyed to us in the Sacred Records, an omission not without its lesson, if it teaches us to abstain from judging one another, or attempting to decide on character without adequate information.

But here the question naturally arises,—and it is a very important one,—Did our Lord, when He uttered the words, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,” mean to teach us that, without a change as great and radical as that which is experienced by the elect, no man living can escape the eternal damnation

of hell? or did He simply intend us to understand that through this Divine transformation alone can any one become a member of the redeemed Church, enjoy a *present* salvation, and be a king and priest to God for ever and ever?

On the first supposition, every unrenewed man, without exception, ignorant or enlightened, Christian or heathen, hangs trembling by a thread over the verge of the bottomless pit; and distinctions between the virtuous and the vicious, the moral and the profane, are altogether lost sight of in the tremendous alternative involved. On the second, such persons, although excluded from "the Church of the First-born," as vessels for more or less dishonour,—shut out from the high privileges and glorious dignity of those who are *emphatically* to be made "partakers of the Divine nature," to "judge angels," and, under the Redeemer, to teach and to rule in the world (or age) that is to come,—are yet, *on the supposition of their being other than absolute rejectors of grace*, not excluded either from mercy now, or from the hope of advancing blessedness hereafter.

That there is much in Scripture calculated to support the more hopeful view, and to justify us in concluding that Regeneration should rather be regarded as the evidence of election than of grace,—the peculiar privilege of those who enjoy *here* an *anticipative* reception of future blessing, and who are to form that Church which is emphatically “the Bride of the Lamb,” can scarcely be disputed. Whether the term “new-born” is *ever* applied in Scripture to any but those who are regarded and generally spoken of as “chosen before the foundation of the world,” may be doubtful. Alford thinks that in that well-known passage (Heb. vi. 4<sup>v</sup>—8), where it is said to be “impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance,” a distinction is drawn between the elect and the regenerate; and he regards the text as “one among many, where in Scripture, as well as from the teaching of the Church, we learn that ‘elect’ and ‘regenerate’ are not convertible terms.” “All the elect,” he says, “are regenerate;

but all the regenerate are not elect. The regenerate may fall away; the elect never can."

Let this be as it may, it is at least certain that, *generally speaking*, the two terms are regarded as one in signification. St. John, in the very first chapter of his Gospel, indicates this when he says, that they among the Jews who received Christ were persons to whom God "*gave power*,"—or, as it reads in the margin, "right or privilege,—to become the sons of God;" which were "*born*, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (i. 12, 13). It is such only who can say, "Of His own will *begat* He us with the word of truth, that we should be *a kind of first-fruits* of His creatures" (Jas. i. 18). It is of such alone that the Apostle writes when he declares that "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John iii. 9). It is of such St. Paul speaks when he says, "Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but *a new creature*" (Gal. vi. 15); a term which he has

just before explained to mean "faith, which worketh by love" (Gal. v. 6); or, as he expreffes it in another place, "keeping of the commandments of God" (1 Cor. vii. 19). These, out of the "many called," are the "few chosen;" *chosen for employment* in the vineyard (Matt. xx. 16); "vessels unto honour, sanctified, *meet for the Master's use*" (2 Tim. ii. 21). They are the Lord's "gold," His "jewels" (Mal. iii. 3 and 17), His "friends" (John xv. 15).

Texts like these obviously do not apply to all who confess and call themselves Christians; but must, from their very nature, be confined to those who have "crucified the world," "put on Christ," and count themselves but "pilgrims and strangers" here below.

Further, the great change in question is always described under terms which almost seem to forbid the idea of human co-operation. When a man is spoken of first as "dead" and then as "alive from the dead;" first as the "old" man, and then as the "new;" as quickened from above, like the babe in the womb; as made alive, like the plant while it is yet underground, it is ex-

ceedingly difficult to associate with the cause of so thorough a change anything at all approaching to an efficient human volition. Such a transformation seems of necessity one which can only be spoken of as the *special*, direct, and sovereign act of Him in whom "we live, and move, and have our being."

Finally, as those who enter into the kingdom of God are always spoken of in Scripture as a "little flock," to whom it is the Father's good pleasure *to give* the kingdom (*i. e.*, rule and authority in the age to come); since the crowning sin of man is always declared in the Bible to be unbelief, a sin which cannot be chargeable on the myriads who have never even heard the name of the Great Object of our Faith; since salvation is always spoken of as a *present blessing*, deliverance even now from the love and power of sin, we are compelled to conclude that Regeneration, in its highest sense, is a sovereign and therefore limited gift; that the regenerate will form the court rather than the company of heaven; that this dispensation is not one of universality, but of selection; that it is preparatory, and not final; that while its *primary* object is to

call out and educate those who are to be "kings and priests," its *secondary*, but by no means less important end is, by the agency of the elect, and through the preaching of the Gospel *now*, to convert sinners from the error of their ways; to develop, through sin and sorrow, the ever varying phases of human character; to evolve, by slow but certain processes, those great moral and spiritual principles which are embodied in the revelation of a Divine Redeemer; and to prepare mankind at large for that coming judgment and final probation which will in due time follow the second and personal advent of the Son of God.

What, on this supposition, will, in that mysterious world to which all are tending, be the precise condition of the converted, but not regenerate; of the unconverted, because ignorant or thoughtless multitude; of the evil and profane; of the heathen who have never heard of Christ; of the Jew, from whom He is still veiled; of the followers of Mahomet, *yet*, as it would almost seem, the sword and scourge of God wielded for the punishment of a corrupt and idolatrous Chris-

tianity; and of the tens of thousands in the most enlightened lands, whom nobody knows how to rank or where to place, *we do not profess to know*. It is only permitted us to say, that *all* will be judged righteously, and “according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or bad;” that the feeblest faith in Christ will then be found to have had a life in it; that the least service rendered to a disciple will, *because* rendered to a disciple, not lose its reward; and that *they only have cause utterly to despair* who, having deliberately and knowingly rejected the counsel of God against themselves, despised and persecuted His children, and denied the Lord that bought them, can, *on no Scriptural ground whatever*, expect anything better than “a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation, that shall destroy the adversary.”

Surely it is not unreasonable to hope that these may be much fewer in number than good men are sometimes led, in their short-sightedness, to imagine.

## CHAPTER VII.

*On the Work of the Holy Spirit.*

THE first thing that strikes us in examining the testimony of Scripture relative to the work of the Spirit is, the revelation of its two-fold manifestation; viz., as POWER, and as LIFE.\*

We cannot search the Bible with any care without observing that in some cases the heavenly gift is seen simply in the bestowal of *Divine power*, while in others it is as plainly the gift of a *Divine life*. In the one case, the action of the Spirit seems to be exclusively on the intellect; in the other, it

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\* The Rev. John McLeod Campbell, in his recent "Thoughts on Revelation, with Special Reference to the Present Time," speaks of "two forms of inspiration,—the inspiration of Revelation, and the inspiration of the Divine life."

is as exclusively on the heart, regarded as the feat of the affections. As power, the gift imparted enables the man *to do* that which otherwise he could not accomplish; as life, it enables him *to be* what God would have him to be.

Illustrations drawn from the sacred writings will best explain what we mean.

We consider, then, that the recipients of the Holy Spirit AS POWER may be supposed to include,—

(1) Among others, Bezaleel and Aholiab, who were endowed with “wisdom, understanding, and knowledge, in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass,” that they might fulfil the will of God in relation to the construction of the tabernacle (Exod. xxxi. 2—6); Eldad and Medad and the seventy elders, who were invested with what is termed a “spirit of prophecy,” that they might aid Moses in teaching and ruling (Numb. xi. 16, 17, and 26); Joshua, filled with “the spirit of wisdom,” that he might govern the people (Deut. xxxiv. 9); Cyrus, “anointed” to be a “shepherd” to Israel

(Iſa. xlv. 1 ; xlv. 28) ; and the hundred and twenty in the upper room, endowed with the power of ſpeaking with tongues, that they might be evangelifts to the nations.

(2) Moſes, and the prophets of the Old Teſtament ; the apoſtles of the New ; and thoſe of their diſciples who were inveſted by them with ability to heal diſeaſes, to work miracles generally, or in any other way to accompliſh acts beyond the range of human capacity. The rapture of Ezekiel and of Philip (Ezek. iii. 12—15 ; Acts viii. 39, 40) ; the judgment of Ananias and Sapphira ; the miraculous diſcipline of the apoſtolic age ; its “rod,” as exerciſed on Elymas and on the Corinthian offenders,—all come under this head.

(3) All perſons endowed with the power of predicting future events, whether under the Old or the New Diſpenſation. And,—

(4) All who were inſpired to teach men truths which could only be known by immediate revelation ; to record converſations or actions, diſcourſes or events, intended for the inſtruction of future ages ; to write hiſtory, poems, proverbs, or epiſtles, which

should authoritatively guide men through all time; and to expound things which were for some years but partially revealed to the Church generally. Among these will fall apostles, evangelists, psalmists, and probably, *in degree*, the primitive elders or rulers of the infant Church. For what else were those special gifts which are sometimes called "words of wisdom," "words of knowledge," "prophecy," "discerning of spirits," "divers kinds of tongues," "the interpretation of tongues" (1 Cor. xii. 6—12), but special endowments granted to particular individuals to enable them to perform the precise work they had to do?

Now, let it be distinctly noted—for it is of great importance to mark such peculiarities—that in all these cases the Divine gift is simply POWER—power bestowed *for a certain time*, and *with a definite object*; that it is never given or used for the individual benefit of the recipient; and that it contains in itself no moral or spiritual element whatever. In apostolic estimation, all these gifts are counted as nothing compared with love (1 Cor. xiii. 1).

That their possessors were *generally* partakers also of the higher and more spiritual donation is certain. But this is by no means universally the case. Of the moral and religious character of such men as Bezaleel we know nothing; Cyrus was a heathen; Samson, though a judge in Israel, was a semi-barbarian, and can scarcely be regarded as a spiritual man; Balaam was *a type* of evil; Judas probably worked miracles; and a human, if not a sinful, element seems sometimes to have blended with inspired songs, such as that of Deborah and some of the Psalms. Everywhere we are taught that the possession of a Divine POWER, whether it be to build, to govern, to fight, to predict, to teach, to heal, to work miracles, or to speak with tongues, is not, *in itself*, proof of a renewed heart, or *of necessity* moral and spiritual in its nature.

The *second* form in which the work of the Holy Spirit is revealed to us is that of LIFE—Divine life, implanted in the soul of the individual man, and productive, in various degrees, of moral and spiritual blessing.

Yet here also a *twofold* operation is plainly revealed.

Our Lord himself has drawn the distinction, to which we advert. The "Comforter," without whose blessed presence believers would be as "orphans," and the world at large friendless, comes, we are told, to *convict* some, and to *renew* others; perhaps we might say, without blame, to renew *the few*, and to convict *the many*; to make the one class, even now, "partakers of the Divine nature," and to prepare the rest for that future, whatever may be its character, in which their eternal destiny will be adjudged.

That in many cases conviction is but the prelude of conversion, and that in others it is the first step in the regeneration of the entire nature, cannot be doubted. But it is not always so. The world at large—in accordance with the promise of the Saviour—*is now* by the Comforter or Monitor *convinced* "of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come;" but large portions of it are, in no sense whatever, submitted to the Redeemer. Christendom, in centuries long past, was as a whole *converted* from heathen-

ism to the worship of God, the living and the true; but comparatively few were *renewed* in the spirit of their minds.

The *higher gift* belongs only to the believer. It is seen when the early Jewish Churches, walking "in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied" (Acts ix. 31); when they consisted of men upon whom was "great grace;" men whose religious history was distinguished by joy, and the character of whose life was everywhere manifested in praise and thanksgiving.

It is seen, too, in those Gentile fellowships of whom it could be said, "Ye have received the spirit of adoption;" "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs, —heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii. 15—17). It is seen in all of whom it can be affirmed, "The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you" (1 John ii. 27); "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things," —*i. e.*, all things which "pertain unto life and godliness" (comp. 1 John ii. 20 with

2 Pet. i. 3). It is seen *in all* who, in every age, bring forth "the fruits of the Spirit, which are love, joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost" (Gal. v. 22); for such, we are told, have, as the result, *not as the cause* of their faith, been "sealed" for God. "In whom also *after that ye believed*, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession" (Ephes. i. 13, 14).

It *is* itself the life-giving water that Christ promised, when, in Jerusalem, "on the last great day of the feast, He stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John vii. 37, 38; iv. 14).

The "Holy Spirit," *in Scripture*, is always either DIVINE POWER given to man for a special end, and therefore temporary in duration,—without any *necessary* connection with moral or spiritual excellence,—and not intended for the individual benefit of the recipient; *or* it is DIVINE LIFE, which is purely moral and spiritual, and intended for the benefit of the

individual to whom it is given; in its lower forms convincing of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and in its higher forms renewing the entire nature, and ending in everlasting life.

The one form, (that of conviction) is for the world; the other is for the Church. The *first* is, as we believe, the *commencement* of a work, intended to be carried on in other worlds, and to find a completion either in the gradual approximation of the man to whom it is given towards the Divine likeness, or in his utter and irreparable ruin; the *second* is *privilege*, granted to those who, "chosen from the foundation of the world," are, in an emphatic sense, the "sons of God."

Beyond these forms, Scripture reveals no work of the Spirit of which we have a right to speak, or on which we ought to rely. And, with few exceptions, all Christians are agreed that it is only as *Divine life* that the gift of the Holy Ghost is permanent, or in any intelligible sense promised to ourselves.

But while this is admitted in words, it is commonly denied in fact. It has been thus denied ever since the dark shadow of the

coming apostacy first fell upon the early Church. From that hour to this, the Divine "counsel" on this, as on almost every other matter, has been "darkened," and the Word of God too often dealt with "deceitfully."

The *forms* of error relating to the work of the Holy Spirit thus generated, have been many and dangerous.

(1.) Losing sight of the distinction, always preserved in Scripture, between the gift of the Holy Ghost as power and as life—regarding the action of the Spirit as being alike on the intellect and on the heart, men soon came to believe that while purifying, it was "a light playing on the rational faculties, and clearing mental perplexities,—a secret energy, through which every organ discharges its functions aright" (so Basil). It was under the influence of this delusion that the creeds were developed, that doctrine was drawn from doctrine, that liturgies were collected, and that Gentile customs were adopted. It is under this same delusion that the Pope and Cardinals to this day invoke the Holy Spirit on all their transactions.

(2.) The Protestant Reformation, while it

changed the direction, and somewhat modified the character of the error in question, was far from eradicating it. That great event simply *transferred* the supposed Divine light, *first* from the Church Catholic, regarded as a unity, to the various branches which, by their separation, bore testimony against the errors of Rome; *then* to the diverse fellowships which soon after separated from the original seceders; and *finally*, to every individual Christian, who, to this day, each for himself, devoutly believes that in answer to his supplications, *he*, amid all the diversities of theological opinion, certainly attains to those views which are *best for him*, and, as he thinks, which are most in accordance with the will of God.

(3.) The most common form of delusion, however, is that which supposes that the Holy Spirit, *in some special manner*, accompanies and gives effect to sacred oratory;\* that He

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\* Scripture does not support this view. When Peter speaks of the Apostles as preaching the Gospel "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven" (1 Pet. i. 12), he simply means that what they taught was *by inspiration*.

co-operates with animal excitements, exaggerated appeals, and inflated eloquence; that He gives *power* to all the various devices—borrowed, although unconsciously, from Rome—by which men, with the best intentions, and under the influence of the purest motives, are ever seeking to awaken and alarm the thoughtless through the influence of the imagination, and by action on the nervous system.

Into the “Natural History” of these extravagances, or the sources of the delusion which connects them with a Divine blessing, and regards them as more or less *endorsed* by the

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When St. Paul says his preaching was “in demonstration of the Spirit and of power” (1 Cor. ii. 4), he refers to the signs and miracles by which it was accompanied (Rom. xv. 19). The “treasure” is in “earthen vessels,” that the “excellency of the power may be of God” (2 Cor. iv. 7). But that power is the Gospel of Christ, which “is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Rom. i. 16). And whensoever and wheresoever that Gospel comes with *renewing force* upon the heart, it is because it is received, not outwardly and in word only, but inwardly as the voice of the Holy Ghost (1 Thess. i. 5).

Holy Spirit, we cannot here enter; but we may be permitted to observe, that they will never vanish until texts are interpreted more soberly than they are at present, and their bearing controlled by the context; until this dispensation is viewed in its true character, as one marked rather by selection than by universality;\* until the age to come is connected with the age that is; and the distinction drawn in Scripture between the glorified Church and the "nations of the saved" (Rev. xxi. 24) is fully and fairly recognized.

Then will it be seen that Christ is indeed

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\* The notion that Scripture leads us to expect the universal triumph of the Gospel under this dispensation is for the most part based on passages which were never intended to be thus applied. Some of them (*e. g.*, Psa. lxxii. 16, 17; Isa. xi. 6—9; xxxii. 15—20) predict the reign of Messiah, without any reference to the *time* when it shall take place; others (*e. g.*, Zech. xii. 10; Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27) evidently belong only to the Jewish people regarded as God's chosen; and others (*e. g.*, Isa. lxv. 25; xlv. 23, comp. with Rom. xiv. 11; and Isa. xxv. 6—8, comp. with 1 Cor. xv. 54) are as plainly connected with the resurrection, and with "the new heavens and new earth in which dwelleth righteousness" (Psa. civ. 29, 30; Isa. lxv. 17).

the Redeemer of *the world*; that mankind form a community, common participants in the miseries of the fall, and, therefore, common sharers in the blessings of the recovery; that Satan's *apparent* triumph is unreal and but temporary; that Divine love is wider and deeper than we are apt to imagine; that "all things" are working together for good to them that love God; that Christ, raised from the dead, is not only in this age, but also in the age which is to come, head *over all* things for the exaltation of the Church (Ephes. i. 22); that they who love Him are not "strangers and foreigners," as were the men of other nations in Jerusalem, and as in the age to come will those be who are not of the Church, but "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Ephes. ii. 18, 19); and that what we know not now we shall know hereafter.

Then, and not till then, shall we learn to separate the super-human process by which God calls and trains His elect, from the great principles on which He governs the world; come to be thankful for a light which, however dim, clears up many dark and painful

mysteries; and rejoice in a hope which relieves the fadness of the renewed heart when crushed by the thought of abounding sin and sorrow, holding out the blessed prospect in a future age of a ransomed world, dwelling under the righteous rule of its lawful Lord and loving Saviour.

But this can never be, so long as we persist in maintaining that the conviction of the world by "the Comforter" is but aggravated condemnation, — that God has no blessing for an Esau, — and can show no favour to any man short of absolute union with Himself.



## Part III.

### SCRIPTURE TESTIMONY.

- CHAP. I. SALVATION,—ITS VARIOUS SIGNIFICATIONS.
- II. SALVATION,—THE GREATER AND THE LESSER.
- III. SALVATION OF THE MULTITUDE.
- IV. TIMES OF RESTITUTION.
- V. LIMITATIONS OF THE WORD “ALL.”
- VI. ETERNAL LIFE.
- VII. HADES, OR THE WORLD OF SEPARATE SPIRITS.
- VIII. HEAVEN.
- IX. HELL.



## CHAPTER I.

### *Salvation,—Various Significations of the Term.*

THE word "Salvation" occurs in the OLD TESTAMENT in *three* distinct senses.

First,—It is put for signal deliverances wrought by *human* agency; *e. g.*, "Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great *salvation* in Israel?" (1 Sam. xiv. 45). *Men* are, in this sense, frequently called "favours" (Judg. iii. 9—15; Obad. ver. 21).

Secondly,—It is used to indicate *Divine* protection and blessing. God is spoken of as a "rock" of *salvation*, a "shield," and a "horn" (2 Sam. xxii. 3), and special manifestations of His providence are emphatically called "His *salvation*" (Exod. xiv. 13; 1 Chron. xvi. 23—35; Psa. xxvii. 1). In this sense, too, Jehovah is said to be "the *saviour*" of Israel (Isa. xlv. 15; Hos. xiii. 4).

Thirdly,—It is employed to describe a *state of mind*,—conscioufnefs of peace with God, and deliverance from the dominant power of evil; *e. g.*, “Let Thy priests, O God, be *clothed with falvation*, and let Thy faints rejoice in goodnefs” (2 Chron. vi. 41); and again, “He hath clothed me with the garments of falvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteoufnefs” (Ifa. lxi. 10). “Salvation,” in this fenfe, was joy and peace to its poffeffor. So David prays, after his sad fall, “Restore unto me the joy of Thy falvation” (Pfa. li. 12); by which he means, “Give me again the sweet conscioufnefs of forgiven fin.”

Prophetically, the *everlasting blessednefs* of Ifrael (whatever that ftate might fignify to the Jew) is called her “*falvation*” (Ifa. xlv. 17; xlvi. 13; lii. 7). We fay, *whatever* that ftate might fignify to the Jew; but we have no doubt as to what it *did* fignify to him. We believe that, to the ancient Ifraelite, it always and *rightly* meant, *the exaltation of Abraham’s feed under the Meffiah, after the refurrektion* (Ifa. xxv. 6—8; xxvi. 19; xlv. 17—23; comp. with Rom. xiv. 11; Ezek.

xxxvii. 1—14; xvi. 53—63). It is in this sense that the coming King is emphatically termed by Ifaiah “a *Saviour*, and a great one” (xix. 20), and is spoken of by the same prophet (xlix. 8) as given “in a day of salvation,”—to “establiſh (raife up—*Marg.*) the earth,” to caufe “to inherit the defolate heritages,”—to “fay to the priſoners (in the grave), Go forth; to them that are in darkneſs, Show yourſelves” (xlix. 9),—to caufe the choſen people to enter upon a period when “they ſhall not hunger nor thirſt; neither ſhall the heat nor ſun ſmite them: for He that hath mercy on them ſhall lead them, even by the ſprings of water ſhall He guide them” (xlix. 10, comp. with Rev. vii. 16).

“Salvation,” as it is now generally underſtood, in the ſenſe of *deliverance from hell*, is a term unknown to the Old Teſtament. Such paſſages as, “Thou haſt delivered my ſoul from the loweſt hell” (Pſa. lxxxvi. 13), or, “Thou ſhalt beat him with the rod, and deliver his ſoul from hell” (Prov. xxiii. 14), refer only to the grave, and are uſually ſo tranſlated in the margin.

That the ancient Jews believed in *future punishment* is clear enough. The amount of light they had on this subject may be gathered from the various Scriptures which speak of sinners as "silent in darkness" (1 Sam. ii. 9); as "reserved to the day of destruction" (Job xxi. 30); as persons whose "name" shall, by God, be "put out for ever and ever" (Psa. ix. 5); *on whom* He will "rain burning coals, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest" (xi. 6); who "shall not inhabit the earth" (Prov. x. 30); who shall be slain by "the breath of the lips" of Messiah (Isa. xi. 4); who shall be made as "ashes under the soles of the feet" of the righteous (Mal. iv. 3); and whose "carcasses" (dead corpses) shall be for an enduring memorial of God's judgment on them, for "their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh" (Isa. lxvi. 24). From these passages,—*and there are none of a contrary character*,—it is difficult to see how the Jew could gather more than that the wicked would rise again, and, at the judgment, be subjected to the punishments thus threatened.

*What classes* of persons were by the Jews included under the term "wicked," it is not difficult to gather. Primarily, and *as a rule*, the idolatrous enemies of Israel,—their seducers and oppressors,—constituted the great body of transgressors; *exceptionally*, apostate Jews,—men of violence and blood, flagrant opposers of God and goodness,—were comprehended; but there is nothing whatever to indicate even a suspicion, on the part either of priest or prophet, that mankind *as a race*, in consequence of Adam's fall, were born under a liability to eternal misery after death,—that all alike were, *by nature*, involved in this one great and common condemnation. Explain the fact as we may, it cannot be denied that the doctrine of the *liability* of all mankind, *in consequence of the fall*, to eternal misery, if revealed at all in Scripture, can be found only in that later revelation, the advent of which was announced to the wondering shepherds as "good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people" (Luke ii. 10).

Nothing can be plainer than that the Jew looked at the condition of the race from a

stand-point differing in many respects from our own. It never seems to have occurred to him that man, *as man*, was under condemnation; that the original threatening, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," meant *more* than God declared it to mean when He said to Adam, "Curfed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. iii. 17—19); or that a Jewish babe was *born* "under wrath," and, until regenerated, regarded as a child of the devil. Explain this state of things, we repeat, as we may, we are forced to conclude that, if man did really *then* enter upon existence in the condition supposed, the Antediluvian, the Patriarch, and the Israelite, were alike ignorant of the fact.

That the distinctions which exist *now*, between the spiritual and unspiritual, the merely moral and the truly devout, the men of form and ritual, and the men whose purged eye pierced through these outer coverings

into the invifible and eternal, exifted among the Jews, cannot be doubted. Such men knew, as well as we do, that they were fallen and depraved, that they had natures prone to fin and averfe to holinefs, and that God therefore required “a new heart and a right fpirit” (Ezek. xi. 19; xviii. 31); but, as we have faid before, this neceffity is, in the OLD TESTAMENT, never fpoken of as attaching to man, *as man*, in confequence of Adam’s fin; is never regarded as exifting apart from *personal* tranfgreffion, or ever fuppofed to be effential to falvation.

Whether rightly or wrongly, we fay not; but moft affuredly the Jews *believed* that, whatever might become of other nations, “Ifrael” would be “faved.” Individually, they were quite aware that the birthright might be caft away, that God might be rejected, and His favour loft by apoftacy; but, *as a nation*, they always regarded themfelves, and were regarded by the prophets, even in the midft of their backflidings, as a chofen people (Rom. xi. 26).

In the NEW TESTAMENT, the word “falvation” firft meets us in the announcement of

the angel that the holy child shall be called Jesus (*i. e.*, Saviour), because He shall save His people *from their sins* (Matt. i. 21). Peter, addressing the Israelites, says, "Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, *in turning away every one of you from his iniquities*" (Acts iii. 26); and Paul but teaches the same doctrine to the Gentiles when he tells them that "the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. i. 16); that they must "work out" their "salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. ii. 12); that salvation is "a helmet" for daily use in the warfare of time; and that the "wife" are they who *live* it (Ephes. v. 15; vi. 17). Nothing can be clearer than that *the primary and principal idea* of salvation in the New Testament is deliverance from the *bondage* of evil, emancipation from the "*captivity*" of Satan.

But this is not the only sense in which it is used,—for St. Paul, writing to the Romans regarding Christ, says, "Being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved *from wrath* through Him (Rom. v. 9); and again to the Thessalonians,—“Jesus, which delivered us

from *the wrath* to come" (1 Thefs. i. 10); and again, "God hath not appointed us *to wrath*, but to obtain falvation by our Lord Jefus Chrift, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we fhould live together with Him" (1 Thefs. v. 9, 10).

In all thefe cafes, the wrath referred to is that which fhall fall upon the enemies of Meffiah when He comes in triumph,—makes "known His falvation,"—"openly fhows His righteoufnefs in the fight of the heathen" (Pfa. xcvi. 2),—bares "His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations," and caufes "all the ends of the earth" to "fee the falvation of our God" (Ifa. lii. 10; Luke iii. 6).

With thefe *two* ideas clearly before us,—that falvation is *primarily* deliverance from the bondage of fin and Satan, and *fecondarily*, as a confequence, deliverance from wrath,—we need not be perplexed if we find this fame word "falvation" often put for something *far higher*, even for a prefent *union with Chrift*; involving freedom from *the love* of fin,—the partaking of a "Divine nature,"—being "born again,"—"created anew in Chrift Jefus unto good works, which God

hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephes. ii. 10).

Hence it is that Peter is sent to tell Cornelius "words whereby he and all his house should be saved" (xi. 14), although *before he heard those words* the Lord himself had said to him, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God" (x. 4). Hence, too, Zaccheus, a man evidently accepted beforehand on account of his works (Luke xix. 8), has salvation "brought to his house" by that blessed Redeemer who "came to seek and to save that which was lost" (ver. 9, 10). It is in this higher sense alone that salvation comes to the Gentile *through the fall of the Jew* (Rom. xi. 11); that some are "from the beginning *chosen* to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thes. ii. 13); and that for others there is "a day" (or period) in which, as "in a time accepted," they may gain or lose the precious boon. And so it is recorded on one occasion, that "as many as were ordained (set in order) to eternal life believed" (Acts xiii. 48); and on another, that "the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be

faved," or, as Alford translates it, "*those who were being saved*" (Acts ii. 47). In all these cases the salvation spoken of is *much more* than deliverance from wrath, much more than emancipation from the captivity of Satan; it is admission to fellowship with the Redeemer, it is the earnest and pledge of a full and final victory over all evil.

Greatly, therefore, as some may be stumbled at being told that salvation is represented in Scripture as *a thing of degree*, involving more or less according to circumstances, we fearlessly affirm it to be true. Scripture does indeed teach that to be "*in Christ*" involves a title to every form of spiritual blessing, whether for time or eternity; but it does not teach that every man not thus united to the Saviour is abandoned to Satan, or that he who fails to become *in the highest sense* a child of God, is by necessary consequence a child of the devil. Not so easily does the Father in heaven let His feeble and erring ones go. For men are *His* children in *two* senses,—by birth, and by adoption; they can be the devil's only in one,—by giving themselves up to his power and service, and by a

voluntary and wicked rejection of the offered love of the Redeemer.

If salvation be not a thing of degree, what does St. Paul mean when he speaks of it as especially sent to God-fearing men,—“Whoever among you *feareth God*, to you is the word of this salvation sent” (Acts xiii. 26)? when, writing to “faints”—saved men—he says, “Whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and *salvation*” (2 Cor. i. 6)? when he tells the Philippians that the contradictions he experienced should turn to his “*salvation*” through their prayer, and “the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ” (i. 19)? when he bids Timothy “take heed” unto himself, and to “the doctrine” he teaches, since “in so doing” he should “both *save* himself and them that heard him” (1 Tim. iv. 16)? when in one place he affirms it to be certain that “all Israel shall be *saved*” (Rom. xi. 26), and, in another, labours “if by any means he might *save* some of them” (xi. 14)?

In what other sense than in that of a *present and higher* salvation, as distinguished from a *future and lower one*, is it possible

to conceive of the loving Saviour saying, "Unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them" (Mark iv. 12)? Does any reasonable being, with the fear of God before his eyes, dare to say that words like these, whether found in the Prophets or on the lips of the Lord himself, mean more than that the parties here referred to were not *then* capable of profiting by the instruction He imparted,—that they were not fit to be numbered among His chosen disciples,—that their reception of His teaching *at that time* would only lead to its misapprehension and abuse? Does any one imagine that the Redeemer meant it to be supposed that He abandoned the multitude to Satan for ever?

The conclusion may be a startling one, but it cannot be escaped,—Grace, in one form or other, *must* extend beyond this dispensation; Mercy must be future as well as present; Forgiveness must be *possible*,

not only in this world, but in the world to come; Pardon and Union to Christ cannot be identical; Salvation is a thing of degree.

And now we come to understand why it is that salvation is spoken of in Scripture as accomplished through so many agencies; that belief in Christ's power to heal *saved* when He was on earth (Luke vii. 50); that baptism once *saved* (1 Pet. iii. 21); that hope *saves* (Rom. viii. 24); that memory *saves* (1 Cor. xv. 2); that the Word *saves* (Jas. i. 21); that the love of the truth *saves* (2 Thes. ii. 10); that preaching *saves* (1 Cor. i. 21); that grace *saves* (Ephes. ii. 5, 8); that endurance to the end *saves* (Matt. xxiv. 13); that calling on the name of the Lord *saves* (Acts ii. 21); that coming to Christ *saves* (John x. 9); that His life *saves* (Rom. v. 10); that His death *saves* (Col. i. 22); that faith *saves* (Acts xvi. 31); that belief in the resurrection of the Lord *saves* (Rom. x. 9); that the knowledge of Scripture *saves* (2 Tim. iii. 15); that Christ is himself "*salvation*" (Luke ii. 30; Acts iv. 12); and that real Christians, while *saved already*, come at length to say, "Now is our

*salvation* nearer than when we believed" (Rom. xiii. 11).

Hence, too, it is that "salvation," while a *present* blessing, is yet an "inheritance" (Heb. i. 14); *enjoyed now*, yet *to be received* by them that "look for the Saviour when He shall appear the second time without sin (a sin offering) unto salvation" (Heb. ix. 28); in one sense entered upon when faith is *first* exercised; in another, the crown and completion of the Christian life.

It is in this latter sense, as an inheritance "reserved" for those "who are kept by the power of God," that "salvation" was so deep an object of interest to holy men of old. For *this*,—the highest privilege of the elect and the gift of Christ,—was the salvation "of which (or, regarding which) the prophets have (in all ages) inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace (the peculiar favour) that should come unto (the saints): searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that

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not unto themselves, but unto us (of the Gentile dispensation) they did minister the things which are now reported by them (the inspired apostles) that preached the Gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into" (1 Pet. i. 10—12).

## CHAPTER II.

*Salvation—Greater and Lesser.*

WE are by no means unaware that the course of inquiry we are pursuing will be very distasteful to that large class of *dubious* Christians who—to use a phrase of their own—never do more than indulge *the hope* of being eventually saved, and yet are, nevertheless, marvellously satisfied with their spiritual condition.

Accustomed, as such persons have always been, to regard “salvation” only in one light, viz., as complete deliverance from evil and sorrow *after death*, anything which seems to indicate the possibility of the future state involving trial is to *them* intolerable.

Impatient under the discipline of this life, irritated rather than improved by its cares, people of this class cling only the more closely to the conviction that, if “saved” from hell,

they *must*, in the world to come, be *perfectly happy*; have done for ever with the vexations and contradictions which have tormented them in this mortal state, and find no further occasion for the exercise of a forbearance, the practice of which has been so difficult and disagreeable while here. It never seems to occur to them *as possible* that those who leave the earth meek and chastened, loving and truthful, may, perchance, carry with them, even into paradise, the elements of their joy; or that others, by the same law of continuance, may bear in their own bosoms seeds of sorrow capable of development even in a world of bliss. How *can* it be so, they say, since "faints" are by grace alone made "heirs" of heaven, and "sinners" altogether excluded from joy or hope? Beyond this awful alternative, Scripture, they imagine, reveals absolutely nothing.

Not such, however, so far as we have yet been able to discover, is the teaching of the Bible. If it were so, our only duty would be silence. But believing, as we do, that such is not the case,—that *some* portions of revelation, at least, are intended to lead us to a very

different conclusion, and that while Scripture distinctly reveals a salvation of the highest kind for the few; it intimates also a salvation of a much lower kind for the many, we venture to pursue our search *for the whole truth*, without fear or hesitation.

The entire question is simply one of Divine testimony, and its only importance is that which it derives from its bearing on the revealed character of God; on the extent and efficiency of the work of Christ; and on the promotion of holiness among those who believe themselves to be emphatically His children.

The ground over which we have to pass is one that has been little trodden. Whether "Redemption" be general or particular—whether Christ, properly speaking, died for the Church only, or for the world also, is a point which has long divided theologians; but all parties appear to have agreed that, whatever be the right way of viewing *this* question, redemption can only become practically available to any child of Adam by the exercise *in this life* of a personal faith, wrought by the Holy Spirit.

That the salvation, whether of the individual or of the race, is of grace alone, we should be the last to dispute; but we are not quite so ready to accept the logical consequence, necessary as it may seem to be, that the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus can have no efficacy apart from the present and personal faith of the sinner; or, which is the same thing, that the redemption of mankind by Christ becomes *a reality* only in so far as the truths of revelation are applied by the Holy Spirit to the hearts of individuals. We see, indeed, abundant reasons in Scripture for believing that a man may *reject* the salvation thus wrought out for him; that he may count himself "unworthy of eternal life," and so perish in his pride; but we can discover none in support of the notion that the great sacrifice, after all, only *rendered it possible* for men to be saved in connection with their faith in it while on earth; or that if no man in Judea had believed in Christ, the only result of His boundless love would have been the deeper condemnation of us all.

That there *is* a salvation which is *only by faith* we readily admit; for in no other way

can any man attain to that vital union with the Redeemer, which is life eternal ; but that where this great and vital change is not effected, nothing which can be of any avail to the sinner is accomplished, we as strenuously deny ; for the world is given to Christ, and not to Satan ; and the redemption which suffices, “ through the forbearance of God,” for “ sins that are past ”—the sins of those who lived before the incarnation, and therefore never knew the Lord, suffices also, through the same forbearance, for sins committed by men to whom the Gospel has never been preached, or by whom it has been so imperfectly understood, that it cannot truthfully be said either to have been intelligently received, or consciously rejected. “ If I had not come and *spoken* unto them,” says our Lord of the Jews, “ they had not had sin ;” and again, “ If I had not done among them *the works* which none other man did, they had not had sin ”—*i. e.*, they had not incurred the sin involved in my rejection. How, then, can *they* have incurred it who have never heard His name, or heard it only in connection with idolatrous superstition, and

without any spiritual apprehension of its power and beauty? Yet strange indeed would be the conclusion, that there is, therefore, no difference, either in this world or in the world to come, between the man who is *now* one with Christ, and the man who *here* remains ignorant or negligent of His great salvation.

That there are *degrees of happiness* in the future world few will be inclined to deny. Passages which refer, on the one hand, to a salvation "so as by fire" (1 Cor. iii. 15), and on the other to an "entrance ministered abundantly into the everlasting kingdom" (2 Pet. i. 11), forbid even doubt as to whether or no *all* redeemed persons in the world to come will be alike honoured or honourable. Further, it is generally admitted that, at the coming of Christ,—in whatever sense the second advent is to be understood,—even among those who "wait for His appearing," *some* will "be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless," while others will be "ashamed before Him at His coming" (2 Pet. iii. 14; 1 John ii. 28). Nay, more (neglected as such truths com-

monly are), few, probably, would be found absolutely to assert that a "prize" (1 Cor. ix. 24; Phil. iii. 14) and a "gift" (Rom. vi. 23) imply, *in all respects*, the same thing; that a "crown," which some obtain, and others lose (Rev. iii. 11), is not a special distinction, or that it is impossible to be "beguiled" of our "reward" (Col. ii. 18).\*

But these admissions, much as they involve, practically amount to little or nothing, since they are all but universally stripped of power in what is usually considered "found" interpretation,—according to which the diversities referred to, all end in every individual being *as happy as he can be*; each vessel, it is said, whatever be its capacity, will then be full of joy and glory,—the only difference being that one will be able to *contain* more than another. The slightest reflection, one would think, would be sufficient to show that this is really *explaining away* the entire doctrine; for what can any man desire more than to be

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\* The best sermon that we are acquainted with on this subject is one by the Rev. Thos. Binney, found in a small volume entitled, "Tower Church Sermons."

as *happy* as his nature and capacity will admit of?

The point at issue is simply this,—Will the Elect Church, the Bride of Christ, occupy, in the world (or age) to come, any position materially differing from that of other “saved” persons? Is there, from the testimony of Scripture, any reason to suppose that, without and beyond the pale of the Church, properly so termed, others will be found tributary to its glory, but not partakers of its dignity and splendour?

Something of this kind would surely seem to be *indicated* in the forty-fifth Psalm, where, in prophetic symbols descriptive of Messiah’s glory, the Church, under the name of the king’s daughter, is described as “all glorious within,—her clothing of wrought gold;” while the daughter of Tyre (heathen) is *there* “*with a gift.*” Something of the kind is surely *asserted* in the Apocalypse, where the Church is described under the figure of a glorious city, of which “the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb” are “the temple,” and *into which*, “saved” nations outside do bring “their glory and honour” (Rev. xxi. 24).

The same truth is probably taught in the parable of the ten virgins, five of whom were foolish and unwatchful, and, therefore, shut out from the marriage banquet. For there is nothing to show that these women were intended to represent the lost. On the contrary, they are recognized as expectants of the Bridegroom, and go out to meet him; but since they are negligent attendants, they suffer exclusion from the post of honour.

Again, is nothing to be learned from the distinction drawn in Scripture between persons "taken captive by the devil at his will" (2 Tim. ii. 26), and those who voluntarily choose his service? St. Paul, we think, recognizes a difference between these two classes, when, speaking either of himself or of another, as the case may be, he describes the condition of the man who is brought "into captivity to the law of sin" (Rom. vii. 23), or, as he expresses it elsewhere, who is "fold under sin" (ver. 14). That he means by this something very different from voluntary servitude is clear from what follows,—“That which I do I allow not: for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that do I.

To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." Who can doubt that this state,—in the Apostle's case temporary,—is the *permanent* condition of multitudes, who never get beyond it, but live and die in this wretched bondage?

Further,—the Lord, through His own death, is said "to deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 15). This text is generally supposed to intimate, that by faith in Christ timid believers are freed from the fear of physical death. But this is not its meaning, for the words are obviously connected with the ninth verse, in which the Saviour is spoken of as tasting "death for every man," and with the fourteenth verse, where the Redeemer is represented as, "through death," destroying "him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." It must, therefore, in some form or other, apply to *all men*. The true meaning, probably, is that Christ, "by the favour of God," suffered for "every man" (ver. 9), in order that "He

might subdue him who has a deadly power—that is, the devil—and free those who, through fear of *condemnation*” (death being here used as including its consequences) “had during their whole lives been subject to bondage.”—(*Stuart.*) The phrase, “power of death,” or deadly power of the devil (Heb. ii. 14), is probably parallel to “works of the devil” (1 John iii. 8); and both imply that Christ’s death delivers the race from “the curse of the law,” that “the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles” (Gal. iii. 13, 14).

But *what is* the blessing of Abraham? Clearly the restoration of his race at the resurrection. And this is the blessing which the Gentiles also are to enjoy. For “the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed” (Gal. iii. 8). There is nothing to show that *all nations* would, by the exercise here of a living faith, be spiritually united to the Redeemer. The teaching is, that by faith in Christ alone, as opposed to works of law, could they be saved; and that “the Scripture hath con-

cluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe" (Gal. iii. 22). But since myriads who lived *before* the Incarnation are, "through the forbearance of God," saved by a Redeemer whom on earth they never knew; so, in virtue of the like forbearance, myriads who have subsequently lived on earth under similar circumstances, will be saved too; not, indeed, without faith, but *by a faith* exercised in other states of existence,—saved *in that lower sense*, which implies deliverance from the captivity of Satan, but not that higher and closer communion with Christ which belongs to those who love and trust Him here, and, by His grace, "endure unto the end."

The words of the apostle Paul to Timothy (1 Ep. iv. 10), "We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, *specially of those that believe*," can scarcely have any other meaning than that some will be saved with a higher, and some with a lower, salvation. They seem distinctly to imply that *for some* there is a salvation, inseparably connected with belief, entered upon *here*, by

faith; and for others, who—it may be for want of a teacher—have not accepted the Gospel, a salvation of an inferior kind.

Divines have felt the difficulty, and tried to get rid of it by *rationalizing*, and asserting that Saviour here does not mean Saviour. So they read it thus:—“God preserves *all* by the care of His providence, but saves *believers* from eternal death” (so Macknight, Baxter, and Gill). Alford, following Clarke, interprets,—“Saviour *intended* for all, but *appropriated* only by believers.”

The reply to such interpretation is decisive. The text does not say *intended* for all; it says, “*who is*” (ὅς ἐστι), in some sense or other, “the Saviour of all,” but specially and in a higher sense “of those that believe.” The same word is used for Saviour here as everywhere else; and it is sought to disregard this, merely lest countenance should be given to Universalism.

But why should it be supposed that evasion of this kind can ever be necessary to protect truth? Why cannot we—without pushing the word “all” to the absurd extent of prac-

tically denying that any man can destroy himself by his wickedness and impenitence, accept the teaching in its simple and obvious sense? If we do so, the passage is confirmed by another text in the second epistle (2 Tim. ii. 20), where we are told that in the Church, as in "a great house," there are "some vessels to honour, and some to dishonour;" and that he who would be "a vessel unto honour," must "purge himself" from "profane and vain babblings,"—such as those indulged in, who maintained that the resurrection, being merely a spiritual thing, was "past already,"—and, in addition thereto, live a holy and godly life (2 Tim. ii. 16—18; Rom. vi. 4). Then would such a man be "meet for the Master's use,"—fit for closer union with the Redeemer than others, and therefore for more distinguished service.

Viewed by the light thus thrown upon the Divine procedure, other passages of Scripture, which often perplex us, become clear,—such as those which speak of *the forgiveness of sins*. "Thy sins are forgiven thee," is a declaration frequently made by the Saviour, and apparently quite apart from a considera-

tion of the previous character of those to whom the words were spoken. Sometimes it is made in connection with bodily healing, and then it is under but one requirement,—faith in the Saviour's ability and willingness to grant the required boon. "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" (Matt. ix. 2, 5).

Now, without going here into the question as to what forgiveness comprehended when connected with bodily healing,—whether it implied, as we think probable, only the forgiveness of the particular sin for which the disease, thus miraculously removed, had been under that peculiar economy inflicted (in which case the phrase was simply an equivalent for "Arise, and walk"), or whether, as in the case of the woman "who was a sinner" (Luke vii. 37—50), it involved the pardon of sin generally,—it is surely safe to affirm that it did not, *in all cases and necessarily*, imply spiritual communion with the Redeemer. In the case of the sick, it was a low, not a high salvation; for it healed the body without necessarily purifying the heart.

Nor are these the only cases in which the forgiveness of sin is separated from oneness

with Christ. "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive your trespasses," is a direct assertion from the lips of one who cannot deceive; and yet, who will say that a forgiving spirit is the only requisite for union to Christ? To be *forgiven* a sin is one thing; to be so completely delivered from its power, that we shall altogether abstain from it, is another: to know that we shall be *pardoned* for Christ's sake is a mercy truly; but infinitely greater is the blessing which reveals to us the place we shall occupy "among them that are sanctified" (Acts xxvi. 18).

Further, *forgiveness may be retracted*. At least, so the parable of the unforgiving servant (Matt. xviii. 34) is usually understood to teach. But oneness with Christ, once enjoyed, can never be lost. God forbid that we should think lightly of the forgiveness of sins by Christ in any sense; yet what renewed man does not *feel* the difference—however difficult it may be for him to expound it—between the words addressed to the pardoned sufferer, "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee" (Luke v. 20), and the call so soon after made

to Levi the publican, "Follow me; and he left all, and rose up, and followed Him"? In the one case there is a declaration of pardon; in the other, an invitation to communion. To the former, the gift is *bodily health*; to the latter, *the honour of service*. To forgive sins (whatever the term may mean) was, as our Lord himself tells us, equivalent to saying, "Arise, and walk;" it was a boon capable of being conferred by mortal man; for whomsoever the apostles forgave on earth were to be forgiven in heaven. But who imagines that the twelve could forgive sin in any sense which implies a change of heart? Who does not know that they possessed no power to insure even their own continued union with the Master?\*

The conclusion we draw from the whole is, that the pardon of the sinner, and the glorification of the saint, are two distinct things, and ought never to be confounded; that the work of Christ and of His Gospel on earth is

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\* The substance of this and the preceding paragraph will be found in the Rev. D. I. Heath's "Future Human Kingdom of Christ," a very singular, but in many respects a suggestive book.

twofold;—*first*, to call out His Bride,—His Elect Church; and *secondly*, to destroy the works of the devil, by forgiving sins, by delivering captives, and by preparing mankind at large for higher and nobler revelations in the age to come, when Christ himself will rule and teach through those whom He has *here*, for that special end, taught and trained. *Then* will it be seen that the falsehoods of Romanism on the one hand, and the delusions of Infidelity on the other, have been but mocking shadows of the true; that the Lord is at once a Priest upon a throne, and the social Regenerator of the race; that while, on the one hand, as King and Judge, He executes vengeance on His enemies, He is *still*—His nature being unchangeable—“kind even to the unthankful and to the evil” (Luke vi. 35).

## CHAPTER III.

*Salvation of the Multitude.*

**T**HAT in Christian countries the multitude,—ignorant, thoughtless, and too often absolutely irreligious,—die hopefully, if not happily, can scarcely be disputed. The question recurs continually,—Whither do they go? “Say,—are they lost or saved?”

We believe that such persons live and die very much as the crowds lived and died, who eighteen hundred years ago witnessed our Lord’s miracles, and heard His words, on the hills and in the plains of Judea. Whatever conclusions, therefore, we arrive at as to the one, must greatly affect our conclusions as to the other.

But here it will be said, “How can we arrive at any judgment at all on such a subject?” We reply, in one way only, by carefully observing our Lord’s conduct and teaching in relation to these same multitudes

when He was on earth. They were not ranked, we know, among the disciples; for He distinctly tells us that He spake to them "in parables, that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand" (Luke viii. 10). It is equally certain they were not classed with the Scribes and Pharisees, whom He denominates "vipers;" He never says *to them*, "How shall *ye* escape the damnation of hell?"

On the contrary, His sympathies seem to have been, as a rule, with these common people. He heals their diseases; He forgives their sins, whatever that phrase may be intended to include; He mourns over them as "sheep without a shepherd;" and He regards them as a field "already white unto the harvest."

These are *Scripture facts*, and we ask, Are they intended to teach anything? or are they to be altogether over-ridden by *inferences of our own*, drawn from other scriptures, such as the declaration of our Lord to Nicodemus, or the various statements in the Epistles which speak of Christians as "a peculiar people," called with a "holy calling," re-

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generated by the Spirit, sanctified by grace, and preserved unto the end?

We know how easy it is to maintain that such inferences are *necessary*;—that a man unconverted is morally unfit for the companionship of the redeemed; and that, were such an one in heaven, he could have no sympathy either with its inhabitants or its employments. We are not insensible to the force of this reasoning; and within limits we fully admit its truthfulness. But we cannot, therefore, come to the conclusion that no man can be saved who is not on earth made morally and spiritually “meet for the inheritance of the saints in light;” or that all, who are not made “partakers of the Divine nature” here, are for ever left to the companionship of Satan, and doomed to eternal hatred of God and goodness in the regions of darkness and despair.

We cannot admit such a view, (1) Because it is by no means clear that our Lord’s words to Nicodemus *ought* to be understood in the sense ordinarily attached to them.\*

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\* See Part II., Chap. VI., On the Doctrine of Regeneration.

(2) Because other texts usually adduced to prove that the way to heaven is very narrow, and that *few* reach the realms of bliss, are for the most part irrelevant, being addressed, not to the unbelieving world, but to the disciples *as such*. (3) Because the course pursued by the Saviour towards the unconverted, both in His teaching and conduct, are inconsistent with the supposition that none but the regenerate can be saved; and (4) Because the later revelations of the Holy Spirit through the apostles, lead to the conclusion that the salvation of mankind, and the glorification of the saints, are by no means one and the same thing.

The necessities of a systematic theology, consisting, as we have frequently said, mainly of human inferences, may require us to believe, on the one hand, that the young man whom Jesus "loved," since he was not "perfect," was for ever abandoned to Satan; and on the other, that the Divine Redeemer, while healing the diseases of the body, kept back the Word of Life from the perishing multitude, *lest* they should be saved: but, apart from such bias, renewed hearts, interpreting

their Lord by the love with which He has Himself inspired them, revolt from such conclusions, and feel assured that the *highest form* of spiritual blessing only was withheld; that he who could not give up *all* for Christ was sent away forrowing, simply because he was morally unfit to rank with the apostles; and that they whose eyes were "closed," lest they should see, were blinded but *for a time*, and if in judgment, in mercy also; for He who said on one occasion, "For judgment (*i. e.*, as a test) am I come into the world," assures us on another that He came "not to judge" (to condemn) the world, but to "save it" (John ix. 39; iii. 17; xii. 47).

Never should we forget that it was the same voice which said to one, "If thou wilt be perfect, sell that thou hast, and follow me" (Matt. xix. 21), that said to another, *who wished to follow Him*, "Return to thine own house," — be thankful for deliverance, and "show how great things God hath done unto thee" (Luke viii. 38, 39); that the crowds, sustained more than once by the Lord's bounty, were, when fed, *sent away*; and that from these masses many forms of

truth were avowedly withheld, because they were not able to receive them.

To what conclusion can we come, then, but that the spiritually unenlightened,—those who *have never understood*, and therefore neither accepted nor rejected the Gospel,—whether involved in the thick darkness of heathenism, or lost amid the mists of a superstitious and sectarian Christianity, are saved, but with a lower salvation; saved, not in the sense in which apostles and martyrs are saved, but saved from the “captivity” of Satan, and brought under a probation adapted to their weakness, and in harmony with what is to be their final position in the universe?

Where, and in what precise way, such probation will be effected, we do not profess to know. We think it most probable that it will *commence* immediately after the Resurrection; that it will *follow* the teaching and discipline of the invisible world, so far as that teaching may be brought to bear on the disembodied spirit; that it will be *carried on* upon the new earth in which dwelleth righteousness; and that it will be accom-

plished *by and through the agency of the Elect Church.*

That the faints of God, “the Church of the Firstborn,” will in that blessed state be free from sin and all its seductions, we doubt not, for they will be united to their Lord; but there is nothing to show that this will be the condition of *all* who rise from the dead, or that they, who have had no probation on earth, will have no enemy to fight in the world (or age) that is to come.

Salvation is, in Scripture, never regarded as separable from *probation*. And yet it must be so, if infants, and idiots, and the utterly unenlightened, are to be regarded as saved, *in the same sense*, and with the same glorious results, as the faithful of all ages. For then must heaven be entered by millions without faith, or love, or holiness, or discipline, or a new heart; *or*—which is still more opposed to all that is revealed concerning God—these same millions must be regarded as lost; multitudes of them without having committed actual sin, — without having, even once, exercised a rebellious will; and other multitudes without ever having heard of the

Law which condemns them, or of the Saviour whom they are supposed in this case, by something like a legal fiction, to have rejected.

But the entire difficulty passes away if we are permitted to suppose that such, while saved from the captivity of Satan, are not yet made partakers of the glory that shall be revealed; that faculties, never developed here, will find development in other states of existence; and that the offspring of believers, under the care and love of parents then perfected in Christ, will there be trained for "glory, honour, and immortality," in a school far higher and purer than that of the world they so prematurely left.

Whether such texts as John xi. 25, "I am the Resurrection, AND the Life," phrases not *necessarily* synonymous, may mean that the one (the Resurrection) relates to physical life, and is for *all*, while the other (the Life), which is spiritual, is for the Church; *or* Rom. iii. 30, "It is one God, which shall justify the circumcision BY faith, and uncircumcision THROUGH faith,"—a distinction "not to be made," as Dean Alford says, "too much of," yet not without its meaning; *or*

Heb. xii. 23, "The general assembly and *Church of the Firstborn*," as distinguished from "the spirits of just men *made perfect*;" or 2 Tim. ii. 10, "The salvation which is in Christ Jesus, WITH (*μετὰ*) eternal glory" (salvation *here*, and glory *hereafter*,—so Alford); or John i. 4, "The life was the light of men," *i. e.*, Christ the life (of the Church), and that life the *light* of multitudes who partake not of the life; or such passages as "God gave His Son" for *the world*, "that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish," and Christ gave Himself for *the Church*, "that He might sanctify and cleanse it," and "present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing;"—whether, we say, any of these Scriptures bear on the question now under our notice; whether or no the distinctions in them, to which we have adverted, are real and important, and intended to teach us what they *appear* to teach, we will not positively affirm. But there is one text which it seems difficult to read without receiving a strong impression that it is intended to indicate the existence of two classes of *saved* persons. We

mean that in the Hebrews, where St. Paul, speaking of the blessedness of sorrow to a child of God, says, "But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye *bastards, and not sons*" (Heb. xii. 8).

The precise distinction here drawn by the Apostle is indicated under the figure of illegitimate (*νόθοι*) and legitimate (*υιοί*) children. The words are specially addressed to *believers* as such. *Both* classes of children are therefore sons, although not in the same sense. The one is the child who inherits the Father's name, wealth, and position; the other, although provided for, is altogether in a lower rank,—helped or supported, as may be needful; acknowledged, but not honoured.

What we really want to know is, whether or not we are to understand, from these words, that some *of the saved* will occupy the position of unrecognized, and others of recognized children? It is difficult to see what else *can* be intended.

The general lesson imparted is plain; that persecution, severe discipline, and painful trial, so far from being indications of *a want of love* to us on the part of God, are, in

fact, *evidences* that they who are “exercised thereby” are intended for higher services and nobler rank in the world to come.

But how, on this supposition, is it possible to avoid the conclusion that *two distinct classes of saved persons* will be found in that coming age, and that the illegitimate are those who, though delivered from the captivity of Satan, and brought under the rule of Christ, are yet not invested with the dignity and glory of the Elect Church?

It may, indeed, be said, that the “bastard” is a child only by creation, and therefore, as such, has no share in a blessing which is of grace. But this goes on the supposition that the writer *meant*, “If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers,” then are ye undistinguishable from those who are “in danger of hell fire;” he does not, however, *say* anything of the kind, nor is there any reason to suppose that he intends to leave such an impression.

Again, in reading the Epistle to the Philippians (iii. 15), we find a somewhat similar distinction made by the Apostle Paul; where, after speaking of himself as counting “all

things but loss," if by any means he "might attain unto the resurrection of the dead," and as ever pressing "toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," he adds, "Let us therefore, *as many as be perfect*, be thus minded;" indicating, that among the Philippians there were those who, like himself, were already striving for the crown, and others who needed to have this high calling revealed to them. Some, indeed, there were who were "enemies of the cross of Christ," whose "end is destruction;" but others were plainly regarded as imperfect and ill-instructed persons, who, though professedly Christian, had "not apprehended" that for which they had been "apprehended of Christ Jesus."

It is because salvation is a thing of degree, and because of the consequent possibility of losing ground for eternity by continued life, that premature death is sometimes a blessing. When our Lord says, "Whoever shall offend (hinder, or become a stumblingblock to) one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were

drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matt. xviii. 6), He expresses this thought. It is as if He had said, It is better to die than to deteriorate; better to die *to-day*, than to sin in some aggravated form *to-morrow*; better for yourself through all eternity to be drowned now, than to live to hinder the progress of others. And why? Simply because death is a less evil than sin,—a doctrine to which every true-hearted disciple instinctively responds.

And now, in the light of all these considerations, let us look at the great *facts of the world*, with which, it should never be forgotten, the *facts of Divine revelation* cannot clash. These, explain it as we may, bring before us, as we have already said, not two, but *three classes* of character, even among men who alike live under the light of the Christian dispensation; those who, by Divine grace made free, *resist* evil, and by faith obtain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; those who, from ignorance or weakness, or under the pressure of overwhelming circumstances, as "captives," *submit* to the evil they cannot overcome; and

those who, from sheer wickedness, *as the voluntary servants of Satan*, love iniquity, and rejoice in it as their chosen portion.

Accepting these distinctions *as real*,—for they cannot be set aside or denied,—we again ask, Are they, or are they not, in harmony with what Scripture (if read without reference to existing schemes of theology) would lead us to expect? If they are, let us thank God, and, with renewed courage and energy, carry on the warfare against the world, the flesh, and the devil, both in ourselves and in all around us, assured of this, that although multitudes may refuse to believe that God hath called them to glory, honour, and immortality, inasmuch as they *will* not come to Christ that they may have “life,” our labour is not lost, nor does it necessarily aggravate their guilt and misery. The message we bring is one of “life unto life,” and it *may*, by wilful rejection, become “a favour of death unto death.” But such rejection is happily the exception, not the rule. Dulness, misapprehension, and indifference are the evils we have mainly to contend with; and, in relation to these, it is indeed a

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comfort to feel that God permits us to believe that a day is coming when the veil shall be removed; that what we accomplish not now, shall be accomplished hereafter; that though we fall short of our hopes, we cannot fall short of His purposes; that no word of God, however feebly or imperfectly ministered by us, shall return to Him void, or fail to accomplish the design for which He sent it.

## CHAPTER IV.

*Times of Restitution referred to by St. Peter  
and St. Paul.*

**T**HAT a time or times of Restitution (whatever that term may precisely mean) is in reserve for our ruined and fallen world, was one of the earliest announcements of the apostles after the ascension of their Lord. Nothing can be more explicit than the declaration of St. Peter to the Jews, that the same Jesus Christ, whom they had crucified, should *come again*; that heaven (so to speak) concealed Him only until\* *the times of restitution*† of all things (Acts iii. 21 ;

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\* ἄχρι. "Not during, as the advocates of the present spiritual sense of the passage wish to render it, but *until*." (Alford.)

† "To render ἀποκαταστάσις fulfilment, is against all precedent. And in the sense of *restoration*, I cannot see how it can be applied to the work of the Spirit, as pro-

comp. Acts i. 6 and 11); and that these times were *the same times* of which God had spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began; the times when, in accordance with ancient prophecy, the lion should lie down with the lamb, and "the knowledge of the Lord cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea."

That this "time of restitution" was in some way or other, in the apostolic discourse, connected with the resurrection, is also plain from what immediately follows:—"And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain (or ruler) of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through ("in the person of,"—*Alford*) Jesus, the resurrection from the dead" (Acts iv. 1, 2).

The doctrine of *the resurrection* they do not appear to have been teaching on this

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ceeding during this interim state in the hearts of men. This would be contrary to all Scripture analogy. I understand it, then, of the *glorious restoration of all things*, the *παλιγγενεσία* which, as Peter here says, is the theme of all the Prophets from the beginning." (*Alford*.)

occasion, except in connection with that of a restitution of all things. Their offence was *not* that they preached the restitution spoken of by the prophets, but that they declared it to be at the resurrection, and *through* Jesus Christ.

We are desirous of ascertaining *what* the restitution spoken of may be supposed to include, and *when* it may be expected to take place.

Dr. Ellicott, Dean of Exeter, and Professor of Divinity in King's College, London, has endeavoured to furnish us with a reply in a small volume of Sermons preached before the University of Cambridge, first published in 1858, and reprinted, by special request, in 1862. The title of the volume is "The Destiny of the Creature."

The particular discourse to which we are about to draw attention is entitled "Restitution," and founded on the text, "And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. xxi. 5). Its *peculiarity* consists in the very different impression which it leaves upon the mind relative to the bearing of the Gospel upon the

race from that which is usually left by orthodox preachers.

That *such a sermon* should have been delivered before the University, printed, extensively read, and regarded as a satisfactory counteractive to the speculations of Mr. Maurice (for such it professes to be), indicates either a wide-spread dissatisfaction with the usual method of treating such subjects, *or*, which is perhaps more likely, an increasing conviction that some of the later phases of scepticism can only be successfully met by a calm and thorough re-examination of the entire testimony of Scripture relative to the future lot of humanity. In either case, it will be hailed by thoughtful persons as an important contribution towards that fuller, freer, and yet thoroughly reverent study of Scripture which is one of the greatest wants of the age.

“It is,” says the Dean, “perhaps a duty that we owe to ourselves, not to shrink from a humble and reverential attempt to grasp the true outlines of a teaching which includes so much that is consolatory; and that too, more especially, as there is no province in

speculative theology in which modern thought has assumed more mistaken and more presumptuous attitudes. Much do I fear that, day by day, opinions more or less allied to that seductive form of belief called 'Universalism,'—or, in plain English, the belief that all will come right at last, however wrong now,—are quietly winning their way among the children of this world's wisdom, and that they already number far more secret adherents than at first sight we may be inclined to believe."

Instead of wasting time in abusing his opponents, the Professor wisely remarks,—“It may do us all good, especially in these dangerous days, if we spend a short time on those portions and passages of Scripture, of which such opinions are the distorted refractions; and if we further endeavour, by sober and scriptural induction, to gain a true knowledge of what God's Word tells us of this restitution,—what appear to be its nature and characteristics,—and what, if any, the necessary limits of its application.”

Taking as a basis the unquestionable fact of the unity of the race—one in Adam, one

in Christ; one in sin, and one in redemption; yet allowing for the equally unquestionable fact, that *individuals* (alas! how many!) can and do deliberately funder themselves from the living unity of their race, and from Him who is its Head and Representative, and so make their future eternally and irrevocably a ruin, he selects *three texts* for examination, which seem to him worthy of notice, as bearing above others on the subject of restitution.

The *first* is found in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. "All things are of God, who reconciled *us* unto Himself by Christ, and gave to us the ministry of the reconciliation; for that God was in Christ," (or, as he thinks the more plausible construction, "for that God in Christ") "was reconciling *the world* unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. v. 18, 19).

"Who," says he, "shall dare to remit these words? It is a reconciliation between God and *all* His intelligent creatures. It is a reconciliation actually *effected*, and it includes neither more nor less than all mankind. It is accomplished, not only *by means of* Christ,

but *in* Him, as the Redeemer and true Representative of humanity.”

The *second* text is from the Epistle to the Colossians. “For in Him it pleased the whole fulness (of the Godhead) to dwell, and by Him to bring into former reconciliation all things unto Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; by Him, I say, whether they be the things upon the earth, or the things in the heavens” (Col. i. 19, 20).

“In the former text, the reconciliation was mainly regarded as *past*; here the language seems to hint at applications more expressly *future*.” It is not only to reconcile as before; it is *here*, “to reconcile back again” (*ἀποκαταλλάξαι*), to re-establish a condition which existed when God looked with Divine complacency on His creatures, and spoke of all as “very good.” Further, what in the first text was described as “the world,” here receives the noticeable amplification, “all things; whether they be things on earth, or things in heaven.”

The *third* text is from the Epistle to the Ephesians. “Having made known unto us

the myftery of His will, according to the good pleafure which He purpofed in Himfelf, in regard of *the difpenfation of the fulnefs of times*, to fum up again (for Himfelf) all things in Chrift,—the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth,—even in Him, in whom we were alfo chofen for His inheritance” (Ephes. i. 9, 10).\* *Then*, at the *appointed* hour,—for this is the meaning of the fulnefs of time (Gal. iv. 4),—will He “gather together in one all things in Chrift,” whether in heaven or earth, *i. e.*, vifible or invifible. How this can be interpreted of the prefent difpenfation (fo Gill and others) it is difficult to fee. Dean Alford tranflates, “the economy of the fulfilment of the feafons;” and objects to its being explained by the paffage in the Galatians. Still the difficulty remains, *in what fenfe* will all things, vifible and invifible, *ever* be gathered together in Chrift? It is clearly a gathering *diflinct from*, although including, the “chofen before the foundation of the world” (Ephes. i. 4); fince God makes known the myftery of His

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\* The renderings are Dean Ellicott's.

will to the elect, *in order that*, in due time, the gathering may be accomplished (ver. 9, 10); and it is exceedingly difficult to understand such a passage apart from the expectation of a time, when the *apparently lost* myriads of mankind shall again appear upon the scene, and find a Saviour whom they never knew upon earth.

In the *third* chapter of this Epistle (ver. 21), in a magnificent doxology, glory is ascribed to Christ *in the Church*, "throughout all ages;" "that is," says Dean Alford, "in the Church, *as its theatre before men*, to all the generations of the age of the ages." *If this be so*, it is certain, that not only the Church as the glorifier of Christ, but *men capable of recognizing the glory* (which lost spirits can never do), must exist somewhere, *as distinct from the Church*, long after the limited period of this world's duration.

This doctrine of "a ransom for all," says the Apostle Paul to Timothy (1 Tim. ii. 6), is one "to be testified" (*or*, a testimony) "in due time," apparently indicating, that though Christ was then preached as having died for all, the time had not yet arrived when it

would be seen that God would "have all men to be saved" (ver. 4); for to the Christians of that day, the dispensation under which they lived must have appeared to be chiefly, if not exclusively, for the salvation of the elect. That Scripture is *progressive*, and that particular truths are, though revealed, *hidden*, so to speak, for a time—*reserved* for particular periods of the Church's history, can scarcely be denied by any thoughtful reader of the Bible.

The summing up of Dean Ellicott is briefly this:—That as the restitution, like the reconciliation, is *in Christ*, "everything which, from the nature of things, and the truceless opposition between light and darkness, between sin and holiness, cannot without blasphemy be conceived of as 'in Him,' or in union with Him, will in the end be only as the dross and scum that is purged off by the refining and sublimating flame."

"We cannot and dare not," adds the Dean, "close our eyes to limitations which the very terms of these profound revelations distinctly pre-suppose, and which the whole analogy of Scripture forbids us to deny. If, on the one hand, restitution is in Christ and

in Him alone; if, on the other, there be such a state as the second death, and one sin, *at least*, for which there is to be no remission,—then, to assert that apostate angels in the abyss, and the seed of the serpent among men, shall share in the blessings of the restitution, is practically to make a mock at the express declarations of the Word of God. This much we may dare to say, but no more than this; that all, that from its union with the Saviour *is saveable*, shall be saved; all, that from being one with the Restorer *is capable of restoration*, shall be restored.”

From the question, what conditions of men may be regarded as *saveable*? in other words, what are the precise limitations laid down in the Bible, beyond which redemption cannot extend? whether, for instance, the nations that have never heard of Christ, can in any world or *in any sense*, by virtue of His atoning sacrifice, ever be brought into such a union with the Redeemer as shall save them from eternal perdition,—the Dean evidently shrinks. He seems to prefer vague generalities of expression, which every man may interpret as he will, such as these:—

“*How*, and in what precise way, the restoring power of reconciling love shall work out its issues, has not been expressly revealed.”

“Perchance, after the purging fires have burnt away from the material earth all the seeds of sin which the flood could not wash away, there may come forth out of its productive bosom races of living creatures, that, in all their instincts, capabilities, and existences, may ceaselessly glorify the Creative Wisdom. Perchance, grass and flower and tree may again clothe the renovated earth, and, in all their developments and through all their changes, may so reflect the restoring power of their Maker, that they, too, may be permitted to bear their part in creation’s new and universal hymn.”

He tells us that he has “shrunk from flinging broadcast denunciations of eternal wrath, while meditating on counsels of eternal mercy;” that he has “shuddered at pronouncing avenues of mercy irrevocably closed, which a just deduction from the Word of God leads us to believe are yet open;” but he has nowhere stated *what* or *how wide* he considers these avenues to be.

## CHAPTER V.

*On the Limitations under which the Word  
"All" is used in Scripture.*

ON the meaning of one little word in Scripture (*πᾶς, πᾶσα, πᾶν*), whether translated "all," "the whole," or "every," important conclusions depend.

The Universalist tells us that since the beloved Apostle has proclaimed Jesus to be the "true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John i. 9), and the Lord himself has declared that He, if "lifted up" (crucified) would "draw all men" unto Him (John xii. 32); that since Paul has assured us that *to* Christ "every knee shall bow" (Phil. ii. 10), that "*in* Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. xv. 22),—that He is, in deed and in truth, "the Saviour of all men" (1 Tim. iv. 10), the doctrine of

universal salvation is plainly and clearly taught in the Bible.

He does not dispute the revelation of "hell," of "a second death," or of "destruction from the presence of the Lord," but he insists that no such intimations can ever set aside the force of such words as "all," "the whole," and "every."

Orthodox commentators, proceeding, as they safely may, on the assurance that Scripture cannot contradict itself, commonly escape the heresy in question, by *expositions* which are supposed to override difficulties in interpretation.

"Christ," say they, *is* truly "the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world," inasmuch as to every man is given a conscience, by the light of which he may, if he will, discern the right and shun the wrong. The Lord *will* indeed eventually draw all men unto Himself, inasmuch as in millennial glory, "every knee" will bow. He is, even now, the Saviour of *all men*, inasmuch as His great sacrificial work is *available for all*, and "whosoever *will*,"—Jew or Gentile,—may come unto Him and live. In Him all

shall be "made alive," but only that each may receive "the deeds done in his body, whether they be good or bad."

It is, indeed, readily allowed by such an one, that, *practically*, few are saved,—that after eighteen hundred years of perpetual struggle, the knowledge of Christ, even as an historical personage, is confined to a very limited number of the race; and that of those who do, more or less, become acquainted with the Gospel, but a small number indicate any change corresponding to the phrase, "being born again." But deep and painful as, he cannot but allow, is the mystery involved in this state of things, he will not for a moment grant that it necessitates anything like triumph on the part of Satan; for, he argues, the salvation of infants innumerable will make up for the number of the lost; while the *possibility* that the millennium may endure for an unlimited period (the phrase thousand years being only symbolical), opens up to him a prospect before which present darkness and difficulty pass away.

The thought that the salvation of any number, however great, of persons yet unborn,

can in no degree affect the sufferings of the myriads who, in his view, *have* passed, and are continually passing, to eternal woe, does not seem to affect his views at all; for he looks at the whole question as one belonging to the Divine sovereignty, and therefore raised altogether out of the proper sphere of human love and sympathy. In his zeal to maintain the character of God as a *Judge*, he seems to forget that it is quite possible to misrepresent Him as a *Father*. He is content to say, "Let the consequences be what they will, —without personal faith in Christ *now*, no human being can, by any possibility, be saved by Christ *hereafter*." The redemption may, "by the forbearance of God," he admits, avail for "sins that are past" (Rom. iii. 25) —sins committed before the Incarnation; but it cannot, he says, avail for sins committed *now*, even though the sinner be as ignorant of the Redeemer as an antediluvian transgressor.

Both parties—the Universalist on the one hand, and the Orthodox on the other—proceed on the assumption that the word "all" must include *every individual*. It is on this

assumption that they found their respective theories.

The question is,—Are they right in so doing? We say distinctly *they are not*. We do not of course affirm that, out of the fifteen hundred places in which the word, or an equivalent, occurs, it is *never* so used as absolutely to exclude the possibility of any exceptions,—for such instances do occur,—but we may safely assert that, *generally*, it implies the reverse,—that, *as a rule*, the word “all” in Scripture is used simply to signify *the great mass*; it is the opposite of few, but not necessarily without limitation.

It would be but a wearisome task to go through the multitude of instances in which the word in question is so applied; but it is quite practicable to take any ten or twenty just as they stand in a Greek Concordance, and *test* the remainder by this experiment.

We will begin at the beginning of the New Testament. “Herod was troubled, and *all* Jerusalem with him” (Matt. ii. 3); he “gathered *all* the chief priests and scribes” (ver. 4); he “slew *all* the children in all the coasts thereof” (ver. 16); “then went out to

(John) *all* Judea" (iii. 5); "*every* tree which beareth not good fruit is hewn down" (ver. 10); "fo it becometh us to fulfil *all* righteoufnefs" (ver. 15); "man fhall live by *every* word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (iv. 4); the devil fhoweth (Chrift) "*all* the kingdoms of the world" (ver. 8); Chrift healed "*all* manner of ficknefs, and *all* manner of difeafe" (ver. 23); "they brought unto Him *all* the fick" (ver. 24); "the candleftick (lamp) giveth light unto *all* that are in the houfe" (v. 15).

We have here taken the firft ten that occur, and we ask fair-minded perfons to fay whether, on the one hand, the fupposition of *exceptions* would in any cafe deftroy the force and meaning of the word ufed? or whether, on the other hand, *limitation to a few* would not do it? In each instance it is quite clear that "all" is ufed colloquially, as implying *the oppofite* of few, but not neceffarily fupposing every one.

It may, however, be faid that, although in *narrative* this ufrage of the word cannot be denied, it is not to be fo underftood in any ftatement, argument, or reasoning re-

quiring scientific precision, such as those must do which relate to salvation or condemnation.

We shall see. Our Lord thus speaks,—  
“*Every* one that asketh receiveth” (Matt. vii. 8); yet, says an Apostle, *not* they that “ask amiss” (Jas. iv. 3). Again, “Ye (the disciples) shall be *hated* of *all* men” (Matt. x. 22); yet at the judgment it is seen that certain, who spiritually understood not their relation to the Judge, offered kindness, and are rewarded for it (Matt. xxv. 35).

Paul thus writes to the Romans,—“I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you *all*” (i. 8); but had he not to weep over some? He speaks of the heathen as filled with *all* unrighteousness (ver. 29); yet recognizes their virtues (ii. 14). To the Corinthians he says,—“He that is spiritual judgeth *all* things” (1 Cor. ii. 15); and of himself, “*all* things are lawful to me” (1 Cor. vi. 12): he asserts that “*every* sin that a man doeth (excepting fornication) is without the body” (1 Cor. vi. 18); that “*every* man, that striveth for the mastery is temperate” (1 Cor. ix. 25); “that *all* our fathers were under the cloud” (1 Cor. x. 1). Again, to the Galatians,—

"Ye are *all* the children of God" (Gal. iii. 26); and to the Ephesians,—“Let the wives be subject to their own husbands in *every thing*” (Ephes. v. 24).

In each of these instances, and in hundreds of others that might be named, it is evident, from common sense and the context, that *possible exceptions* are always supposed, although the statement, in its spirit, is absolutely true.

Now, then, let us apply this principle to the various texts which lie at the foundation of the two classes of opinions we have noticed, and see how it will hold.

St. Paul says distinctly, “*all* Israel shall be saved” (Rom. xi. 26). How is he to be understood? Does he mean only, all the elect? Impossible! “The election,” he says, “has already obtained” the grace. It is of “the rest,” who “were blinded,” that he is speaking (xi. 7). What, then, is *every* Israelite to be saved, let his sins, his unbelief, his deliberate rejection of God, be as aggravated as they may? Scarcely is this possible,—for then it would not have been said of Judas, “It had been better for this

man had he never been born" (Matt. xxvi. 24). Can it mean merely that particular remnant which should happen to be living when Christ comes the second time? Impossible! for this would not agree with the statement, "God hath included them all (or rather, "shut them all up together"—*Marg.*) in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all" (Rom. xi. 32).

Why should we thus perplex ourselves, when difficulty can be escaped by simply understanding Paul to mean, by "*all* Israel," the nation at large,—the nation *as a nation*,—the multitude, of all times and ages, over whom prophets wept—to whom they promised a glorious future—and of whom, "concerning the flesh, Christ came"?

Exceptions there may be, and *must* be; but then they are exceptions that prove the rule \*

Now if this be true of the Jew, why should it not also be true of the Gentile? If the word "all," or its equivalents, when applied to Israel, means *the race*, yet not necessarily

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\* See Note at page 82.

every individual of it, why should it not bear the same meaning when applied to "the world"?

If we admit that "in Adam *all* die" (regarding the death as both physical and moral), although Enoch and Elijah were translated, that (physically) "they should not see death" (Heb. xi. 5), and although St. Paul himself tells us elsewhere that "we shall not all sleep" (1 Cor. xv. 51), why should we feel difficulty in receiving the latter clause, "so in Christ shall *all* be made alive," although it be true that some, morally and spiritually, will never live, *i. e.*, never *live in Christ*, having deliberately rejected mercy, and destroyed themselves? Why cannot we receive the word "all" as in each case implying the mass,—the race *as a race*,—the whole, with certain sad exceptions?

What wretched trifling it seems, to assert, as some commentators have done, that the wicked are "made alive" in Christ, to be eternally tormented, as if this were the same as "the many" being "made righteous;" while all the while it is so plain that the Apostle is

simply contrasting *loss* by Adam with *gain* by Christ; that the one is regarded as the antithesis of the other; and that both must be understood with *like* limitations.

To say, as even Dean Alford does, that in this passage "*no consequence*, whether on the side of death or life, is brought into consideration," is to deprive the argument of the Apostle both of force and meaning, since he is all through speaking of the resurrection *only in the light of blessing*. He says, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (ver. 17).

From sheer *faithlessness*, and in mere *dread* of any interpretation, however simple or natural, which seems to favour Universalism, even our Lord's own words are commonly subjected to a process which emasculates and explains away both their point and meaning. He himself says, "And I, if I be lifted up (crucified), will draw (attract) all men unto me" (John xii. 32). What words can be plainer? Why can they not be simply received with thankfulness? The reply is,—*partly* because they cannot be made to accord with a theology which maintains that the

"elect" only, the "little flock," the chosen from eternity, can be delivered from the dominion of Satan, or escape everlasting perdition; and *partly*, because the word "all" being supposed necessarily to include every individual child of Adam, the statement, if so understood, cannot be reconciled with other declarations.

Dean Alford, to avoid the difficulty, ingeniously enough, but certainly without warrant, lays the emphasis on the personal pronoun, observing, "Before the glorification of Christ, the Father drew men to the Son (John vi. 44); but now, the Son Himself to Himself. Then it was, 'No man can come except the Father draw him;' now the Son draws all (who are drawn)." But this notion is surely quite inconsistent with the context; for the declaration of the Saviour is connected, not with any comparison between the work of the Father and the work of the Son, but simply with the *triumphs* of the cross, anticipated in the words which immediately precede,—“Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out” (John xii. 31).

If the word "all," in Scripture, invariably means *every individual*, and admits of no exceptions, then, undoubtedly, either the Universalist is right in his doctrine of the final happiness of all men, *or* the Orthodox, in his supposition that such expressions refer only to the *availableness* of Christ's sacrifice to all who *on earth* repent and believe the Gospel; in which case, a "little flock" only is saved, and the world at large is abandoned to Satan—irretrievably ruined by him.

We cannot for a moment admit either of these alternatives. Christ is the "Saviour of *all men*," though "specially of them that believe" (1 Tim. iv. 10). "If by one man *the many* were made sinners, by one also shall *the many* be made righteous" (Rom. v. 19). He came "to destroy the works of the devil," and He will do it. He alone is conqueror, and He will "lead captivity captive."

But hell is no dream. Degradation and punishment are not less certain than honour and reward. Life and death are not figures of speech. The lake of fire is as much an objective reality as is the kingly crown.

We trust we have shown that in thus inter-

preting the "all" of Scripture we adopt no *arbitrary* principle; that we are far from pretending that readers of the Bible, with or without evidence, are at liberty to regard the word as meaning *all* without the possibility of exception; or *all* potentially, but practically a few; or *the race* regarded as a whole, —just as may best suit their own particular theology.

If we have proved anything, it is this,—that *no other* interpretation, save the last, is ever implied in Scripture, except in cases where the word is obviously used only in a colloquial sense, or where it is applied to matters with which the conduct or character of man has nothing to do. In *the first*, as in St. Mark, where all Judea is spoken of as coming to John for baptism, common sense alone is adequate to show that it must be limited to the idea of a multitude, acting under a common and general excitement. In *the last*,—viz., in cases where God is spoken of as the Creator or Disposer, the Judge or Father of us all,—common sense again is abundantly sufficient to indicate that no exception or limitation of any kind is possible.

But in all other cases—in all which involve, or are involved in, the working of that complex system which embraces man as in a state of probation; man as fallen and redeemed, and the world as the great field of contest between Christ and Satan—we are satisfied that Scripture *invariably* uses such terms as “all,” “every,” and “the whole,” with a silent reference to *possibilities* which, while they do not affect the truthfulness of the general statement, render it altogether unsuitable and unlawful for us, first, to press the word to its *extreme* meaning, and then, by speculations of our own, to endeavour to *force* such expositions into harmony with the revealed character of God.

We are satisfied that as there are those who, having “tasted the good word of God, and the power of the world to come,” may yet so “fall away, that it is impossible to renew them to repentance,” while it yet remains true that believers are eternally safe in Christ; so there is a salvation of the race which is perfectly consistent with the peculiar blessedness of the elect, the condemnation of the finally impenitent, and the

inspired declaration that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness."

We hold distinctly that Scripture, in revealing future retribution, divides mankind, *not*, as is generally supposed, into *two* classes only, but into *three*; viz., *first*, those who, by the grace of God, are *here* made "new creatures in Christ Jesus," and are destined to live and reign with Him for ever; *secondly*, those who, having enjoyed every advantage for knowing and loving Christ, have deliberately and *consciously* rejected His authority, and refused to have Him to reign over them,—for *such* "there remaineth only a fearful looking for of judgment;" and *thirdly*, "the *many*," whether heathen or nominally Christian, who, having been made *what* they are by Adam, will finally be made *other* than they are by Christ. These, although not REIGNING with the Lord, will yet be subjected to His sway, and, in the world or age to come—probably under the guidance and teaching of the elect of earth—be brought voluntarily to choose God and goodness as their portion, and to swell the triumphs of redeeming love.

Then will it be seen by all, that “where sin abounded, grace doth *much more* abound;” that if the evils entailed upon mankind through the sin of Adam are manifold and grievous, the grace and blessing procured by the Redeemer are *much more* extensive and abundant; that the blessing so neutralizes the curse, that *all* are subject—not nominally, but really—to a *probation of grace*; and that in every sense the bane and the antidote are co-extensive.

It will be said that a supposition like that we have advanced cannot be made to accord with our Lord’s own teaching relative to the Judgment, given us in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew. As we shall have occasion, in the course of our inquiry, to discuss that entire passage at length, we shall content ourselves here with simply asserting that nothing we have advanced is out of harmony with the teaching in the chapter referred to. The *first* class—the Elect Church, the Bride—*come with* the Lord to judgment, and are “the brethren” who are all through identified with Himself (1 Thes. iv. 17). The *second* (the sheep on the right hand) are those who,

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as a reward for kindness to the suffering Church, are made partakers of the kingdom. The *third* are men who have, by contempt and neglect, aggravated the sorrows of "the brethren" when they were on the earth, and who are, therefore, "separated" for punishment. The great mass,\* from which the "blessed" and the "curfed" have alike been *sifted*, are, as we judge from other portions of Scripture, left to be acted upon by influences and motives from which, while on earth, they were debarred by ignorance and other circumstances beyond their control.

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\* "*All nations*" (Matt. xxv. 31—46).—To take this expression (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) as referring to Christendom, is utterly untenable. It is indeed said that it denotes the Church of the Lord collected *out of* all nations; but it is impossible to show that an expression, the fixed meaning of which is so different, can be employed in this sense. Hence the only alternative is to understand the term as denoting all men, with the exception of true believers—that is, *all unbelievers*; and this interpretation being adopted, the parable preserves its own internal harmony, as well as its right position in relation to those which precede. (See "Olshausen on the Gospels," vol. iii, p. 155, Third Edition. Dean Alford, in his Notes, takes a similar view of this passage.)

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When it can be shown that the probation of a negro in Africa, of a Hindoo in India, of an aboriginal in Australia, or of a street Arab in St. Giles's, has anything in common with the probation of a well-instructed Christian, it will be time enough to assert that in each case the trial and the training are alike final and complete.

## CHAPTER VI.

*On Eternal Life.*

THE word LIFE, as applied to things spiritual and heavenly, frequently occurs both in the Old Testament and in the New.

Perhaps the earliest and most striking instance of its use in this way will be found in that beautiful Messianic psalm, where David, speaking in the name of Christ, says, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (sheol, or hades); neither wilt thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show me *the path of life*: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psa. xvi. ; also cxxxiii. 3).

It is in a spiritual sense, doubtless,—limited only by the amount of light then enjoyed,—that Solomon tells us wisdom is "a *tree of life*" (Prov. iii. 18), and "the fear of the

Lord a *fountain* of life" (xiv. 27); that the wicked take not "hold of the *paths* of life" (ii. 19); that "out of the heart,"<sup>\*</sup> spiritually as well as physically, are "the *issues* of life" (iv. 23); and that "the mouth of the righteous is a *well* of life" (x. 11). In all these cases the primary meaning is, that as "life is the first of blessings belonging to the body," so wisdom—understanding by that term the fear and love of God (Prov. i. 7; ii. 2—6)—is the source of all spiritual vitality in man now, and of all blessing in the world to come.

In the New Testament we are told that "life and immortality are *brought to light*" by the Gospel (2 Tim. i. 10), that is to say, through the good news of redemption by Christ, eternal life is *revealed*, in a sense in which it had been hitherto unknown.

It is important, therefore, to ascertain what is meant by this assertion, since, as we have already seen, the prophets of the old dispensation well knew that the life of God in the soul was the only true life of man; and further, that the possession of this life involved its renewal in other states of existence.

In order to answer the question, it will be necessary to review, with some care, the testimony of the New Testament in relation to this subject.

It can scarcely be questioned—whatever that testimony may be—that it is based on the assumption that the Jews were not ignorant of the doctrine of a future life. When our Lord tells the Jews that “many” should come “from the east and from the west,” and should “sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. viii. 11), He but recognizes the popular belief that the patriarchs would live again in blessedness and glory.

Further, the *resurrection of the body* from the dead, although denied by the Sadducees (Mark xii. 18), was held as a cardinal truth by the Pharisees; and the sister of Lazarus only expressed the belief of all devout Jews when she replied to the Lord’s assurance that her brother should rise again, “*I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day*” (John xi. 24).

In what sense, then, did Christ bring life and immortality to light?

The rejoinder to Martha supplies the answer. It teaches us that He revealed a life *higher* than that involved either in the fact of future existence, or in that of the resurrection of the body,—a life *peculiar and special*, which was to be obtained only by union to Himself. “Jesus said unto her, *I am* the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me *shall never die*” (John xi. 25, 26).

To suppose that our Lord, in these words, merely referred to truths already known,—such as the fact of a future existence, and the general resurrection,—is to deprive His reply of its point; for Martha had already spoken of such a belief as elementary and familiar. But the saying of Christ was by no means of this character. For when He adds, “Believest thou this?” she can only reply, unable to comprehend the *depth* of His teaching, “Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world” (ver. 27).

Here, then, we have the key to the New

Testament revelation of life. It is not merely the revelation of a future state; *that* was already known. It is not the revelation of the resurrection of the body, and the restoration of the Jews under David, their king; *that* was published again and again by the prophets (Isa. xxvi. 19; Ezek. xxxvii. 11—13, and 24). It is the revelation of a *life in Christ*, through which, those who are made one with Him *here*, by a living faith, and they alone, shall become partakers of a Divine nature (2 Pet. i. 4); live for ever, because He lives for ever (John xiv. 19); and share with Him the honours both of the priesthood and the throne (Rev. i. 6).

Viewed in this light, the words of the Redeemer to Martha are indeed "good news;" they are the revelation to her of that "wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory," which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit" (1 Cor. ii. 7—10).

Understood, as the passage frequently is, as a republication and confirmation of the old truth that men should one day rise again, the saying becomes deprived of all special force and meaning. While if, as some would have us believe, the Lord here supersedes the old doctrine that *the nation* would be saved, and substitutes for it the modern doctrine that none but the true followers of the Redeemer—the regenerate—can escape the second death, the revelation is not of mercy, but of judgment. If it is to be read, "Since I am the resurrection and the life, none but they who believe on me *here* can be saved," it is the eternal condemnation of the Jewish people, *regarded as a whole*, through all their generations; it is the apparent sweeping away of all that the prophets had taught, and the people believed, in relation to their final destiny; it is a message, indeed, of untold blessing to *the few*, but it is one of inconceivable horror for the many,—for humanity,—for the race.

It may, we are aware, be disputed whether the Jews *did* believe, on the authority of the prophets, that the nation, as such, would be

faved. But it seems impossible to doubt that this was the case, without rejecting the reasoning of St. Paul in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and setting aside his direct assertion that "God hath not cast away His people (the Jews), which He foreknew" (ver. 2); that "all Israel shall be saved" (ver. 26); that He "hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all" (ver. 32). It seems impossible to believe, with this inspired evidence before us, that any other belief than that of a national salvation found place for a moment in the Jewish mind.

Does any one suppose that the young man who came to Christ, saying, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" (Matt. xix. 16), was simply desirous of escaping hell? or that when he went away forrowing, he felt that he was doomed to perdition? Clearly not. When told that if he would enter into life he must "keep the commandments," he had, with apparent truthfulness, replied, "All these things have I kept from my youth up." But still he is not satisfied. He wants to share in

that peculiar life which Christ had been teaching was *His* gift. He is desirous that it should be said of *him*, as Christ had just said of the children,—“Of such is the kingdom of heaven,”—and so he responds, “What lack I yet?” The Lord replies, “*If thou wilt be perfect*, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.” But this he could *not* do; the honour of discipleship, therefore, could not be his, nor *the kingdom* either; for he loved earthly riches better than the rewards of eternity.

It is *in contradistinction* from the lot of this young ruler that Peter is told, in the same conversation, that he and his brother apostles should “sit upon *twelve thrones*, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matt. xix. 28).

When Peter, on another occasion, exclaims, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life” (John vi. 68), he is thinking of a *distinction* which Christ only can give. When Jesus says of His sheep, “I give unto them *eternal life*; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man

pluck them out of my hand" (John x. 28), He speaks of nearer and dearer ties than those which attach Him to the world He has redeemed. When He tells His disciples that "he that hateth (disregardeth) his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal" (John xii. 25), He explains immediately after, that the life referred to is oneness with Himself, and *honour* from the Father (ver. 26). *This* is the "eternal life" which He gives "to as many" as God has given Him (xvii. 2, 3); *this* is the "eternal life" which "God, who cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Tit. i. 2; 1 John ii. 25); *this* it is on which we are to "lay hold" (1 Tim. vi. 12), for the way is "narrow" (Matt. vii. 14); *this* it was of which the Jews of Antioch, in Pisidia, counted themselves "unworthy" (Acts xiii. 46); and which "as many" (of the Gentiles) "as were ordained to eternal life" believed in with joy, glorifying the Lord (ver. 48).

And now we come to understand how it is that "to be spiritually minded is *life*" (Rom. viii. 6); that to be united to Christ *is itself life* (John vi. 53; 1 John v. 12); that Christ

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is "the bread of life" (John vi. 48), and "the water of life" (Rev. xxi. 6; xxii. 17); that He *gives* life (John v. 40); that He *is* life (John i. 4; xi. 25; Col. iii. 4); that He *has it in Himself* (John v. 26; 1 John v. 11); that His *words* are life (John vi. 63); that he who believeth not the Son shall not see life (John iii. 36); that *truly to live* is to have a life "hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 3); that eternal life is at once a recompence and a *reward* (Matt. xxv. 46); that there is a "*grace of life*" (1 Pet. iii. 7); a "repentance unto life" (Acts xi. 18; John v. 24); and a "resurrection of life" (John v. 29); that there are those who are "*heirs of life*" (Matt. xix. 29; Titus iii. 7), and those who live in "newness of life" (Rom. vi. 4); that there is "a law of the Spirit of life," by which, even now, men may be "made free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. viii. 2); and that he who thus "followeth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. vi. 8).

Compare these passages with the many others that speak of Christ as giving life *to the world* (John vi. 33); as "reconciling *the world* unto Himself" (2 Cor. v. 19); as given

“for the world” (John iii. 16); as taking away “the sin of the world” (John i. 29); as “the propitiation” for its “sins” (1 John ii. 2); as “the Saviour of the world” (John iv. 42; 1 John iv. 14); as coming not to judge, but to “*save the world*” (John xii. 47); and it seems impossible to escape the conclusion that there is a *twofold* life,—one for the world and one for the elect, and that the life and immortality *revealed in the Gospel* is emphatically the latter,—the life of God’s elect; the immortality of those who, receiving “*abundance of grace* and of the gift of righteousness, shall *reign in life*” (Rom. v. 17); have a *crown of life* (Jas. i. 12; Rev. ii. 10), and enjoy that “life unto life,” which is the true antithesis of the “death unto death” (2 Cor. ii. 16).

Why, then, should it be thought strange to add, that this great gift is not to be confounded with the “justification unto life,” which is the “free gift unto all men” (Rom. v. 18)?

## CHAPTER VII.

*On Hades, or the World of Separate Spirits.*

**B***Y Hades* we mean that intermediate state between death and the resurrection in which Scripture teaches us the souls both of the righteous and the wicked (although in very different conditions) await the future; some to remain there till the second coming of the Lord, others till the final judgment.

The existence of this state, although rarely if ever *denied*, is, in our own day, commonly ignored, under an impression, altogether unsupported by Scripture, that *at death*, and therefore long before either the second coming of Christ or the judgment day, the souls of the departed, according to their character, enter into the full enjoyment of the blessedness of heaven, or into the untold miseries of the lake of fire.

And yet nothing can be plainer than that the Bible teaches that the soul at death goes to hades, and that the word hades, although in the English version usually translated "hell," simply *means* the invisible state—the place of departed spirits—without any reference whatever to the condition of its inhabitants.

The following passages are mentioned by Dr. Angus, in the "Bible Hand-Book," as instances in which, by the consent of all parties, hades is thus wrongly translated:—  
"And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell" (hades,—here used figuratively for death or desolation), Matt. xi. 23; "The gates of hell" (hades,—here put figuratively for the power of death) "shall not prevail against it" (the Church), Matt. xvi. 18; "And in hell (hades) he (the rich man) lift up his eyes, being in torments" (Luke xvi. 23); "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell" (hades), Acts ii. 27; "His soul was not left in hell" (hades), ver. 31; "O grave (hades), where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. xv. 55); "I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell (hades) and of death" (Rev. i.

18); "Death and hell (hades) delivered up the dead which were in them,"—"Death and hell (hades) were cast into the lake of fire" (xx. 13, 14).

In most of these cases, if not in all, the meaning of the word is, *the world of separate spirits*, as distinct alike from hell (Gehenna), properly so termed, and from heaven, regarded as the dwelling-place of God and of the holy angels.

Yet in one instance—that of Dives—it is quite clear that hades is represented as a place of punishment; and there seems little reason to doubt that the "Paradise" to which the penitent thief departed was the same place as that in which the beggar is represented as reclining in the bosom of Abraham. We gather, therefore, from the whole at least this,—that while *all souls* depart at death into hades, and wait there that final doom which will one day be pronounced on every child of Adam, the righteous are "with Christ," and the wicked, perpetually sorrowing,\* are parted from them by an impassable gulf.

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\* "Sorrowing," for the word translated "torment" is

Beyond these intimations we know little of the state of separate spirits *prior* to the resurrection. The parable of Dives and Lazarus merely teaches that in that state the righteous are at peace, and the selfish restless and unhappy; the *object* of the parable being, not, as is usually supposed, to reveal to us heaven and hell, but to enforce the great duty of love and kindness to poor brethren, and the certainty of future retribution. Both Dives and Lazarus were Jews; all the obligations, therefore, of the Mosaic economy towards a poor brother rested on Dives, since both professedly belonged to the same "household of faith."

That the condition of souls in hades is

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the same word (*βασάνοις*) that is used by Matthew (iv. 24) to express the "diverse diseases and torments" to which the sick were exposed; and by Peter (2 Ep. ii. 8), to denote the suffering of "just Lot, *vexed* (*ἐβασάνιζεν*) with the filthy conversation of the wicked." In the following verses (Luke xvi. 24, 25) another word is used for "tormented" (*ὀδυνῶμαι*), which is, in this same Gospel, elsewhere translated "sorrowing" (Luke ii. 48), a phrase which very naturally expresses what we may reasonably suppose to be the rich man's state of mind.\*

*retributive* cannot be doubted by any who believe in the statements of Scripture. The rich man who had neglected and despised his brother Israelite is distinctly represented as "lifting up his eyes" *there* in torment (or sorrow), apparently distressed by internal fever, as he asks for water to "cool" his "*tongue*" (Luke xvi. 24). The suffering is evidently *mental*. The now awakened conscience is doing its fearful work.

It is clear—apart altogether from the use of the word *hades*—that "hell," properly so termed, is not intended by our Lord, *first*, because the state described is one entered upon immediately after death, and therefore *prior* to the judgment; *secondly*, because Dives is regarded as being sufficiently near to Lazarus to converse with Abraham, on whose bosom the beggar is represented as reclining; and *thirdly*, because his state of mind is one in which, if penitence is not directly expressed, pity for others is certainly felt. There are manifest in him the *germs*, at least, of a better mind; he is anxious that those whom he loved on earth should be warned, *that they might repent*; conditions

which it is certainly very difficult to suppose can apply to the lost in hell.

It is plain, from the whole, that the soul of man, at death, passes into what we usually term "the separate state;" that there it begins to reap that which it has sown on earth,—the righteous peace and rest, the foretaste of better things to come; the wicked pain and sorrow, the "fruit of their own devices."

It was in relation to the *immediate* condition of the soul after death, rather than to the resurrection, that the world before Christ was in such total darkness. The Jews, like the Greeks, had certain vague notions about an Elysium and a Tartarus, but they could not be said to have had any definite beliefs on the subject. Daniel, Job, and the prophets all recognize the resurrection, but are alike ignorant of the state of the soul *between* death and that event.

Job could say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for

myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another"\* (xix. 25—27); and yet, in the immediate prospect of death, he can only exclaim, "Man dieth, and wafteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: so man lieth down, and riseth not: *till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake*, nor be raised out of their sleep" (xiv. 10—12). From these passages it seems clear that Job believed the body would slumber in the grave till the resurrection.

So Martha, as we have just seen, when told that her brother should rise again, but expresses the national sentiment, gathered from the prophets of the Old Testament, when she responds, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." The dying thief, believing in the resurrection, and connecting that event, as the better part of his nation did, with the

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\* We do not feel it necessary to notice here the various readings and translations which have been offered of this passage. We *assume* that the authorized version is substantially correct.

triumphs of Messiah, prays, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Jesus, revealing the *immediate* happiness of the believer, answers, "*This day* shalt thou be with me in paradise." Nothing but gloom is connected with the departure even of the righteous *prior* to the resurrection of Christ. Nothing but glory should be associated with it now.

Whether, as some suppose, believers, dying since the advent of Christ, avoid hades, and dwell in some other spot called "paradise (Luke xxiii. 43; 2 Cor. xii. 4), or whether, as we have already suggested, paradise stands for that department of hades which is appropriated to the righteous dead, we know not; nor does it seem to us of very much importance, since in any case they are with the Lord, in a state of happy preparation for the resurrection of the body, to which they look forward as the consummation of their bliss.

If *Christ's* soul did not sleep,—if He went "to the Father" (John xvi. 17; xiv. 28); if He was "quickened by the Spirit" (John vi. 63); was "seen of angels," and "received up into

glory" (1 Tim. iii. 16),—it is clear that the souls of His brethren live also; that they *continue in life*, exempt from death so far as regards the self or soul. Therefore it is our Lord says the believer never dies.

The departing exclamation of the first Christian martyr, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts vii. 59), clearly shows that such was the belief of the primitive Church. St. Paul evidently *assumes* that he cannot, properly speaking, *die*, when he says to the Philippians, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and *to be with Christ*; which is far better" (Phil. i. 23). And again to the Corinthians, "Willing rather to be absent from the body, and *to be present with the Lord*" (2 Cor. v. 8). And again, when he tells the Thessalonians, Christ "died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should LIVE together with Him" (1 Thess. v. 10).

In all these cases, not only is *existence* supposed, but a *consciousness* of the relation between the soul and Christ, which implies active communion. The vision of the Apocalypse, in which John sees "the souls of them

that were slain for the word of God," under the altar, and hears their cry, "How long, O Lord?" (Rev. vi. 9—11), indicates something more still. For the statement that "white robes" are given to them, and that they are told to "rest yet for a little season," teaches that their *prayer* was heard, their *sympathy* with sufferers on earth approved, and the exercise of their *faith* in God, their *hope* of victory, and their *charity* for their brethren, rewarded by the gift of that robe which was to be the symbol and the pledge of their final triumph.

We are speaking now, let it be remembered, of the believer *only*. The case of the unbeliever must be looked at separately. There is, perhaps, no other portion of the New Testament, besides the parable of Dives and Lazarus,—unless it be that which tells us of Christ preaching to the spirits in prison,—that, so to speak, lifts the veil which hangs over the *immediate* condition of the unrepenting dead, and reveals the retributive character of the invisible world. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus this is done; and its great peculiarity is, that

neither the joy nor the suffering is represented to us as directly inflicted by God, but rather as the natural working out of law acting retributively *on the mind*. In this respect, its revelations, if so they may be termed, differ materially from what we are elsewhere told regarding heaven and hell.

Whether this peculiarity,—especially as connected with the fact that Dives, when suffering, distinctly expresses pity for others, and desires their timely repentance,—is intended to indicate that the retributions of hades, *may be*—nay, that in some cases they *are*—disciplinary as well as punitive, many will be inclined to doubt. Yet it is, at least, far from improbable. And if it be so, why may not these sorrows be regarded as introductory to that further probation in the world (or age) to come, which, we believe, Scripture in many places *hints at*.

We are quite aware that the very term “probation” implies more or less of pain and sorrow, of perplexity and of depression, arising *from evil*, and can quite understand the indignation with which some will resent the very thought that, in any other world than

this, evil can exist out of hell. We would remind such objectors, however, that from the teachings of the Bible, it is an indisputable fact that evil existed in heaven before it came down to earth; that "the angels who left their first estate" did so, if not under temptation from without, certainly from the workings of evil within them; and that there is nothing whatever, either in the Bible or in the analogy of God's dealings, which should lead us to suppose that *moral trial* terminates here.

For the redeemed,—for the elect Church of Christ,—for all that are here one with Him, trial obviously does terminate; for they have "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. vii. 13—17). And again, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, *that they may rest* from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev. xiv. 13). But where is the authority for applying to every professing Christian—however cold, or negligent, or inconsistent he may be—passages

which, in Scripture, are carefully confined to martyrs, apostles, and eminent saints (John xii. 26; xvii. 24).

The prejudiced, or the careless, may call the very idea of a probation for anybody in the world to come, "purgatory," and content themselves with the sneer; but thoughtful readers will perceive at once that it is at least no such purgatory as that with which Rome deludes her victims. The torments of hades *may*, indeed, and in some cases, doubtless, will be only the prelude to further and final woe; but that such will be invariably the case is nowhere taught in Holy Scripture.

The revelations of the Old Testament cannot be expected, for reasons we have already stated, to throw any additional light on this subject; for the few highly figurative passages which are found in the Prophets, such as the triumphal song which celebrates the overthrow of the king of Babylon,—deceased monarchs taunting him on his entrance into *sheol* (Isa. xiv. 9—12),—or Ezekiel's description of "the strong among the mighty" speaking to the king of Egypt "out of the midst of hell" (*sheol*, or hades,

Ezek. xxxii. 21); or Pharaoh seeing the fall of empires, and being "comforted over all his multitudes slain by the sword" (ver. 31), can scarcely teach us more than that the wicked dead in the invisible world are, to some extent, under the influence of the passions that enthralled them on earth, and that they are capable of aggravating each other's sorrow.

In the book of the Apocalypse, the Apostle John, *entranced*, finds himself indeed in vision before the throne of God; but that throne seems to be set in Hades, where the Father, in His official character, as the originator of the work of redemption, is, in this magnificent imagery, supposed to preside.

The form of worship described as carried on there corresponds to the course and manner of worship in the earthly temple; and, as has been well observed, there is a remarkable analogy between this representation of the invisible, and the *tabernacle service* generally, which, as we are told, was arranged *according to the pattern* (or copy) showed to Moses in the mount; all seeming to imply that the employment of happy separate spirits is that

of frequent worship, and that this holy and blessed service is very closely adumbrated by that of the Jewish tabernacle.\*

It is in this upper world that the Christian is called *even now* to dwell. This is "the heavenly," in which the believer should, by faith, already feel himself *at home*, domesticated, so to speak, with the Redeemer. For "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, *hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places (lit., in the heavenlies) in Christ Jesus*" (Ephes. ii. 4—6). Now, says the Apostle to the Colossians, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Here, ye are but aliens; for your souls are not the property of this world; by faith, ye dwell *in that holy seclusion from the tempests of time* to which the Redeemer has risen. But "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear," or manifest Himself,—when He shall renew His sensible relation to earth, and bring it into subjection to Himself,—THEN all shall be changed. "Ye

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\* See Bishop Newton's "Dissertation on Rev. iv.," and "Saturday Evening," by Isaac Taylor.

also shall appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4), and enter into more glorious relations both with Him and it (1 Thes. iv. 14; Matt. xiii. 43).

In harmony with the view we have thus taken of the separate state, is that beautiful delineation of its character, which has been set forth by Mr. Isaac Taylor in his "Saturday Evening."

"The spirit," says he, "is then, when freed from the body, to be thrown upon the play of its AFFECTIONS,—whether these be malign or benign, pure or depraved,—and it is moreover to be thrown upon them in presence of objects of the most stupendous magnitude. In place of the measured and mingled emotions of the present life, there are to be encountered, in the next stage of our existence, excitements of overwhelming force, and all of one quality. And amid them, the soul, quiescent in regard to what might move it to wonder or terror, is to be nakedly sensitive to the MORAL QUALITY of what it beholds. Human nature, thus reduced to its most simple element, shall exist in one mood only,—that of AN INTENSE CONSCIOUSNESS OF ITS OWN MORAL CONDITION."

## CHAPTER VIII.

*On the Revelations of Scripture regarding*  
HEAVEN.

THE word "Heaven" (*οὐρανός*), or, as it is frequently found in the plural form, "Heavens," occurs about two hundred and eighty times in the New Testament alone. In *ten* of these it is translated "air,"—as in the parable of the sower,— "the fowls of *the air*" (Luke viii. 5). In *five* others it is rendered "sky,"—as in the discourse of our Lord,— "Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of *the sky*" (Luke xii. 56). In *eighty-six* other places, although translated "heaven," it is obviously put rather for the visible firmament,—as in Mark xiii. 25,— "the stars of *heaven* shall fall;" or, as indicative of the direction from which Divine communications seemed to come,—as in Matt. iii. 16, 17,— "Lo, the *heavens* were

opened;" and again, "Lo, a voice *from heaven.*"

In *eighty-three* instances heaven is expressly intended to indicate the peculiar residence of God and of the holy angels; the place *from* which Christ came, *to* which He is gone, and *whence* He will one day come again; *the locality*, so to speak, from which all authority and all blessing proceeds, *e. g.*, "Our Father which art in *heaven*" (Luke xi. 2). "*Heaven* is my throne" (Acts vii. 49). "No, not the angels which are *in heaven*" (Mark xiii. 32). "He that came down *from heaven*" (John iii. 13). "The great High Priest, that is *passed into the heavens*" (Heb. iv. 14). "To wait for His Son *from heaven*" (1 Thes. i. 10). "The true bread *from heaven*" (John vi. 32); and such like.

In *thirty-three* other places the term is associated with "the kingdom" of the Redeemer, which is styled "the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. iii. 2), and the "heavenly kingdom" (2 Tim. iv. 18); just as the calling of the Christian is termed a "heavenly calling" (Heb. iii. 1)—his resurrection body a "celestial," or *heavenly* body (1 Cor. xv.

40), and the future residence of the faints, the "heavenly Jerufalem" (Heb. xii. 22).

In the book of the Apocalypfe the term occurs *fifty-four* times, *sometimes* indicating the immediate residence of Jehovah, but *commonly* the world of separate spirits, or Hades. This intermediate state between death and the resurrection is generally called, in reference to the Christian, *heaven*; but not properly so, for it is but the temporary residence of the dead, and should never be confounded with the dwelling-place of God and of the holy angels.

Of the *immediate happiness* of the faint after his departure from earth, no Christian, who refuses to accept the theory that the soul sleeps till the day of the resurrection, can entertain a doubt. To such men unquestionably "to die is gain;" to be "with Christ" is "far better" (Phil. i. 21, 23). "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev. xiv. 13). "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to

prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John xiv. 2, 3).

The phrase, "my Father's house," is, we are aware, usually understood to mean the peculiar and special dwelling-place of God. But not justly so. For everywhere else "the *house* of God" clearly stands for the *people* of God, the *family*, who are constantly represented as a "household," a "building," a "temple," and such like. The natural meaning surely is,—“In my Father's (household or family) are many (dwelling-places);” *not*, as it is usually read, “In my Father's habitations are many habitations.”

Where Enoch is, or Elijah, or Moses, we know not, for these are exceptional instances; but *we do know* that “David is not ascended into the heavens” (Acts ii. 34), but that his soul is yet in Hades, and his flesh has seen corruption. We know, also, that while angels, God's messengers, ascend and descend, the “Son” *alone* has entered its everlasting gates (John i. 51; xx. 17). For, says Christ himself, “*No man* hath ascended up to heaven,

but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John iii. 13). Nothing seems to be clearer than that we must all wait in the invisible till "the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised." "Beloved," says St. John, "*now* are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear" (or rather, "that if it were manifested"—*Alford*), "we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2). But we can find no authority whatever for asserting that the happiness of the redeemed, either immediate upon death, or subsequent to judgment, is enjoyed *in heaven* properly so called. We believe, on the contrary, that Scripture distinctly teaches that *after the resurrection* the spirit, till then in the separate state, is again united to the body, and finds its home and its work on the regenerated earth.

The point to be noticed is—and, as contrasted with popular impressions, it is a very singular one—that THE WORD "HEAVEN" IS NEVER USED IN SCRIPTURE TO DENOTE THE FINAL DWELLING-PLACE OF BELIEVERS IN THE

WORLD THAT IS TO COME. We all speak of going to heaven when we die, and are apparently quite unconscious that we are using a term which is nowhere sanctioned in Holy Writ.

Heaven, as the abode of Christ, is always and justly regarded as the spot where our "hopes" rest (Col. i. 5), and where that reward is "reserved" which is to be *revealed* in the last time (1 Pet. i. 4). *There* our "inheritance among all them that are sanctified" is deposited (Acts xx. 32); our "treasure" is *there* (Matt. vi. 20; Heb. x. 34); our "names" are "written" *there* (Luke x. 20); our "reward" is *there* (Matt. v. 12); the "crown of righteousness" is *laid up* there (2 Tim. iv. 8); our "conversation" (moral life) is *there*, "from *whence* also we look for the Saviour" (Phil. iii. 20); but our final home is *not* there; for the "house" with which we are to be "clothed upon," although as yet, by a figure, spoken of as "in the heavens," and declared to be "eternal" in character, is to be a house "*from* heaven" (2 Cor. v. 2); and "the holy city, the new Jerusalem," is to "come down from God *out of* heaven" (Rev.

xxi. 10) ; and the dwelling-place of risen men is to be "*a new earth*," in which dwelleth righteoufness (Rev. xxi. 1) ; and Christ is to return, "for the Lord himself shall *descend from heaven* with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God" (1 Thes. iv. 16) ; and "the tabernacle of God" is to be "with men," and "*He will dwell with them*, and they shall be His people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Rev. xxi. 3).

That the elect Church, "the Bride," will occupy a position higher than the rest—nearer to Christ, and more glorious than that of many who will be saved—we have already seen to be probable from the statement that such shall be with Christ "*within* the holy city," while others, "saved nations," only dwell "in the light" of it (Rev. xxi. 24) ; but there is nothing whatever to support the ordinary expectation that, at the resurrection, this material world of ours will be destroyed, and the righteous conveyed to heaven, to be for ever happy among the angels of God, sharing with them in the services of the upper world. There is far more reason to

suppose that the angels will continue for ever to be “ministering spirits” to those who are “the heirs of salvation” (Heb. i. 14).

In all the *speculations* which excellent persons so freely indulge in about “being happy in heaven” — for, unsupported by Scripture, they are nothing but speculations — the point forgotten is, *the perpetual humanity of man*, so clearly indicated in the incarnation of the Redeemer, and in the fact that He ascended, in His human body, to “His Father and to our Father, to His God and to our God.”

To a similar forgetfulness may probably be traced a tendency, now very common, to contemplate future happiness apart altogether from its connection with *locality*.

That there is a sense in which heaven may be *within us* is certain; for where God is, heaven is; and unfettered communion with Him, through Christ and by the Holy Spirit, is perfect happiness. But this is no argument whatever against a locality as the future residence of the redeemed. God is everywhere, but we cannot be everywhere; and since, *at present*—even were it true that space is

merely subjective to the mind of man—we can comprehend the idea only as *a relation*, all the probabilities are that we shall continue to do so; for however glorious may be the spiritual bodies of the faints, however free from imperfection or corruption, however much they may transcend the limitations of our earthly conditions, the notion of *place* seems inseparable from the possession of a body.

That *the body* will be raised is the distinct teaching of revelation. That this union of the soul, after death, *with matter*—however spiritualized the new material frame may be—is essential to the re-birth of the spirit into “the new world of knowledge and action,” may fairly be gathered from Scripture. That the first consequence of this birth must be “the acquirement of locality in the extended universe,” is certain.

The mischief involved in the tendency to think of the future in connection with the spirit alone, and of heaven as merely subjective, commences whenever such interpretations are supposed to include *all that Scripture is intended to teach us* relative to

the world to come. Such is certainly *not* the case. Heaven is *there* always spoken of as a locality, the special residence of the Court of the Most High; hell is distinctly revealed to us as *a place* "prepared for the devil and his angels;" and the "new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness," as clearly declared to be the final abode of the "children of the resurrection."

And why should it not be so? Has not God made the world to be inhabited? Hath He not made all nations of men for to *dwelt* on the face of the earth? "Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else" (Isa. xlv. 18). The assurance given to man of sovereignty in it—a dominion far too absolute to be regarded as fulfilled either in the present or in the past—alone proves that it is not destined to destruction (Heb. ii. 8, and Psa. viii.). It is "*till the day of Christ*" that St. Paul prays the Philippians may be preserved; and it is "*in that day*"—the day of His return—that

he is so desirous to "rejoice" (Phil. i. 10; ii. 16).

Further, the world is a *redeemed* world. Christ died to restore all things; to deliver all things from the grasp of the Evil one; and who will venture to say that this design can ever be thwarted? that Satan is able to hinder the world from becoming the dwelling-place of the creature formed in God's image? or that "Wisdom" can be compelled to cease "rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth," and no longer to find "delights with the sons of men"? (Prov. viii. 31.)

These views, so far as they relate to the probability of this world becoming, when purified by fire, the future abode of man, are not new. Dr. Chalmers, in his "Astronomical Discourses," supports them with all the argument and eloquence of which he was so distinguished a master; and Mr. Isaac Taylor, in his "Physical Theory of Another Life," expresses his conviction that "all the practical skill we acquire in managing affairs; all the versatility, the sagacity, the calculation of chances, the patience and assiduity, the promptitude and facility; as well as the

higher virtues which we are learning every day, will find scope in a world such as is rationally anticipated when we think of heaven as the stage of life that is next to follow the discipline of earth."

"With no other indication of the destinies of the universe than what may be furnished by the swelling emotions of pity that are now working, pent up in tender and noble hearts, we should hardly fear to err in assuming that a sphere will at length open upon such spirits, wherein they shall find millions needing to be governed, taught, rescued, and *led forward from a worse to a better, or from a lower to a higher stage of life.* It is quite as easy to suppose that the Creator should have imparted to human nature the notion and the desire of immortality, without intending to realize it, as that He should have instilled a boundless benevolence, which is to have no more opportunity to express itself than it may chance to meet with in the present state."\*

We add,—And *who* so likely to be the objects of this benevolence as those who, on

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\* "Physical Theory," p. 190.

earth, have never been under any government deserving of the name ; who from birth upwards have been abandoned to ignorance, superstition, and vice ; and who wait only for a wife and kindly hand to lead them from evil to good, and from self to Christ ?

It is a favourite idea with many, and doubtless regarded as a very spiritual one, that the employment of the redeemed will be *perpetual worship*. This notion proceeds on an utter forgetfulness of the fact that "our Lord carried up into heaven, to live there for ever, *human nature complete*—all the powers of a perfect man. "Does any one believe that these powers, being carried into heaven, are to lie dormant there for ever ? Is it not manifest that there must be some exercise for them all ? Will any one maintain that a glorified spirit will be *more* spiritually-minded, more full of love to God, than 'God manifest in the flesh' was ? Yet *He* had room in His human nature for *personal friendship*, as well as for the perfect love of God. Or will any one deny that the Perfect Man delighted Himself in the contemplation of the flowers of the field, the

fowls of the air, the great order of God's works? Surely there must be room in heaven for the infinite pleasure of studying God's works—for '*dressing and keeping*' the marvellous '*garden*' of a perfected universe, in all its infinite expanse, in all its unnumbered provinces!"\*

The main difficulty in the way of impressing these truths upon mankind arises from the false associations that are commonly thrown around matter. We forget that when God first framed the *body* of a man, He pronounced it "very good;" and that it was in his *material* dwelling-place that Adam originally enjoyed unclouded fellowship with his Maker. We forget that there is no essential connection between materialism and sin; that it was over the *material* world that "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy;" that it is the material and visible "heavens" that "declare the glory of God;" that if the body were indeed nothing better than the prison-house of the soul, Divine

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\* The Hon. and Rev. W. H. Lyttleton, M.A., in "Tracts for Priests and People," No. xii., pp. 36-7.

love itself would hinder the possibility of its resurrection; that it is the substitution of righteousness for sin, of the pure for the vile, of love for selfishness, and not of spirit for matter, that will distinguish the new economy; for its special and distinctive mark is simply this,—“A NEW EARTH, WHEREIN DWELLETH RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

Such a view—the only revealed, and therefore the only reasonable idea of the future life—puts to shame not merely the “dreamy Elysium of classical antiquity, and the sensualisms of Oriental beliefs, it rises above all the wearisome and vapid inanities of modern poetical or philosophical fancies,” and transcends every speculation which would attempt to draw evidence of the nature of man’s futurity from the analogies of nature. “It is,” as has been well said, “the belief to which a genuine philosophy would instantly give the preference, if, among the many hypotheses of a future stage of human existence which have been imagined as probable, it must make a choice.”

We gather from our investigation that, whatever may be the final destiny of the race,

Scripture clearly teaches that the soul of *the believer in Jesus* passes at death into the world of separate spirits—the “Paradise” of which Christ spoke to the penitent thief; that it remains there in a state of blessed repose, and in the enjoyment of close fellowship with the Redeemer, till the resurrection of the body; that when that great event takes place, *the whole man*, body and soul once more united, becomes again an inhabitant of a material world (*probably* our earth, purified by fire), a dweller in the New Jerusalem, and a participator in the regal and priestly glories of the Redeemer.

## CHAPTER IX.

*On the Revelations of Scripture regarding*  
HELL.

WE propose now to inquire into the testimony of Scripture relative to "Hell," and to "Future Punishment." It will be seen, as we proceed, that we do not consider these two terms to be in all respects synonymous.

In the OLD Testament, the word "Hell" (Heb., *Sheol*) invariably stands either for the grave, or for the invisible world of spirits,—that state in which the soul remains from the time of its departure from earth till the Resurrection. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God" (Psa. ix. 17), is a text popularly understood as referring to the final doom of the ungodly; but such is not the case: it is the sweeping away from the earth, *by death*, of the enemies of God and of His people

which is alone predicted. The word translated "hell" is *the same* as that used by Jacob, when he exclaimed, "Then shall ye bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to *the grave*" (Gen. xlii. 38); the same as that used by David when, speaking of his enemies, he says, "Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell" (marg., *the grave*), Psa. lv. 15; the same as that by which Jonah expresses his *burial*, so to speak, in the body of the fish,—“Out of the belly of *hell* cried I, and thou heardest my voice” (Jonah ii. 2).

Denunciations against wickedness, and threatenings of punishment, are frequent in the Old Testament, both in the patriarchal and Mosaic periods, *e. g.*, Job iv. 8; xv. 20—24; xviii. 11; xxi. 30; Psa. v. 5; vii. 11; ix. 17; xxxiv. 16; Prov. xvi. 4, and many others; but in no case is there any distinct reference to the *final* condition of the impenitent. The first three of the passages to which we have referred seem to relate exclusively to natural retributions; the rest point to punishment at the hand of God; but in none of them is there any clear

revelation of a future judgment. *The fact* that God "hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained" (Acts xvii. 31), is itself a special revelation of the New Testament; for although both Jews and heathens expected a retributive future, of some kind or other, they knew not that God had fixed *a special time* for the judgment of mankind; that it should be by Messiah; or that it should take place *on earth*. They knew no more than this,—that after death men were happy or miserable according to the character and conduct they had exhibited on earth,—an amount of knowledge with which too many Christians, in the midst of so much clearer light, still seem to be content.

How dim and comfortless these views were, it is impossible not to perceive, from the fondness with which the most pious of the old dispensation clave to life, and from the way in which they speak of the dead as "dwelling in darkness," and as unable to praise God (Psa. vi. 5; xxx. 9; lxxxviii. 12; Isa. xxxviii. 18, 19).

In the NEW Testament, as we have already shown, several distinct words, widely different in meaning, are alike translated "hell," a practice which necessarily leads to a good deal of confusion in the mind of the English reader.\* "Hades" is in this way commonly mistaken for "Gehenna." Such, however, is not its import. It is *never* used in Scripture to express what we understand by HELL.

St. Peter (2 Ep. ii. 4), using another word, speaks of "the angels that sinned" being "cast down to hell" (*ταρταρόω*), and "delivered into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment," a term probably corresponding to "the deep" of St. Luke (viii. 31), and to the "bottomless pit" of St. John (*ἄβύσσος*), (Rev. xvii. 8). "Tartarus" (or the abyss), therefore, would seem to be to *evil spirits* what one department of "Hades" is to *evil men*.

The teaching of Scripture certainly is, that the soul of man, at death, passes into what we usually term "*the separate state*;" that *there* it begins to reap that which it has sown on earth; the righteous,—peace and rest, the

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\* See Chap. VII., p. 245.

foretaste of better things to come; the wicked, —pain and sorrow, “the fruit of their own devices.”

In *twelve* other texts of the New Testament, “hell” is in Greek expressed by the word Gehenna (*γέεννα*), which signifies “the valley of Hinnom,”—a valley of abomination, because *there* children were sacrificed to Moloch, and because it was used as a sort of “common sewer of Jerusalem.” Josiah, with the express purpose of degrading it, commanded that all the ordure of the city should be thrown there, with the carcases of dead dogs, and dead men’s bones. The dead bodies of criminals were, from time to time, thrown there. These, putrefying, produced worms and other vermin; to prevent any fatal consequences from which, a fire was kept continually burning (2 Kings xxiii. 10; Jer. vii. 31, 32; xix. 13; Mark ix. 44). The word “Gehenna,” therefore, obviously implied, to the Jew, all that is degrading and corrupting in connection with death and putrefaction.

It occurs for the first time in the New Testament in Matthew (v. 22),—“Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of

hell fire" (τὴν γέενναν τοῦ πυρός); it is immediately afterwards repeated in the twenty-ninth and thirtieth verses,—“It is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell;” or, as the same evangelist gives it in another place (xviii. 8),—“It is better for thee to *enter into life* halt or maimed,” with one eye, hand, or foot, “rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire;”—words reported by Mark (ix. 43—48), with the addition, *thrice made*,—“Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” *Seven*, out of the twelve instances in which the word “Gehenna” is used in the New Testament are, therefore, involved in the consideration of these few verses.

In relation to the first of them (Matt. v. 22), it should be distinctly recollected that the word “fool” (μωρός) does not mean what we understand by that term, but rather “apostate” (see *Alford* on this word); and further, that “Gehenna,” *here*, probably stands only for *capital punishment*, inflicted by the highest court in Jerusalem, as contrasted with the

minor sentences passed by "the judgment," or by "the council."

To understand the exact bearing of the passage, it is necessary to keep in mind, *first*, that in the Jewish law it is stated, that "he who calls his brother, 'slave,' shall be excommunicated; that he who calls him 'bastard,' shall be beaten with forty stripes; while if he calls him 'wicked' (*i.e.*, in the sense of fool or apostate), he may be tried for his life, which was also called being 'thrust down into hell, or tossed into Gehenna.'"\* Further, it should be recollected that there were *three* courts among the Jews,—the court of the twenty-three, the court of the Sanhedrim, and the supreme court at Jerufalem, each of which took cognizance of crimes according to the degree of guilt involved; *these* were the tribunals to which our Lord referred.

It may, therefore, without any wish to avoid the force of the passage, be fairly questioned whether, *in this particular case*, Christ

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\* Quoted from the Talmud by Lightfoot and Schoetgen, and here taken from "The Evangelists and the Mishna," by the Rev. Thomas Robinon.

is speaking at all of the punishments of the future world; whether, in fact, He is not using the term "Gehenna" simply with reference to the actual "Valley of Hinnom" at Jerusalem,—an application of it with which the Jews were thoroughly familiar. It is difficult to imagine that the punishments of time and of eternity would be mingled together, as on any other supposition they must be.

In the latter passage (Matt. v. 29, 30), the contrast between entering into "the kingdom of God," or "into life," as St. Mark puts it (ix. 45—47), and being "cast into hell," evidently seems to refer to the "lake of fire" or "second death." Still, the emblematic language of our Lord must not be pushed *beyond* its true meaning, which is certainly done, when the undying worm and the unquenchable fire are made to stand, as they commonly are, either for eternal remorse of conscience, or for unending torture, either in material or figurative flame. This is not only to put our own fancies in the place of revealed truth, *it is directly to contradict Scripture*; for the very words in question are

but a quotation from Ifaiah, who distinctly applies them, not to living beings, but to dead "carcafes" (Ifa. lxvi. 24). No fuppofed good that may arife from terrifying finners (even if they were commonly alarmed by fuch ftatements), can for a moment juftify interpretations of this character.

In *two* instances (Matt. x. 28, and Luke xii. 5), where the charge is given,—“Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the foul: but rather fear Him which is able to deftroy both foul and body in hell (*γεέννη*),” the reference is again to the final doom of the irreclaimably wicked. So, alfo, in Matthew (xxiii. 15—33), where our Lord, denouncing the hypocrify of the fcribes and Pharifees, exclaims, “Ye ferpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye efcape the damnation of hell (*γεέννης*)?” it feems quite plain that it is eternal and not temporal punifhment that is referred to.

In the laft instance (Jas. iii. 6), “hell” is apparently put for Satan and the powers of evil:—“The tongue fetteth on fire the courfe of nature, and is fet on fire of hell.”

Having now examined all the passages of Scripture which speak of future punishment under the term "Hell," or "Gehenna," we proceed to notice those which unquestionably *mean* the same thing,—such as, "the lake of fire," and "the second death."

The term "lake of fire" (*λίμνη τοῦ πυρός*) is found only in the Apocalypse, in which it occurs FIVE times; *first*, in chap. xix. 20, where "the beast and the false prophet"—whatever these terms may mean—are said to be "cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone;"\* *secondly*, in chap. xx. 10, where "the devil," that deceived the nations,—in distinction, let it be observed, from *the people* he had deceived, who are "devoured" by fire "out of heaven" (ver. 9),—is represented as being "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever;"

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\* Like every other *symbol* of the Apocalypse, this is clearly taken from the Old Testament. The entire text is as the voice of Daniel,—“I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame” (Dan. vii. 11).

the *third* instance is in chap. xx. 14, where "death and hell" (*ᾠδης*) are "cast into the lake of fire;" the *fourth* is in the fifteenth verse, where it is said, "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire;" and the last is in chap. xxi. 8, in which we are told that "the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and forcerers, and idolaters, and all liars (*i. e.*, deceivers,—of course, only if unrepenting,—for 'such were some of you,' 1 Cor. vi. 11), shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone."

But though the particular term, "lake of fire," is found only in the Apocalypse, a somewhat similar phrase, "furnace of fire" (*κάμνος*), occurs in one of the Gospels (Matt. xiii. 42, 50), where our Lord tells His disciples, that "in the end of this world, the Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things (or, as it reads in the margin, all *scandals*) that offend"—*i. e.*, hinder the progress of truth,— "and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace

of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

The term "second death" is also confined to the Apocalypse, where it occurs FOUR times,—*twice* (viz., Rev. xx. 14, and xxi. 8) in connection with "the lake of fire," which is distinctly said to be "*the* second death;" *once* (chap. ii. 11) in the epistle to the Church at Smyrna, where it is declared that he "who overcometh (*i. e.*, endures to the end, in the midst of fiery persecutions) shall not be hurt of the second death;" and *once* in chap. xx. 6, where "the second death" is said to have "no power" over the partakers of "the first resurrection."

St. Peter, however, probably means the same thing, when he speaks of apostates, to whom "the mist of darkness" is reserved for ever (2 Ep. ii. 17); as also St. Jude, when he writes of those to whom is *reserved* "the blackness of darkness for ever" (ver. 13).

As we are anxious to pursue our inquiry without the slightest regard to controversies, past or present, we shall not—through fear of being classed with Universalists—shrink from admitting, that among the very

numerous passages in the New Testament which, openly or by implication, speak of sinners as "lost," "destroyed," or "perishing," *many* do not apply to "hell," or the "second death."

The word commonly employed to express "perishing," or destruction (*ἀπώλεια*, *ἀπόλλυμι*,—*perdition*), is a word which is used in a variety of significations. Examples in abundance present themselves. In the Gospel of St. Matthew (ii. 13), *ἀπόλλυμι* is used to express the fact that Herod sought "the young child, to *destroy* Him." Here it obviously means temporal death. It has precisely the same meaning when the alarmed disciples cry, "Lord, save us: we *perish*" (viii. 25). Further on (x. 6), in the instructions given to the seventy, to "go rather to the *lost* (*ἀπόλλυμι*) sheep of the house of Israel," *lost* evidently stands for persons, *wandering and neglected*, whom they were to gather in. In a verse which shortly follows (x. 28), it is plainly put for eternal death,—“Fear Him who is able to *destroy* (*ἀπόλλυμι*) both soul and body in hell.” In the parables of the *lost* sheep, the *lost* son,

and the *loft* piece of money (Luke xv. 6—9), it is employed to describe that which was obviously loft *only for a time*.

When the Apostle writes to the Corinthians (1 Ep. i. 18) that “the preaching of the cross is, to them that *perish* (*lit.*, that are perishing) foolishness,” he does not speak of persons who are actually *doomed*, but of those who remain under the dominant influence of ignorance, self-conceit, and rebellion. Again, when he says (2 Cor. iv. 3), “If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are *loft*” (*lit.*, *being loft*), it is obvious that he does not mean persons eternally condemned, nor yet reprobates by a Divine decree, but, as the next verse intimates, men who were *then* “blinded” by Satan.

The text, “Broad is the way that leadeth to *destruction*” (*ἀπώλεια*—Matt. vii. 13), is commonly, but erroneously, supposed to be an *authoritative declaration* on the part of Christ that the mass of mankind are ever rushing on to “eternal death.” Such an interpretation, however, cannot be justified, —*first*, because our Lord himself refuses to sanction this doctrine (Luke xiii. 23—30),

not, indeed, by directly asserting the contrary, but by calling on the disciples to strive after something higher and better than mere salvation in the sense of deliverance from hell; *secondly*, because this view of the text practically gives the victory to Satan, and directly contradicts the most express declarations of the word of God (Rom. v. 15—19; xi. 26; Heb. ii. 14); and *thirdly*, because the word translated *destruction* (ἀπόλεια) occurs further on (Matt. xxvi. 8) in the sense of *misuse*,—"To what purpose is this *waste*?"

That (ἀπόλεια) is also used to express eternal perdition is unquestionable (2 Thess. ii. 3; 2 Pet. iii. 7; Rev. xvii. 8); but there is nothing in the word itself which could for a moment justify its *invariable* application in that sense. The lesson really inculcated in the passage under consideration (Matt. vii. 13) appears to be, that the mass, *even of professed disciples*—for it is to these, and *not* to the multitude, that the Lord is speaking—run to waste; that *few* enter in at "the strait gate," or attain to that blessedness which belongs to "the Church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven."

But we are anticipating. Our immediate object is to ascertain, with something like precision, what is really the testimony of Scripture regarding "hell," the "lake of fire," and the "second death." To this we must, for the present at least, confine ourselves.

Putting, then, all the passages we have quoted together, and viewing them in combination, we seem to learn—first, that the terms in question are exclusively used to denote *the highest form* of God's vengeance against iniquity; and secondly, that "hell," properly so termed, *cannot admit of degrees*, either of pain or of continuance,—nothing is revealed in connection with it that corresponds either to "few stripes," or to "many stripes." Yet that "future punishment" is a thing of degree, Scripture clearly teaches (Matt. x. 15; xi. 22—24; xxiii. 14; Luke xii. 47, 48).

Again, while *certain classes* of men are said distinctly to be in danger of hell (Matt. xxiii. 33), mankind generally are never spoken of as exposed to it,—"salvation" is not said to be from "hell," but from

“wrath.” Further, the *only beings* represented as *tormented* in the “lake of fire” (with one exception, which we shall afterwards notice), are “the devil,” “the beast,” and “the false prophet,” — the two latter probably incarnated evil spirits. Finally, “hell,” though always regarded as a locality, is never, either directly or by implication, said to be the *eternal dwelling-place* of impenitent men, or even put as a general term expressive of the retribution that will eventually fall on every wicked person; while the doom of those who are at length cast into it is only made known at the conclusion of the mediatorial economy. These particulars we *observe* in the Record, and they are certainly worthy of being carefully noted.

We now approach texts which, though they say nothing about “hell,” yet directly speak of future “punishment.” The first and most striking of these is found in Matthew (xxv. 31—46), “These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.” To this passage we must direct very careful attention.

On reading the account of the judgment as a whole, the first question that suggests itself is, "*To what class* of persons does it relate,—to believers, or to unbelievers? Is the redeemed "Church of the firstborn" supposed to be standing there *doubtful* of its doom, and *unconscious* that it had ever lived for Christ? or are the persons in question those who on earth remained till death in ignorance of the Gospel?

The term "all nations" (*παντὰ τὰ ἔθνη*) might alone decide the point, since it is always used to describe heathen *in distinction from* Jews. But if this be not enough, let it be further noticed,—first, that as the two parables immediately preceding relate to the sifting of *professed believers*, all probability favours the supposition that this belongs to a different class; and secondly, that Scripture distinctly assures us believers shall not come into judgment (comp. John v. 24; Luke xxii. 30; 1 Cor. vi. 2).

The mere fact of those on the right being called "sheep," and those on the left "goats," proves nothing, since the goat was not an unclean animal. The paschal lamb might be

“a lamb *of the goats*,” and the “scapegoat” is generally allowed to be a type of Christ (Exod. xii. 5 ; Lev. xvi. 21, 22). That the parties before the bar, both good and bad, are “nations” not included in the Church, is evident, not only from the circumstance that the “Bride of Christ” will *come with* her Lord in the clouds of heaven (1 Thes. iv. 17), but still more from the absurdity of supposing that the elect children of God, who have done everything with reference to Christ and for His sake, can ever reply, “When saw we Thee an hungred, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink?” Such a supposition removes all reality from the scene. It is easy to say the expressions in question merely indicate humility; but this is not the character of *Christian* humility, which is always, when healthy, conscious of its *true* state. The language of the believer is that of St. Paul,—“I have laboured; yet not I, but the grace of God that is in me.”

A second inquiry would naturally be,—“Are the masses of nations before the Judge to be regarded as then and there divided into

two vast bodies, and so disposed of? We think not. For those on the "right hand," as well as those on "the left," are to be "separated," or severed (*ἀφορίζω*), "one from another" (comp. Matt. xxv. 32 with xiii. 49). The word used to denote this severance is the same as that by which St. Paul expresses his own separation from his mother's womb for the service of Christ (Gal. i. 15), and the same as that employed in the Acts (xiii. 2),—"*Separate* me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." The "severed" or "separated" persons, therefore, whatever their number, are, probably, in each case comparatively few, since they are men who have either actively *aided* the followers of the Redeemer in times of persecution, or *aggravated* their sorrow by hard-hearted coldness and neglect, which could, of course, only be done by the few.

We are thus taught that persons, alike ignorant of Christ and of His Gospel, are *not*, as we are often told, *all alike* in the eye of God. There are those among them, as among Christians, who have improved the light they had, and there are those who have

deliberately excluded themselves from it. Hence this judgment is purely *of works*; and not of works generally, but of one particular work,—that of helping or hindering the people of God when under perfecution, hungry, thirsty, naked, or in prison. The righteous—doubtless some of the “other sheep not of this fold” (John x. 16)—“Gentiles, which have done by nature the things contained in the law” (Rom. ii. 14), are commended and rewarded, although they knew not that in aiding “the just” they were aiding the Judge of all; while the “curfed”—those who, from hatred to the light, have united with the persecutors—are banished from the Divine presence, although they, too, knew not that in gratifying their evil passions, and opposing goodness, they were opposing One who regardeth His children as “the apple of His eye” (Zech. ii. 8); all which is in exact accordance with the word of our Lord,—“Whofoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only *in the name of a disciple* (*i. e.*, knowing that the man to whom he gave it *was* a disciple, and daring the risk involved in rendering such

affittance), verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matt. x. 42).

The "bleffed" now "enter" into a "kingdom" (assume government or rule of others, —not merely become subjects), one *prepared for them* from the foundation of the world, where, without doubt, they grow in knowledge, advance in all goodness, learn more perfectly the lessons of Him whom, even in darkness, they have "groped after," and experience the force of the promise, "To him that hath shall be given" (Matt. xiii. 12).

The "curfed" depart into "everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," from which it would seem that *for them* no further probation is permitted. The sentence is clearly an irreversible one. It is distinctly said to be "eternal punishment" (*κόλασιν*, something *inflicted*), as the antithesis of "eternal life;" *the* punishment, therefore, whatever it be, which is elsewhere called the "lake of fire" and the "second death."

Of the great mass from whom these persons are selected, nothing is here revealed. The parable relates only to *the sifting* of the hea-

then, just as the two preceding ones related to the sifting of professed believers.

We know the objection that will be taken to this interpretation, though rising so naturally out of the text. Certain theologians will say, "Here, then, are men (the sheep on the right hand) saved without faith, and saved, too, for their good works, while the Apostle says, 'Whatsoever is not of faith is sin' (Rom. xiv. 23), and that 'without faith it is impossible to please God'" (Heb. xi. 6).

Our reply is, first, that nothing is either said or implied in our Lord's parable (interpret it as we may) about justification by faith; secondly, that the Scripture does not contradict itself, nor does St. Paul teach conflicting doctrines; yet he says that "when Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law," they are dealt with *exceptionally*—"they are a law unto themselves;" thirdly, that since Abraham's faith "was accounted to him for righteousness," it is quite possible that these men's righteousness may be accounted unto them for a faith,—not exercised on earth, because they never

knew the proper object of belief, but felt and expressed when that object is revealed.

But it will be said, 'Granting this exposition to be a correct one, we are still left altogether in the dark as to the future condition of mankind *as a whole*,—whether heathen or nominally Christian.'

We admit it; nor do we think that it was the intention of our Lord *here* to reveal what on all other occasions He kept back. Yet we are not wholly left without guidance on this subject. That such persons are *sinners* is, with the word of God before us, unquestionable; that, whether with or without a written law,—whether nominally Christian or actually heathen,—they are *justly* exposed to "wrath," cannot be doubted; that they are at present unfit for the fellowship of holy beings, is certain. Yet they are among those for whom Christ died; they are the very "captives" to sin and Satan that He came to deliver. Nor can we believe that His "finished work" is *to them* of none effect. It can only be so regarded on the supposition, —utterly unsupported by Scripture,—that the second Adam came, *not* to repair the ruin

involved in the disobedience of the first, but only to render salvation possible to those,—alas! the very few,—who in various ages should on earth be renewed by the Holy Ghost.

This question,—one which certainly ought not to be evaded,—brings us to the consideration of future punishment generally, so far as it can be *distinguished* from the highest expression of the Divine indignation, in the final doom of the “second death.”

We have already referred to the parable of Dives and Lazarus as indicating some important differences between “Hades” and “Gehenna,” and we revert to it again, because, coming as it does from our Lord’s own lips, it is peculiarly weighty, and because it is, perhaps, the only portion of Scripture in which, so to speak, the veil which hangs over the immediate condition of the dead is lifted, and the *retributive* character of the invisible world made known.

The suffering of Dives, as we have already observed, judging from what he says, is mental,—it seems to arise from restlessness and the fever of the mind, the effect of an

awakened conscience; he *sorrows*. This is evident from the fact that the word translated “torment,” means something very different from *torture*, to express which another and distinct word is employed. This is done in the case of those who are described, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as having been “tortured, not accepting deliverance” (Heb. xi. 35). Here the word employed is *τυμπανίζομαι*, a word derived from *τύμπανον*, an instrument of torture.

The testimony of Scripture, so far as it can be gathered, relative to the invisible world, seems to us distinctly to point to the conclusion that the punishments of the wicked *commence* in Hades immediately after death; that they *spring* out of past character and conduct; that they are exactly *proportioned* to guilt—“few stripes,” or “many stripes,” as God sees necessary; and that they are *not incompatible* with moral improvement. *Much*, on such a subject, we may not be permitted to discern, for Scripture is not given us to satisfy “an inbred and restless curiosity.” Yet the little we *do* know is too instructive to be neglected, since we are sadly prone to *mis-*

*represent* our heavenly Father, either on the side of justice or of mercy.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus will be of great value to us if it keeps us from either of these errors. Manifold are its lessons. It teaches us how little it avails to be *nominally* Christian; for the punished one is a son of Abraham. It teaches us that the selfish and the worldly (for the rich man is not represented as vicious or profligate), whatever may be in reserve for them at the coming of the Lord, are in the unseen world punished, like Dives, or disciplined, as God knows how, by *solitary thought*, each reaping precisely as he has sown. It teaches us that the "righteous" alone, washed in the blood of the Lamb, and sanctified by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, wait, like Lazarus, in the blessed repose of paradise for the perfection of their bliss; and probably receive *there*, from Christ himself, lessons of love, and revelations of glory, which could not be imparted on earth without endangering a frame unfitted for the reception of more than earthly splendours. This much, at least, may fairly be predicated from Scripture regarding

a state which, though unseen by mortal eye, is yet intensely real, and into which the children of men are every moment entering.

But not *there* alone will the past and the present influence the future. Under that further probation, after the resurrection, which we believe, and which we are attempting to show from Scripture, awaits the great majority of the race, will the result of time well spent, or misspent, still more decidedly bring forth its appropriate fruit, and every man gather precisely as he has sown. Some, with weeping and gnashing of teeth (the Jewish mode of expressing *grief and vexation*), will in that world, we doubt not, mourn, with a bitterness proportioned to what they will *then* feel to be the loss sustained by their self-wrought exclusion from the Church of the firstborn; and some who, on earth, lived and died fancying themselves *within* the guest-chamber, will then, to their utter astonishment, find themselves *without*,—plunged into that “outer (or rather, *outside*) darkness, which so strikingly contrasts with the brilliancy of the marriage banquet. They were *disciples*, but they neglected the charge,

“Enter ye in at the strait gate,” and they now find it is too late, for “the door is shut” (Luke xiii. 24). In vain do they cry, “Lord, Lord, open unto us. We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets.” The only reply is, “I know you not whence ye are; depart from me all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when they shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and they themselves thrust out” (ver. 26—28).

Then will some, like “Chorazin and Bethsaida” (cities of privilege), find “Tyre and Sidon” (heathen and untaught) in a condition far better than their own; and others (the self-satisfied), like “Capernaum,” will discover, to their amazement, that Sodom, with all its abominations, is nearer to God than they. Now will one find himself a “vessel to honour,” and another to “dishonour;” to whom “much has been given,” of him will “much be required;” he who has improved his “one talent” will find himself entrusted with “five” or with “ten” talents; and there are “last” which shall be “first,” and “first”

which shall be "last." He who has stored his riches in the heavens now enjoys his wealth. "The meek" are inheriting the earth. Every man receives "according to his deeds," and each goes "to his own place."

We have now completed our talk, and in conclusion desire only to add a few words as to *the method* we have pursued, and *the results* at which we have arrived.

In relation to the first (the method pursued), let it be observed, we have strictly confined ourselves to Scripture testimony. We have not discussed the supposed *reasonableness* of any particular view. We have not attempted to weaken the force of the words "eternal" or "everlasting."\* We have not asked,

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\* We think a great deal of time and learning have been wasted on discussions about the word *αιῶνιον*. Every one admits that it is used in Scripture in *two* senses; sometimes to indicate limitation (*αιῶν* is constantly used to express this *age* or world, Matt. xii. 32; xiii. 22), and sometimes to express a state or period beyond that of time. Is it not then safe and reasonable to understand the word, not in the vulgar sense of mere endless duration,—for this can make nothing "eternal" which has had a beginning,—but as referring to the

what is most in accordance with *our sense* of right? We have not imagined it possible for man to be more merciful than his Maker; for well do we know, that if we have either piety or benevolence, *He gave it us*, and the fountain is surely higher than the stream. We have simply inquired as to what is *scriptural*. We acknowledge no other authority. Only let us be satisfied that any given doctrine is revealed *there*, and we bow; for we *believe* in the Bible as a Divine revelation, and have no sympathy whatever with those who would judge such a message from God by human consciousness, or measure it by any supposed spiritual intuitions of their own.

The *result* at which we have arrived is, that future punishment, properly so termed, commences in Hades; that it is strictly retributive; that its general character arises from the natural working out of the great

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grief or rapture *of the world to come* in opposition to that which now is; the one being temporary, measured by time, the other eternal, having no such limitation? Bengel puts it thus:—"That which touches upon and goes beyond the limits of earthly time."

laws under which man is placed, and that its *degrees* are as manifold as the degrees of human guilt.

So far we do not anticipate any material difference of opinion. For the rest we can appeal only to "the Book." We are satisfied that it teaches, in the plainest possible terms, that the *final* lot of the irreclaimably wicked is "hell," the "lake of fire," the "second death;"—a judgment *directly inflicted* by the hand of God, and not in any sense the natural result of violated law. In this characteristic it strikingly differs from the punishments of the invisible world, which, as we have seen, are, to a great extent, like remorse, intended to lead to repentance; or, like retributive disease, but the inevitable consequence of folly or neglect. Further, it has no gradations, for how anything like *degree* can be associated with an *everlasting* punishment, *first* represented as being cast into a "lake of fire," and *then* explained to be a "second death," it passes our comprehension to imagine.

Such terms, *naturally* understood, would certainly seem to imply the absolute extinction of being, by a Divine and judicial execution.

We say *naturally*, because *in no other sense* would any unprejudiced reader ever think of understanding either such a passage as Matt. x. 28, where the killing of the body and the killing of the soul are spoken of under the same term (*ἀποκτείνειν*, to kill, is used in both cases), or Rev. xx. 14, where, as we have just said, the “lake of fire” is distinctly stated to be the “second death.” To allege, as the late Moses Stuart does, that such words as destroyed, perishing, and eternal *death*, are “the most eligible that could have been chosen” to express the idea of eternal *life* in misery, “seems,” as has been well said, “to be trifling with that common sense which God in His mercy has given to the unlearned, to preserve them from the infatuations occasionally incident to their superiors in knowledge.”

To suggest such a *possibility*, however, as the ultimate annihilation of the wicked, is, at present, an offence; it takes away, it is said, all *terror* from the minds of the guilty, and, in so doing, at once emboldens them in sin, and makes them reckless of consequences; for *who*, it is argued, will care for the “lake

of fire," if separated from eternal sensitive torment in its flame? To this some add the strange notion, that, in proportion as we lessen the fearfulness of future punishment, we diminish the value of the death of Christ.\*

We are not, however, disposed to *argue* this question. The duty of the Christian, with the Word of God in his hand, is plain. It is simply to ask,—“WHAT IS TRUTH?” not, what is it most expedient to teach, *as if it were* truth? But we may be permitted to say to the defenders of eternal sin and suffering, that the arguments they use are

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\* Some assert that the doctrine of the Atonement *implies* that of the eternal torment of all the unregenerate; and others (as Bp. Pearson) say, “He who believeth not the eternity of torments to come, can never sufficiently value that ransom by which we are redeemed from them.” How strange that it should be thought more glorious that the redemption of Christ should be a blessing to the few than to the many; that God’s “unspeakable gift” should alone make credible *never ending sin and misery*; that the Gospel of holiness and love obliges us to believe in the hopeless ruin of the race! (*Quoted from “The Duration of Evil,” an Essay.*)

*the very same arguments* that were employed for ages in defence of inflicting the most horrible tortures on criminals. What, it was said, is death (since all must die) to a murderer or a traitor?

For ourselves we frankly avow,—let the consequences be what they may,—that, having searched diligently, and we hope with a sincere desire to ascertain the whole truth, we cannot find a syllable in Scripture to sanction the popular notion (really derived from the fathers and founders of the Romish apostacy), that God ever allows *torture*, or ever practises it Himself. The punishment of death—capital punishment—He commanded of old: “Thine eye shall not pity” (Deut. xix. 13); that eminent criminals were, by Divine authority, burnt, seems also certain (Lev. xx. 14),—but whether alive, or after being otherwise put to death (as was the case with those who were cast into Tophet), is not so clear; that, under the Christian dispensation, the judicial taking away of life is sanctioned, cannot fairly be disputed,—for the magistrate “beareth not *the sword* in vain” (Rom. xiii. 4); but *nowhere*, and

under no conditions, does God sanction torture.\*

*The supposition that He did,* led to its infliction in Christian countries by man on man,—formed the chief justification of the horrors of the Inquisition, and laid the foundations, deep and firm, of purgatory and priestcraft. If this barbarity has so entirely ceased from among ourselves, that even the most cruel assassins are exempt from its agonies, it is only because the advancing steps of Christianity have driven it away. If the doctrine of the future—nay, the eternal—infliction of it by God yet lingers in the Church, it is because the dark

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\* We do not say that the Jews never *practised* it, but that God never sanctioned it. David is, indeed, in one instance, represented as putting his prisoners “under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron,” and making them “pass through the brick-kiln,” but most judicious commentators consider that this *means*, he made them, as slaves, cut down trees, drag the harrow over the fields, or make bricks. To *pass under* an axe or a saw, might indicate symbolically that life was forfeited, but scarcely describes any form of torture.

shadow of the apostacy still falls over us, and because base notions of what it seems *expedient* to teach, override that love of truth which makes a man fearless of all consequences in its service.

It is impossible to suppose that St. Paul, who so strikingly calls God to witness that he kept nothing back from his converts,—that he had “not shunned to declare” unto them “the whole counsel of God” (Acts xx. 26, 27), *could* have used the term “death” as he does in so many passages,—and always, be it observed, as the antithesis of “life,”—had he intended to teach that this “death” *meant* eternal life in torture. The same may be observed of Peter, John, and James, the three disciples who had been most intimate with the Lord; of all of them we say, it is impossible to suppose that they could have kept back such a doctrine,—so unlike everything else in Scripture,—when a few plain sentences would have sufficed both to explain and to enforce it.

One *apparent exception* to all that we have stated certainly exists; and as we have not the least wish to evade a single line of Scrip-

ture, we call attention to it. It is this,—“The third angel,” flying in the midst of heaven (Rev. xiv. 9—11), proclaims,—“If *any man* worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be *tormented* with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and *the smoke* of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.”

On this passage we would simply observe, *first*, that it is a special judgment, threatened only in connection with *a particular form* of idolatrous worship in the last days, carried on in “Babylon the great;” *secondly*, that the torment (*βασανισμὸς*) is not said to be inflicted *in hell*, or after the last judgment, but, as it would appear from the context, *on earth*, and at the second coming of Christ. The reference to “day and night” also indicates that *earth*

is the place of punishment; *thirdly*, that the same word (*βασιλιζω*) is applied to *the city itself*, whose overthrow and utter destruction is called *her torment* (Rev. xviii. 7—10), and “her smoke” is said, in like manner, to rise up “for ever and ever” (xix. 3), just as in Jude, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is called “suffering the vengeance of *eternal fire*” (ver. 7), although we are told by Ezekiel (xvi. 53—63), that Sodom shall “return” to her “former estate,” and be given “to Israel for a daughter, *though not by covenant.*” St. Paul speaks of these very sinners,—those of the last days,—as men who shall be punished (*lit.*, suffer as punishment) *everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

It is obviously neither wise nor safe to found any doctrine on a passage confessedly so obscure, and certainly so *symbolic*, as the one in question,—especially as it does not specifically point to hell at all, and is acknowledged by every intelligent reader to refer to a state of things still hidden in the future. Yet beyond this solitary and most inconclusive text, there is not anything in Scripture which even

seems to justify the assertion that impenitent men are everlastingly tormented.

We repeat,—Hell, as revealed in Scripture, has *no tortures*, and, therefore, *no degrees* in punishment; it is utter, hopeless, irremediable ruin; and we would solemnly warn every Christian man to beware what he is about when he asserts the contrary. Heathenism is an abomination unto God, mainly because *it represents Him to be what He is not*,—vindictive and cruel. Christians misrepresent Him no less when they forget either His Fatherhood on the one hand, or His hatred of sin on the other; when they represent Him either as *all mercy*, or as so arranging the final destinies of the world, that evil triumphs in the ruin of *the race*.

We are quite aware that many will only glance at what we have written, and then “pass by on the other side,” with the exclamation,—*Who now* holds to physical torture, or to material fire? Who now would endorse the statements on this subject of President Edwards and Jeremy Taylor, of the Fathers, and the Reformers, and the Puritans? Who now believes that *the*

*great majority* of men will be miserable for ever?

We answer such questions calmly and considerately when we say, "*the bulk of English Christians do.*" The ignorant,—all of them; children,—without exception; well-informed adults,—generally. We are quite aware that the topic of future punishments is, in the present day, rarely introduced into the pulpit, and that when it *is* mentioned, it is always in the most vague and general terms; for neither the rewards nor the retributions of the world to come, occupy any prominent place in modern teaching. The *former* are frequently considered to be somewhat inconsistent with a full and free salvation; the *latter* are regarded as too dreadful for popular handling. The *loss* occasioned by this unbelieving avoidance of important truth is far greater than is generally supposed; but things can never be otherwise so long as men hold to the "glorification" of *all* the saved, and the eternal misery of *all* the lost.

# Part IV.

## SCRIPTURE TESTIMONY.

CHAP. I. THE CHURCH,—ITS NATURE AND CALLING.

II. ELECTION,—TO SPECIAL SERVICE.

III. THIS DISPENSATION,—ITS PECULIARITIES.

IV. THE SECOND ADVENT, AND THE MILLENNIUM.



## CHAPTER I.

### *On the Church,—its Nature and Calling.*

THE word "Church" (ecclesia, ἐκκλησία) is, in the New Testament, used in different senses. *Three* times it stands for *a mere assembly* of persons. It does so in the Acts (xix. 32—40), where the writer, in recording an account of the riot at Ephesus, tells us "the assembly" (*lit.*, the Church—ἐκκλησία) was "confused." *Once* it is put for *the body of Israelites* in the wilderness, viz., in the Acts (vii. 38), where Moses is spoken of as he that was in *the Church* in the wilderness. In this sense it corresponds to the word "assembly" in Deuteronomy (xviii. 16); to "company" in Samuel (1 Sam. xix. 20; and to "congregation" in the Psalms (xxii. 22). *Fifteen* times it indicates *a particular society* of Christians, meeting, either in one place, or in different parts of a

town or city, *e.g.*, Acts xi. 22 ; 1 Cor. xvi. 19 ; Rev. ii. 8. It *never* stands for a building, although in a figurative sense it may be so used without impropriety. *Ordinarily* (about *eighty-five* times) it denotes the entire body of professing Christians dwelling in any given city or district,—in Judea, or among the Gentiles, *e.g.*, Acts xi. 26 ; Rom. xvi. 4 ; 1 Cor. vii. 17.\*

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\* “The *English* word ‘Church’ is from the Greek *Κυριακόν*, used to express *the Lord’s* Supper (1 Cor. xi. 20), and *the Lord’s* Day (Rev. i. 10), whence come also the Saxon *Kyrck* or *Kyrch*, and the Scotch ‘*Kirk*,’—all meaning the Lord’s house, or, *literally*, the Lord’s,—*i. e.*, relating to the Lord.”—*Rev. G. Venables.*

“*Kirche* (*Ger.*), *Circe* (*Sax.*), *Kirke* (*Dan.*), *Kyrka* (*Swed.*), *Cerken* (*Pol.*) The Gothic nations, receiving the Gospel from the Greeks, took most of their ecclesiastical words from the Greek tongue.”—*Dr. Angus.*

The late Mr. Robertson, of Brighton (substantially in accordance with Dr. Arnold), defines the Church to be “that body of men in whom the Spirit of God dwells as the source of their excellence, and who exist on earth for the purpose of exhibiting the Divine life, and the hidden order of humanity ; to destroy evil, and to assimilate humanity to God ; to penetrate and purify the world, and, as fast, preserve it from corruption. It has an existence continuous throughout the ages ; continuous,

In all these cases the Church is regarded as an *outward and visible* thing, and therefore liable to include hypocrites and false brethren as well as true believers. Some of these communities are, indeed, spoken of as “fancified,” or set apart for God,—“called to be saints” (1 Cor. i. 2), and such like, but only for the purpose of indicating God’s will concerning them. They are addressed rather as what they *ought* to be in consistency with their profession, than as what they in fact *are*. This is plain from the circumstance that at the time these terms were applied to the Corinthians, their fellowship was torn by contentions, and disgraced by impurity (1 Cor. v. 1; xi. 18).

So notorious did this admixture of good and evil in the Churches soon become, that in the Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians,

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however, not on the principles of hereditary succession, or of human election, as in an ordinary corporation, but on the principle of spiritual similarity of character” (John i. 13). (*Lect. on the Ep. to the Corinth.*)

This is surely a much truer and more scriptural definition than the ecclesiastical one found in Article XIX. of the Church of England.

and Colossians, the Apostle addresses himself, *not* to the whole Church, but, in the one case, only to the "*saints, and the faithful in Christ Jesus*" (Ephes. i. 1); in another, to "*all the saints in Christ Jesus*" (Phil. i. 1); and in a third, to the "*saints and faithful brethren in Christ*" (Col. i. 2). It is worth notice that nowhere in Scripture are these terms applied to any persons who had separated themselves from other *professors* of the faith, for the maintenance either of sound doctrine, of pure discipline, or of greater spirituality.

Ten times, indeed, the word "Church" is used to indicate true and spiritual members, *as distinguished from* the hypocritical or self-deceived, the formal or the dead, *e. g.*, Ephes. i. 23, and Col. i. 18—24, in both of which places the Church is spoken of as "*the body of Christ*;" 1 Tim. iii. 15, where (if the Church be intended) it is styled "*the pillar and ground of the truth*;" and Heb. xii. 23, where it becomes "*the Church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven*:" but in all these cases it is regarded as *an invisible society*,—its members "*unknown though well known*," manifest by their spirit, but not to be recog-

nized by any outward sign or peculiar organization.

The "Ecclesia" first appears in the New Testament in the sixteenth chapter of St. Matthew (ver. 18), where our Lord says to Simon,—“Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build *my Church*,”—the earliest notification, so far as we know, of the intention of the Lord Jesus to found *a community* or fellowship of believers. The *basis* on which it was to rest is also here stated, viz., the simplest possible expression of faith in the Redeemer,—“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

For the *establishment* of this Church, Peter first (ver. 19), and afterwards the other apostles (Matt. xviii. 18), are endowed with the power of “binding or loosing,” in the sense of *enjoining or forbidding*,—the sense in which these words were then in daily use, as applied to the Jewish rabbis.

Specially qualified for the work by Divine inspiration, these men were to *decide*, whenever questions arose as to what was or was not forbidden or allowed under the Christian dispensation. They do so at Jerusalem (Acts

xv.) when they determine that circumcision is not binding on converts from heathenism; they do so when they declare it needful to abstain from meats offered to idols.

The pretence that this power was given, not to the apostles only, but *to the Church, regarded as an organized body*,—that it was *transmitted* to the successors of those who first received it,—and that it is still transmissible, is a mere fiction, having no foundation whatever in the Word of God.

This is plain from the circumstance that no such power can, from its very nature, be exercised by other than inspired men. Apart from the teaching of Scripture, which is open to all of us, no uninspired person, or body of persons, can ever authoritatively say what is forbidden or what is permitted to the Christian. No Church, therefore, now holds “the keys of the kingdom,” or can either bind or loose; since no Church rulers, without blasphemy, could say with Paul, “It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us” (Acts xv. 28).

That such is the true state of the case is further evident from the connection which

subsists between the power of binding and loosing and that of forgiving or retaining sin (John xx. 23), words obviously used *not* in relation to the pardoning of any man's transgressions generally,—for never is it permitted to mortals, even though inspired apostles, to ascend the throne of the Most High, and to anticipate the decisions of the judgment day,—but with a distinct reference to the infliction or removal of any disease or other calamity suffered on account of some special fault. Our Lord, on one occasion, distinctly uses the phrase, “Thy sins be forgiven thee,” as equivalent to “Take up thy bed and walk” (Matt. ix. 2), and again, “Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee” (John v. 8—14).

Peter exercised this power when he punished Ananias and Sapphira with death; Paul when he struck Elymas with blindness; and it is to this miraculous endowment he refers when he speaks of delivering one “to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Cor. v. 4, 5),—when he threatens his “rod” (1 Cor. iv. 21), and when he refers to the causes for which some are “sickly,” and others

“sleep.” In all these cases, inspired and therefore infallible guidance on the one hand, and the possession of miraculous power on the other, are clearly supposed.

The word “Church” occurs the second time in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew (ver. 17), where Christ says that if a man neglect to “hear the Church,” he is to be regarded as excommunicate,—as “an heathen man and a publican.” But what Church does He mean? Evidently *the only Church* which then existed, that of His own disciples, with the chosen apostles at their head,—men already invested with miraculous power “against unclean spirits,” and with ability “to heal all manner of disease” (Matt. x. 1). Of *them*, and of them only, can it ever be truly said that what they bound on earth was bound in heaven. *They alone* were assured by their Lord that they would be infallibly led by the inspiration of the Divine Spirit “*into all truth;*” and to them only was the promise made that if “two” of them “agreed on earth,” as touching “anything they should ask,” it should be “done” for them by their “Father which is in heaven.”

And in relation to *them*, the promise was limited. James and John *did* agree together to ask our Lord an important favour, and they put it in these words,—“Master, *we* would that Thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire;” but the only answer they received was, “Ye know not what ye ask” (Mark x. 35—45). Yet the request was a *spiritual* one; for although “the ten” were angry with their two brethren for putting it, the Lord was not. He does not rebuke the petitioners, but *the ten*, for their want of charity and humility in misjudging the two sons of Zebedee. Still, the request *was not granted*. What can be clearer, then, than the fact that the particular promise in question related *exclusively* to matters essential to the apostles in the accomplishment of their work as His inspired servants?

Properly speaking, the Church can be regarded only in one of two aspects,—visible or invisible; as *visible*, it comprehends all “who profess and call themselves Christians; as *invisible*, it consists only of those *who are really* what such terms as “saints,” “faithful,” “elect,”

“chosen,” “precious,” and such like, scripturally mean.

The question arises, in what relation does the Church, regarded in either of these aspects, stand to Christ?

We reply, The Church, regarded as *invisible*, and as consisting only of the faithful, is, so to speak, *identified* with its Head. Such persons are said to be ONE with the Redeemer, “partakers of the Divine nature,”—“born not of man, but of God,” and therefore, *as sure* of being, in the next world, kings and priests to God and to Christ, as they are of their existence in this. *Over* whom they are to rule, and *to* whom they are to minister, is not, indeed, explicitly stated; but of *the fact* that they will “reign,” there can be no doubt.

Of the *visible*, or merely professing Church, regarded as consisting of those who—with whatever admixture of superstition, inconsistency, or scepticism—do really regard Christ as the Saviour, and live in *hope* of being benefited by His mediatorial work, though they know not how, it is more difficult to speak. To affirm that, if unrenewed, all such are no better than idolaters, is simply absurd;

for they who say so would very properly be shocked beyond measure were these persons to fall into polytheism, and to worship Baal or Moloch.\*

To hold that to all such the Gospel is merely "a favour of death unto death" is equally extravagant; for this "greater condemnation" can only belong to those who consciously resist and reject offered mercy.

To imagine that in some form or other persons of this class will be so purified in their passage through the grave, that they will after all enter into the joys of the elect, is a fancy which can find as little justification in reason as in Scripture.

What, then, is to become of them?

We do not profess at this moment to be

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\* "The conversion of the whole people (of India) to the worst form that Christianity ever wore in the darkest ages would be a happy event. It is not necessary that a man should be a *Christian* to wish for the propagation of Christianity in India. It is sufficient that he should be a European, not much below the ordinary European level of good sense and humanity. In no part of the world is heathenism more cruel, more licentious, more fruitful of absurd rites and pernicious laws."—*Lord Macaulay*.

able to furnish the answer. We must content ourselves at present with endeavouring to ascertain whether or no any revelation of Scripture regarding the Church *forbids* the hope that those who are but inconsistent members of it here, shall, in the age or dispensation to come, find mercy, and—in dishonour though it be—advance in the knowledge of truth, and attain to better things than they loved and followed on earth.

We cannot find a single passage which is calculated to close this door of hope. Any contrary supposition must rest on the notion—altogether unsupported by Scripture—that there can be no union to Christ, short of the highest; that the Gospel has no work to accomplish on the earth beyond the *salvation* of the elect, and the *condemnation* of the rest; that the Redeemer can bestow no spiritual blessedness upon any creature whom He does not identify with Himself; that “the salvation of the Church”—little flock though it be, even to the last—is a term equivalent in breadth and compass to the “creating” of “all things new.”

If it be so, *what*, we may well ask, can be

meant by such *contrasts* in Scripture as the "strait gate," the "narrow way," and the "few" that enter, as compared with the various passages which speak of "the knowledge of the Lord" covering the earth as "the waters cover the sea,"—of *all* knowing Him, "from the least even unto the greatest"?

If it be so, *where* is the reality and truthfulness of the assurances so frequently given in Scripture, that Christ is "the Saviour of *the world*" (John iv. 42); that the object of His coming was "that *the world* through Him might be saved" (iii. 14—17); that His *lifting up* should "*draw all men*" unto Him (xii. 32); that "God our Saviour will have *all men* to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii. 4); that Jesus suffered, "that He, by the grace [favour] of God *should taste death for every man*" (Heb. ii. 9); that "He is the propitiation for our sins; and *not for ours only*, but also for *the sins of the whole world*" (1 John ii. 2)?

We know of but one way in which the force of these texts can be evaded, and that is by asserting, that if they mean anything beyond the possibility of all men being saved

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who repent and believe, they teach Universalism,—the final salvation of *every man*, do what he will and be what he may,—a view so obviously opposed both to the letter and spirit of Scripture, that only to state it is to pronounce its refutation. But is this mode of reasoning either honourable to God, or honest to man? We think it is neither. Surely it is far wiser to accept the facts as they stand, without any reasoning at all about them, and thankfully to admit that the same Saviour who reveals the lake of fire for the conscious rejector of mercy, reveals also both the *glory* of the elect, and the *redemption* of the race.

## CHAPTER II.

*On the Doctrine of Election.*

THE doctrine of Election, viewed scripturally, and apart altogether from inferences drawn by theologians, seems to us to be in perfect harmony with the opinions we have been advancing.

A few pages may perhaps not be unprofitably occupied in stating distinctly what we regard as the teaching of the Bible on this important subject.

Divine choice, or "election," as it is usually termed, although *implied* from the beginning in the Scriptures of the OLD TESTAMENT, is nowhere distinctly asserted until Moses, in the book of Deuteronomy, affirms it of the people of Israel,—“The Lord thy God hath *chosen* thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth” (Deut. vii. 6).

The *purpose* and *peculiarity* of the choice is involved in the declaration of *the fact*. It is election *to service*. The Israelites are to be “a special people unto the Lord, *above*” (but not to the exclusion of) others; they are—as is subsequently revealed—to be “witnesses” to the Divine unity (Isa. xlv. 8); publishers “to the sons of men of God’s mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom” (Psa. cxlv. 10—12); and they are to become eventually the channel through which mercy should be extended to all nations (Gen. xxvi. 3, 4; xlix. 10; Isa. xlix. 6). But there is nothing to show that it was ever the design of God to save *them only*, and to abandon the rest of the world to ruin. Even their final restoration—come when and how it may—is distinctly declared to have other and higher ends than their own benefit. “Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel” (Ezek. xxxvi. 32).

In the NEW TESTAMENT, election becomes a *doctrine*.

The elect *there*, whoever they may be, and

whether many or few, are spoken of as persons peculiarly *dear to God* (Mark xiii. 20; Luke xviii. 7); who shall be *preserved from apostacy* under every form of seduction or fiery trial to which the faints shall be subjected (Mark xiii. 22; Rev. xiii. 8); who are the *special objects of apostolic solicitude* (2 Tim. ii. 10; Titus i. 1); and who shall finally be *gathered by the angels* from the four winds of heaven into the garner of God (Mark xiii. 27); while election itself, as distinguished from "calling" (Matt. xx. 16), is said to be a *sovereign gift* (Rom. ix. 15, 16; 1 Cor. i. 27, 28),—*personal* (1 Thes. i. 4; 2 Tim. ii. 19),—*limited* (Matt. xx. 23; Rom. xi. 7),—*absolute* (Rom. ix. 11), and *eternal* (Ephes. i. 4); yet needing to be made "sure" (2 Pet. i. 10), since it is *to sanctification*, or setting apart for Divine service (2 Thes. ii. 13), *to holiness* of heart and life (Ephes. i. 4; Col. iii. 12), and *to office* (1 Pet. ii. 9). It is in relation to office, and *to office only*, that the term "Elect" is applied to Christ (Isa. xlii. 1; Matt. xii. 18; 1 Pet. ii. 6);—to angels (1 Tim. v. 21);—to David (2 Sam. vi. 21; Psa. lxxviii. 70); and to the apostles (John xv. 16—19).

We gather from the whole, that election is a privilege granted to some, but not to all ; that its object is special service ; that it in no way whatever interferes with the condition of others, excepting in so far as it improves that condition, by providing for them further instruction ; that, in short, its one distinguishing characteristic is mercy, *grafted on* mercy, — *favour* to the few, that by and through their agency its blessings might be extended to the many ; just as God includes “ *all* ” (whether Jew or Gentile) “ in unbelief, *that He might have mercy upon all*. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out ! ” (Rom. xi. 32, 33).

We have already said that an “ election of grace,” in some sense or other, is *implied* from the beginning of the Old Testament. Abel, Seth, Enoch, and Noah, were obviously, in the Divine eye, “ chosen and precious ” in a sense which did not, and could not, belong to the men by whom “ the earth was filled with violence.” On such, as the appointed heads

of their families or tribes,—“sons of God” (Gen. vi. 2), as distinguished from the unrighteous seed,—devolved the preservation of purity and love upon the earth, in connection with the worship and service of the one true God.

Nor is it easy to conceive of such an election—if so it may be called—as other than personal; for it was as *individuals* these men feared God above many; and it was in their individual character that they acted as guides and examples to those among whom their lot was cast. We see no impropriety in regarding these antediluvians as the subjects of *the first*, or primitive election.

The covenant made with Abraham indicates, if we may so say, the commencement of *the second* election; and it differs from the earlier one chiefly in its *national* character. For the covenant is made, not with Abraham only, but with his seed after him; *they*, rather than he, being the destined inheritors of Canaan, the depositories of Divine truth, and the future lights of the world. It is the election of a whole people, through all their generations, to be, in a peculiar sense, “the

people of God," a "holy nation," a community of "kings and priests" to all around.

That the Jewish nation was *set apart*, by this solemn act of choice, to be the rulers and teachers of the rest of the world, cannot be doubted. Their miraculous history—miraculous from its commencement to its close; their instinctive consciousness of a regal destiny—a consciousness still clinging to them as closely as ever; their marvellously unworldly institutions—such especially as the sabbatic year,—all testify to the fact that God *intended* them to enjoy pre-eminence, as the best men of that period of the world's history.

Nor should it be forgotten, while perusing that dark record of their folly and crime which it has pleased God to stereotype for use in all ages, that while no other people ever had their inner life so faithfully depicted, or their faults so unsparingly disclosed, the nation, *as a nation*, during by far the greater part of its existence, was *immeasurably* superior to any other people then existing; and that its representative men, its kings and warriors, its prophets and its priests, its heads of families and well-conducted households,

were really the *élite* of the world, and the "falt of the earth," as it then was. Who can read David's heart-stirring comparifon between the pure and cheerful worship of Jehovah, perpetually celebrating on Mount Zion, and the horrid and foul rites of the furrounding nations, without feeling how righteous was the scorn which made him exclaim, "Their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips"? Who can think of the *peaceful joy* that fo often breathes in the Pfalms, that was echoed in the temple, that lingered on the hill-fides of Judea, and that abode in "the tabernacles of the righteous," without feeling how vaft was the diftance that intervned between the moral condition of the Jew, and that even of the moft philofophic and accomplished Gentile?

Still they *failed* as a people to anfwer the end God had defigned them to accomplish; they neglected to make "their calling and election *sure*;" and finally, like Efau of old, they caft away "*their birthright*," never again to find it, even though it fhould be fought "carefully and with tears" (Heb. xii. 17).

Spiritually indeed, and in relation to individuals,—for then, as now, “all” were “not Israel,” who were “of Israel” (Rom. ix. 6),—the covenant was unchangeable, and so, one after another, the holy men of old “died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off,” and assured that in “the better country,” to which they were hastening, every word of God would find a glorious fulfilment. But, *as a whole*, and in relation to the purpose for which it was designed, we repeat, the Jewish election must be termed a failure,—so far at least as we may venture, without irreverence, thus to speak of a transaction in which God, to our short-sighted conceptions, appears to allow His intentions to be thwarted by human perversity.

The *third and final election*,—that under the Gospel, which, be it observed, proceeds on precisely the same principle as the earlier ones,—viz., the setting apart of the noblest and the best for special service,—dates from the advent of the Redeemer, and, like the Jewish, has a twofold character; *externally*, embracing all professors of Christianity, however feeble

their faith, or however inconsistent their conduct; but *spiritually*, and in a deeper sense, including only the highest and purest among the children of men.

St. Paul clearly indicates this when he addresses, as "elect," *all* the members of a Church which contained, at that very time, in its fellowship, some who denied the resurrection of the dead, and others who lived in flagrant sin (1 Cor. v.); St. Peter, when he tells us that "election" is a "calling" which has to be made "sure" (2 Pet. i. 10); and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, when he speaks of the possibility of a falling away of persons whom it is "impossible" to "renew again unto repentance" (Heb. vi. 6).

In no case, however, as some have thought, is the Divine choice represented as proceeding on the assumption that the persons elected *merit* distinction, or are chosen on account of *foreseen* goodness; *in all* the choice is regarded as made for reasons which are *reserved* in the Divine mind. Hence we very properly speak of it as *sovereign*,—not meaning by that term anything arbitrary or capricious, but simply using the phrase

as descriptive of an act commenced and completed for reasons which are concealed from us.

Yet, *not altogether so*; for while nothing is told us which explains, or is intended to explain, *why* this individual is taken, and that left, the general principle embodied is, as we are distinctly informed, the ultimate elevation of the many, through the agency of the few. On this point Scripture is explicit,—“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” says St. Paul, who hath “predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,”—“*that in the dispensation*” (“economy,” so Alford) “*of the fulness of times*, He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him” (Ephes. i. 3—10).

Election, then, regarded in its twofold character, is, like the Church itself, visible and invisible; *visible*, in so far as it externally embraces all who “profess and call themselves” Christians; *invisible*, so far as it relates to the truly regenerate,—to those

who, in the words of the Apostle John, are born, "not of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

It is in this *latter* sense alone that the elect Church is the "Bride of Christ;" for none but the "regenerate,"—and we clearly distinguish these from the merely "converted,"—can share in the throne and the priesthood of the risen Saviour. *Who* these are it is not for us to inquire. Hidden at present from mortal eye, they will one day be owned and made manifest before an assembled world, as the best, the noblest, the most Christ-like souls earth, with all its discipline, and heaven, with all its love, can fashion and bring forth.

Lawful enough it may be for us, in our ignorance, to *hope* that we ourselves, and those whom we see around us in the daily Christian intercourse of life,—with whose prayers we mingle our own, and with whom we share the fellowship alike of Christian effort and of Church communion,—*all* belong to that blessed company; for, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, it is not fitting that we should form any other judgment. But it is not really so. Only a part are chosen to

honour. For God's elect, did we know them, would be found even now *worthy of their name*, and very different from those who only perplex by their inconsistencies, or plague by their folly.

Loving, trustful, and unselfish; broad in their sympathies, candid in their judgments, honourable in their lives, and humble in the estimate they form of themselves, *these*, the true sons and daughters of the Highest, will one day issue from the obscurity in which it pleases God as yet to hide them, and "*they shall walk in white, for they are worthy.*" From deepest poverty and peasants' huts,—with here and there, it may be, one from the palaces of princes; from lonely prisons, and from martyrdoms severer than those of the axe or the stake; cultured, or rude of speech; great souls, of whom the world knows nothing, will then come forth,—“a multitude which no man can number,” and stand confessed God's own nobility, the aristocracy of the skies.

That the rest of the professing Church will be *saved*, we doubt not. For to be “*saved*” is one thing, but to be honoured of

God and of Christ is quite another thing. To be "forgiven" is *much*; but to hold rank among the sanctified is far more. The one is not unfrequently found in combination with the ambitions of this world; the other, *even now*, has no heartfelt affinities with anything that does not more or less bear on the world that is to come.

*Diversities of condition*, we are also distinctly taught (1 Cor. xv. 41), will be as characteristic of the world (or age) that is to come, as they are of this; yet then, as now, each will receive, not less, but far more than he deserves; and each, whatever he may have to lose or to suffer, as the just penalty of folly or of sin, will be obliged to admit that "the Judge of the whole earth" does "*right*."

Looking forward to that glorious period,—the day of Christ, and the resurrection of the body,—the elect, under the symbolic title of Elders, are presented to us in the apocalyptic vision as already exercising priestly functions,—holding censers full of odours,—and filling heaven with anticipative praise. "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou

art worthy to take the book; and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and *we shall REIGN on the earth.*"

Without the recognition of the twofold salvation—that of the elect, the "kings" who are to "reign with Christ," and that of "the world," who are to be subjects in the kingdom, it seems impossible, as we have already said, to reconcile the "strait gate," the "narrow way," and the "few there be that find it," with the various promises which speak of the kingdoms of this world becoming "the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ."

Regarded as these passages usually are—all alike made to apply to the same class, they leave the impression of a *total contrast*, if not of inexplicable contradiction. Viewed, as we think they should be, separately and apart; the *former* regarded as relating to the elect alone—the *special result* of this dispensation; the *latter*, as referring to the ultimate

condition of *the race as a whole*, they fully harmonize; for they then intimate that “the completed salvation of the elect Church, instead of closing the fountains of Divine love, only introduces a wider and fuller display of it;” that, for aught we know, “there may be a thousand stages and varieties of union with Christ distinguishable from the glory of the elect Church;”\* that as God, “*at the first, visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name*” (Acts xv. 14), so, at last, through that visitation of mercy, will Christ eventually secure “the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession;” that as by the fall of the chosen people the Gentiles were enriched, so, in their fulness, shall “all Israel be saved;” and the cross, so long “a stumbling-block to the Jew,” and “folly to the Greek,” shall become at length the centre of the world’s attraction, and the word of the Redeemer be verified,—“*I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.*”

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\* Rev. Edw. Bickersteth. See also, Birks’s “*Outlines of Prophecy*,” pp. 141, 143, 147.

## NOTE.

It will probably be said that certain texts of Scripture are distinctly *opposed* to the view we have taken, since they clearly assert that the Divine sovereignty is exercised, not with regard to office or service merely, but in relation to acceptance or rejection, salvation or damnation, love or hate.

We cannot, of course, determine what particular texts any one thus arguing might think fit to bring forward, nor, if we did, would it be possible *here* to deal with them controversially. But it may not be unfruitful to notice, however briefly, two or three of the more prominent ones, which are generally regarded as conclusive. They are the following :—

(1). Rom. ix. 13, "*Jacob have I loved*" (lit., *preferred*, as in Luke xvi. 13) "*and Esau have I hated*" (lit., *disregarded*, as in Luke xiv. 26). These words, let it be observed, are avowedly a quotation from Mal. i. 2, 3, where they clearly refer, not to individuals, but to Edom and Israel, and the respective conditions in which it pleased God to place them. To say, as Mr. Robert Haldane does, that "Esau was *justly* the object of hatred before he was born, because he was viewed in Adam as a sinner;" that "Jacob was *justly* the object of God's love before he was born, because he was viewed in Christ as righteous;" and that "the whole of the context proves that the declaration has reference to their spiritual and eternal state," is (ignorantly enough, we admit) to *travel* the Word of God, and to libel the Divine character.

(2). Rom. ix. 18, "*Therefore hath He mercy on whom*

*He will have mercy.*" This passage is grossly misread by those who imagine that mercy is here used in the sense of *saving from punishment*. Such is not the case. The Apostle uses it in the sense of *conferring benefit*. It is as if he had said, "All the Lord's mercies are sovereign. He blesteth *whom* He will, and in the way that seems best to Him." St. Paul uses the same word when he says, in this very Epistle (xi. 31), "Through your *mercy*"—*i. e.*, favour. So also in the Second Epistle to Timothy (i. 16), "The Lord give *mercy* to the house of Onesiphorus." So Luke uses it (xviii. 38), where the blind man cries for *mercy*,—*i. e.*, the favour of receiving sight. How very absurd, then, to read, as most persons do, "He *saveth from hell* whom He will"!

(3). Rom. ix. 21—33, "*Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour?*" These words are used in reply to a supposed objector, who practically says, "Why does God disapprove of any, if all alike are but clay, and moulded as He will?" "*Why then doth He yet find fault?*" The Apostle retorts, "Who art thou that repliest against God?" Is it reasonable to suppose that *you*—a creature—have a mind comprehensive enough to judge the Creator's conduct? What says Jeremiah? (xviii. 6)—"Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel,"—an illustration, be it observed, used by the prophet to exhibit God's right to *change the position or condition* of His people by *degrading* them, as He was about to do, in the sight of all the nations (ver. 7—21). It is in this sense St. Paul uses it in the passage on which we are remarking, for he

practically goes on to say, "Have not these words of Jeremiah all been fulfilled, and are not we ourselves evidences thereof?" For, "if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering (our fathers the Jews) vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:" and that He might make known the riches of His glory, *rejected* them, and called us (of the new election, Jew and Gentile), what shall we say, or how explain such sovereign grace? (ver. 22—30). The passage does *not* teach that election is to salvation as opposed to damnation, but *to honour*; to blessing and service, without doubt; but in contradistinction only to dishonour, and in no case to the prejudice in the slightest degree of others.

(4). One passage—the parable of the Marriage Feast,—as recorded by St. Matthew (xxii. 2—14), seems distinctly to teach that "the kingdom of God," properly so termed, is *not* for the many, but for the few. This parable, it is admitted, represents "*the great marriage supper of the Son of God*, i. e., His full and complete union to His Bride, the Church, in glory"—(so Alford). The guests form the Church (Ephes. v. 27.) But two things must be noticed; *first*, that the feast is neither *provided* nor *intended* for all the king's subjects. The invitation is only given to a certain part of them; and it is not till the first invited (the Jewish, as the elect nation) refused to come, that the servants are sent out to the highways and hedges (the Gentile world). *Secondly*, that even when the call becomes indiscriminate as to class, it is still limited as to number; *all* are not to be brought in, only as many as were required, that "the house might be filled" (Luke xiv. 23);

or, as St. Matthew expresses it, that "the wedding" might be "furnished with guests." One of these guests, represented as wanting the "wedding garment," is cast from the brilliancy of the bridal hall, into the outer (outside) darkness, deepened by contrast with the glory he has lost; and there, with others similarly disappointed, in ineffectual vexation he weeps and gnashes his teeth,—the Jewish mode of manifesting sorrow and rage.

The teaching of the parable can scarcely be mistaken. It is that God has on earth a people who, in distinction from others, are called, as the Bride of Christ, to honour and glory; that these are gradually being gathered in; but that even among them will be found some who have failed to make their calling and election sure. It *implies*,—since the number of guests is limited, while the invitations of the Gospel are universal,—that *beyond* those who are thus specially honoured will be found redeemed persons, saved equally by grace, yet not in the same sense, or with the same result, as "the Church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven;" saved from the captivity of Satan, and brought under the blessed rule of the Deliverer, yet not partakers of that higher glory which is to be the peculiar privilege of the elect.

## CHAPTER III.

*On the Peculiarities of this Dispensation.*

WE use the word "Dispensation" in its ordinary and popular sense, as expressive of the particular spiritual economy under which the children of men are, at any given time, placed in relation to Divine things. We think it is not difficult to recognize *five* of these economies as more or less treated of in the Bible, viz., the Antediluvian, the Patriarchal, the Jewish, the Dispensation of grace to the Gentiles (Ephes. iii. 2), and that which is called emphatically "the Dispensation of the fulness of times" (Ephes. i. 10).

We propose to inquire whether or no anything is revealed in Scripture which is calculated to throw light on the object, character, and duration of the particular economy under which we are, at the present time, living.

The first thing that strikes us in relation to it is, that while certain events which have taken place under it are *the subject of Old Testament prophecy*, the true character of the age or period, as a whole, was evidently either concealed from, or misunderstood by, the prophets.

Most distinctly are we informed that "the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus" (Acts i. 16); that the prophets "inquired and searched diligently what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow;" and that "not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister" the things that are now made plain by the Gospel (1 Pet. i. 10—13); but nowhere is there any indication that their message extended beyond the publication of the statement that Messiah should suffer, and that glory should follow.

Nothing startles a careful observer more than the discovery of the fact that, in the eyes of all the Old Testament seers, the

humiliation and the glorification of Messiah on the earth *seem to touch each other*. His advent is always regarded as the immediate harbinger of the world's subjection. Not a hint is given of *delay*; not a suspicion seems to have entered their minds that eighteen hundred years and more, of struggle and persecution, should intervene, at the end of which five-sixths of the human race should be found even historically unacquainted with the fact of Christ's existence.

Who can wonder that, under these circumstances, the apostles, reverencing the prophets as they did, should expect the glory of Messiah to follow immediately on His humiliation, and ask, even at the last moment, "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Who can wonder that, after the ascension of their Lord, both they and their followers should, *for some years*, have lived in daily expectation of His second and glorious coming in the clouds of heaven?

That they did so, is clear enough, since, to counteract the error, both Paul and Peter, under Divine guidance, are led to write,—

the one to beseech his Thessalonian converts not to be "shaken in mind" by any supposition "that the day of Christ is at hand" (2 Thess. ii. 2); the other to urge that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Pet. iii. 8).

And yet all parties would have avoided the original error, if they had been mindful of the Lord's teaching when He sat upon the Mount of Olives, and answered their question, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (Matt. xxiv. 4—44). They ought to have remembered that while He was yet with them He said, "The end is not yet;" the "Gospel of the kingdom" must first be "preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations" (ver. 6 and 14), and "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke xxi. 24). But they *understood* not these things, for they were as yet hidden from their eyes. It was not, probably, till Paul received, by special revelation, a knowledge of "the mystery which in other ages was not made known

unto the sons of men," that *just views* began to prevail relative to the true character of the dispensation under which they were placed.

The statement that such a revelation had been given appears first in the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians (iii. 1—11), in which the Apostle speaks of that which had been specially committed to him. And as this passage has generally been interpreted as teaching, *either* simply that the Gentiles should be "fellow-heirs" with the Jews, *or* else the kindred truth that, in becoming "heirs," Gentiles were *not to pass through* Judaism, it may be necessary to observe that the bringing in of the Gentiles was no "mystery" at all, inasmuch as it had been from the beginning revealed to Abraham (Gal. iii. 8), and was fully recognized, in the plainest terms, by Isaiah and other prophets (Isa. ii. 2; xi. 10; Mal. i. 11); while the further truth that these privileges were to be enjoyed without reference to Judaism, had been taught to Peter in a vision soon after Pentecost (Acts xi. 1—18; xv. 7—11).

In the Epistle to the Romans (xvi. 25, 26), the Apostle again refers to "the revelation

of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." It is this preaching of Jesus Christ "according to the revelation of the mystery," which, by the power of God, is to establish them in the faith (ver. 25).

Now what *can* this be but the preaching of the great love of Christ to the Gentiles, manifested in His gathering out of *them* a people who shall share His crown, and be numbered among His chosen? That it cannot mean the entire subjugation of them under this dispensation, seems clear from another passage in the same Epistle (xiv. 11), where, quoting Isaiah (xlv. 23), the Apostle connects the fulfilment of the prophecy that "unto God every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear," and "all the ends of the earth" look unto Christ to be saved, with that day when "every one of us shall give account of himself to God." "We shall all stand," he says, "before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, faith the

Lord, every knee shall bow to me" (Rom. xiv. 10, 11).

We scarcely see how, on any other hypothesis, the conduct of St. Paul—so different from our own—can be explained. Prince of missionaries as he was, he never seems to look forward to the conversion of the masses of mankind. His prayers, and tears, and efforts, are always for the few, rather than for the many. His supplications are not, as we might have expected they would have been, for the subjugation of the Empire to Christ, but always for "the faints;" and especially for those who had been called under his own ministry, that they might "grow in grace," and that he might "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

"It seems, indeed, impossible to deny the essentially limited nature of a dispensation that consists of a *Church*,—a body of *called-out* ones,—an election out of the mass. If it be an election, it cannot be universal; if it be universal, then there is no more Church or election." \*

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\* "Mystery of the Gentile Dispensation," by Ridley H. Herfshell.

Further, that "the mystery" spoken of as one "which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God," must have involved *much more* than ordinary interpretations suppose, is evident from the subsequent teaching of the apostles, which frequently relates, *on the one hand*, to the election of a chosen people out of all nations, who, like the Master, should be hated and rejected of men, yet honoured to be under Him kings and priests for ever; and *on the other*, to a "mystery of iniquity," *then* at work, *soon* to bring forth "ravenous wolves," who should "traffic in the Word," make "booty" of the flock, account "godliness a means of gain," and finally culminate in a "man of sin," and "son of perdition," whom the Lord should "consume with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming." All this clearly indicates that the light received by this special revelation fell on the entire economy, and was intended to guide the expectations of believers into a right channel.

This view is confirmed by the Second Epistle to Timothy (chap. iii.), in which Paul

enlarges on the character of the "last days;" and still more, perhaps, by the way in which St. Peter, in the third chapter of his second epistle, treats the entire subject. Without at all withdrawing the assertion in his first letter, that "the end of all things" was at hand (1 Eph. iv. 7),—for this is ever true,—he now warns them that great delay will take place before Christ's return; a delay so great, that scoffers will arise, ridiculing the very thought of His second advent, and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Eph. iii. 4). The *fact* of the Deluge, regarded as a Divine judgment, will, he tells us, first be denied (ver. 5, 6), and then the prophecy of the future destruction of the world by fire will be rejected as a similar exaggeration. He assures us, however, that the word of God will stand; that "the Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness," but that mercy is involved in the delay; that the "longsuffering" of God arises only from His unwillingness "that any should perish;" that it means "salvation,"

*even as Paul had taught them*, "according to the wisdom given unto him," revealing in his Epistles some things "hard to be understood," which the unlearned (or rather, unteachable) and unstable wrest, as they do the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction (iii. 15, 16).

What the "things hard to be understood" may precisely be, we know not; but it is worth notice that the Apostle Paul often uses the phrase "*my Gospel*" as if his message to mankind included matters directly and specially revealed to himself. In the Epistle to the Galatian Church (ii. 2) he says that, seventeen years after his conversion, he went up to Jerusalem "by revelation," in order that he might communicate to the Church in that city, and to the other apostles, the Gospel which he preached among the Gentiles.

Judging by what is said in that Epistle alone, we should naturally come to the conclusion that its sole peculiarity was that it asserted the liberty of Gentile converts to abstain from the observances of the Mosaic law. But it is by no means probable that

this was all; for, as we have before seen, Gentile freedom had not only been directly taught to Peter soon after Pentecost, but, *in consequence of his testimony*, had been formally and officially recognized as the revealed will of God by the apostles and brethren in Judea (Acts x. and xi.) In his Second Epistle to Timothy, after saying to him, "Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead *according to my Gospel*" (ii. 8), the Apostle adds, "*Therefore* I endure all things *for the elect's sakes*, that they may also obtain the *salvation* which is in Christ Jesus *with eternal glory*" (ver. 10). Here he would seem to say that he suffered for preaching a special salvation for the elect.

If we ask, What more did Paul's revelation or Gospel include? what else could it embrace that was in any way peculiar to him? we must look for an answer to the First Epistle to the Corinthians (chap. xv.), in which we find the doctrine of *the resurrection of the body* first clearly set forth as a necessary consequence of Christ's having raised His own body. This particular doctrine he declares to be "*the Gospel*" which he had "preached"

unto them—*that* wherein they “flood,” and by which they were “faved” from the power of this present evil world (ver. 1, 2).

But again it may be asked, “What is there in the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, as taught by this Apostle, which makes it so peculiarly his own?”

We are certainly at a loss to see what it can be, *unless*, indeed, the resurrection be connected—as we believe it always is by St. Paul—with the fulfilment of all those glorious promises of *a new moral world* which abound in the writings of the Old Testament. Other apostles had *taught* this to the Jews (Acts iii. 21); but Paul seems to have been specially called to open up the doctrine, and to impress upon the Gentiles that the dispensation of the fulness of times must be a result of the resurrection.

Such we believe it to be; and we cannot but think that if Scripture be carefully searched, and its various announcements relative to the resurrection be thoughtfully examined, it will become evident that while glorious days may be expected after the return of Christ and the binding of Satan, it is not

till mortality is merged in life that the reformation of the race will be effected.

Dr. Arnold, when lecturing in Oxford, after taking a survey of the field of modern history, once asked whether there were, in the existing resources of the nations of mankind, any materials for a new epoch distinct from those which have gone before? and he answered—None.

Dr. Stanley, meditating on this conclusion, which he does not dispute, observes:—"We cannot hesitate to say, that if the Christian Church be drawing to its end, or if it continue to its end with no other objects than those which it has hitherto fought, it will end with its acknowledged resources confessedly undeveloped, its finest hopes of usefulness almost untried and unattempted. It will have been like an ungenial spring, cut short in full view of the summer—a stately vessel wrecked within the very sight of shore."\*

St. Paul seems to us to remove this difficulty, and to reconcile the apparent discrepancy which exists between things as they

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\* "Advantages of Ecclesiastical History." Introduction to Eastern Church, page 79.

are, and what we are assured they shall be, when he expounds inspired prophecy (as no other man does), teaching that it is not till "death is swallowed up in victory," that "the veil that is spread over all nations" shall be removed (comp. 1 Cor. xv. 54, with Isa. xxv. 6—8). If so, *then* it is that Israel, though she has destroyed herself, shall be ransomed from the power of the grave (Hosea xiii. 9—14); and as *this dispensation* is the one in which God visits the Gentiles, "to take out of them a people for His name" (Acts xv. 14), and as, when this dispensation has finished its work, and the elect are gathered in, the Saviour will "return," and, in the Millennium, "build again the tabernacle of David,"—for not till then will "the residue" (the rest) of mankind seek after the Lord (Acts xv. 16, 17); so, when that period is ended, and the decisions of the last day have been made known, will the Church enter upon its great mission, as the ruler and teacher of the nations. May not St. Paul point to this when he says, "Flesh and blood"—men in their present condition—"cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. xv. 50)?

If this be the true view, the "stately vessel" is not "wrecked;" it but disappears for a season in the narrow straits of death, soon to emerge in new splendour on the ocean of unclouded felicity.\*

As we have said, however, this doctrine is by no means *confined* to Paul. The very first teaching of Peter and John relates to "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" (Acts iii. 19); to "the times of restitution of all things"—predicted by the

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\* "The glorious work of the Triune God, *in calling out and educating* the partners of Christ's throne and kingdom, I conceive to be the mystery that was revealed to Paul; a work which now makes known the  *manifold wisdom* of God unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places; and which, 'in the ages to come,' will manifest to them *the riches of His grace*.

"That which was *new* in the Gentile dispensation was its interpolation, if I may so call it, between the Jewish dispensation and that universal dispensation announced by all the prophets, as following the advent of the Redeemer." This is the *preparation* for the time when "from the throne of God and of the Lamb a healing power shall go forth to all the nations; and in the administration of this 'health and cure,' the glorified saints, the Church, the Bride of Christ, shall share with her King and Lord."—*Herschell*.

Old Testament prophets—"which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (ver. 21). *Then*, in effect, say they to the Jews, will "the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed," be enjoyed in its fulness (ver. 25); the *preparatory* work being the first advent of Christ, to turn men away from their iniquities (ver. 26). It was "*as they spake*" unto the people these words, "the Priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus *the resurrection from the dead*" (iv. 1, 2).

Nothing can be clearer, from these concluding words, than that, by Peter and John, "the times of restitution," which "all the prophets, from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have foretold," had been connected with the "resurrection from the dead." *Their crime* was, that they had taught that this great and expected national blessing was to come through Jesus, whom the Jews had crucified.

The peculiarity of Paul's "Gospel," or teaching, appears to have been, that it was *received*, *not* through any other apostle, but by *direct* revelation from the Lord Jesus (Gal. i. 12), and that it *comprised*, so far as we can ascertain, six distinct particulars.

(1). That idolatrous Gentiles, when converted, should be received into the Church without being subjected to Mosaic law, or in any sense passing through Judaism (Ephes. iii. 3—7).

(2). That God had cast off the Jews as the elect nation (Rom. xi. 1—10).

(3). That in place of this national calling, an "election of grace," consisting both of Gentiles and believing Jews, should be accomplished (Rom. xi. 5).

(4). That while this process was going on, a "mystery of iniquity" and a "son of perdition" should arise, and remain till the second advent of the Lord (2 Thes. ii.)

(5). That when this work was completed, and "the fulness of the Gentiles" should arrive, the Jews, *as a nation*, would again be "grafted in" (Rom. xi. 25); those on earth in the latter day,—during the Millennium;

those that had died in unbelief,—after the resurrection.

(6). That the last generation of faints should not die (1 Cor. xv. 51).

These seem to have been the topics *specially* constituting St. Paul's Gospel; they mark his teaching out as distinct from that of the other apostles, and constitute, without doubt, "the mystery hid from ages and generations" (Col. i. 26; Rom. xvi. 25), which he was "to make all men see" (Ephes. iii. 9); and it was in connection with these truths that he preached everywhere the resurrection of the dead, as the perfected triumph of Messiah, and the great time of restitution.

The Apocalypse of St. John, as we think, completes the lesson by the presentation of what may almost be termed a prophetic history of the fortunes of the Church during the period that is to intervene between the first and second advents of the Redeemer.

If the view we have now taken of the dispensation under which we live be a *true* one; if it be only of grace to the Gentiles (Ephes. iii. 2), and not *final*; if it be a dispensation,

the peculiar and lengthened character of which was completely concealed from the Old Testament prophets; if the only indications of the future of Christianity in the world, *prior* to this apostolic revelation, were to be found in our Lord's discourse on the Mount of Olives (Matt. xxiv. 4—44); and if our era is to be followed by another, called "the dispensation of the fulness of times" (Ephes. i. 10), *then*, as it seems to us, light is thrown on *the purposes* of the Apocalypse, which, if rightly used, may serve to give us at least some clue to its *interpretation*.

For then it but takes up, and *expands* in prophetic outline, the hints which lie scattered in the writings of the Apostle Paul, and *illustrates* more at large the prophetic discourse of the Saviour on the Mount of Olives; its purpose being, not, as some would tell us, to *conceal* the future until time, the great interpreter, should expound its meaning; but to *make known* to the children of men future events, just so far and no farther than such a revelation may be necessary to prepare Christians for their approach, and to *preserve* them from the errors and dangers into which

they are likely to fall, if they take up the notion that no further changes await the Church, but that it is to go on "conquering and to conquer," until all nations are subdued to the Redeemer.

The Apocalypse, viewed, as we think it should be, simply as *filling up* what had been hinted at by St. Paul, and expounding what had been more directly taught by Christ, thus becomes to the Christian what Old Testament prophecy was to the Jew,—a "light," though "shining in a dark place" (2 Pet. i. 19), and a fresh *illustration* of the inspired declaration,—"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets" (Amos iii. 7). Regarded thus, its prophecy becomes as much the interpreter of ecclesiastical history, as ecclesiastical history is the interpreter of prophecy; yet in each case *testing the moral condition* of those to whom it is presented, and becoming silent or eloquent, according as that condition may be. To the flippant, the sceptical, and the prejudiced, prophecy is *dumb*; to the froward it shows itself froward; to the lowly and meek alone is it *comfort and strength*.

If this view be a true one, what we have to look for in the Book of Revelation is, *first*, additional prophetic intimations regarding the Church, of a character harmonizing with, and corresponding in order and significance to, the declarations of the Lord; and, *secondly*, such references to the history and character of the "mystery of iniquity" as were likely to be useful in warning men of its approaches, and in delivering them from its seductions.

And this is precisely what we *do* find enshrined in the magnificent imagery of St. John.

We are not about to enter either on the dangers or intricacies incident to minute interpretation; yet we cannot refrain from drawing attention to at least the *general outline* of that splendid prophecy in its relation to the latter days, in order to show—whether dimly or clearly we say not,—that it shadows forth a course of events, *to the character and order* of which it is well that we should "take heed" (2 Pet. i. 19).

Under the figure of the unfolding of seven successive sheets of a pictorial roll, each presenting hieroglyphic symbols, we note, first, a representation of the early and peaceful

conquests of the Gospel, under the emblem of a kingly rider on a white horse (chap. vi. 1, 2); next, the bloody persecutions to which its followers were to be exposed, represented by a shedder of blood on a red horse (ver. 3, 4); then gloom and decay, under the emblems of famine (ver. 5, 6); then mortal sickness and dissolution, under the figure of Death on the pale or ghastly horse (ver. 7, 8).

Such are the *four first* seals, which are distinguished from those that follow by *two* peculiarities;—*first*, by the introduction of a *war horse*, which is, in Scripture, everywhere the symbol of military power (Exod. xv. 21; Jer. li. 21; Ezek. xxiii. 6; Hag. ii. 22; Zech. ix. 10), and here, probably, of the Roman empire,—the field on which the work goes on. *Secondly*, a *rider*, which we presume must, in each case, be regarded as a *personification* of the prevailing or ruling influence of the period represented. For we regard “the seals” in each case as representing *eras*. It is arbitrary beyond measure to make, as some do, the first seal to symbolize *an era*,—that of the Church’s peaceful prof-

perity,—and the sixth seal *an event*,—whether that event be, in the estimation of such expositors, the overthrow of paganism in the Roman empire, or the day of judgment.

The *fifth* seal (ver. 9—11) seems to indicate a period of martyrdom,—not at the hands of the pagan power of Rome, for the war horse now disappears, but for “the Word of God and for the testimony.” Apparently, therefore, it is persecution for upholding the teachings of the Bible, and for witnessing to its supreme authority.

The *sixth* shadows forth a time of overthrow and universal change, under the figure of a raging whirlwind; ending, *not* with the coming, but with “*the sign* of the Son of man in heaven” (ver. 12—17).

The *seventh seal*, preceded (under the sixth) by the sealing of the elect (vii. 1—17), is obviously the era of judgments and of miracle (viii.—xi.), ending with the declaration that “the kingdoms of this world *are become* the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ” (xi. 15—19).

So far—as we should have anticipated—we have a course of prediction *illustrating*

that of the Lord, as recorded in the twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew.\*

But now a *new series* of visions commences, and in them we trace clearly, as we think, the rise, progress, and fall, first of the "mystery of iniquity," and then of the "man of sin," spoken of by Paul and Peter.

The Church, under the image of a woman pregnant with the kingly rule of Christ, cherishes, as the early Christians did, the false expectation that the *reign* of the Redeemer would immediately begin; that Christ would immediately come; that Christians would now be kings on earth; and that universal empire would be the dower of the new faith. For the realization of this hope, the woman cries to God, as one "travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered" (xii. 2).

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\* A period of slaughter, when Christians shall be hated and killed for His name's sake (ver. 3—10); then, a period of corruption and decay,—false teaching, iniquity, and loss of spiritual affection (ver. 11, 12); then a time of martyrdom, implied in the promise to those who "endure unto the end" (ver. 13); then the period of the open door, when the Gospel is to be preached for a witness unto all nations; and *then* the end (ver. 14.)

Here we have the *first rudiment* of the apostacy.

Instead, however, of this expectation finding a fulfilment, a *persecuting power* appears, under the emblem of a seven-headed dragon, while the hope of rule over all nations (the new-born kingly child) is withdrawn to heaven until the fulness of time shall come (ver. 3—5). The true Church, in consequence of increasing corruption, now flees into the wilderness (becomes an invisible Church), and is there fed of God (ver. 6). In the meantime, a long struggle ends in the downfall of paganism (ver. 7—12); and then, "a flood" (of barbarians) having failed to sweep away the Church, in consequence of "the earth" (the worldly admixture of Christianity and paganism, which then had rule) helping "the woman" by receiving into her bosom the barbaric hosts (ver. 13—16), the enmity of Satan centres on the spiritual few "which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (ver. 17).

The "mystery of iniquity" is now briefly foreshadowed under the figure of a seven-

headed mystic beast (or power), *rising out of* the flood of waters (the incursions of the barbarians), crowned, and bearing the name of blasphemy (xiii. 1); it receives royal power (ver. 2); it is wounded to death (by Mahometan incursions), yet wonderfully healed (ver. 3); it claims and secures universal homage (ver. 4); it talks boastfully and blasphemously (ver. 5, 6); it overcomes all opposition (ver. 7, 8); it falls by the hands of its own children (as *we* think it is *now* doing), (ver. 9, 10); and is succeeded by a new form of evil,—the man of sin,—*another power*, coming up like a lamb, but (soon) speaking like a dragon (ver. 11); attaining universal empire (ver. 12); supported by evil spirits, deceiving by false miracles, and reviving *the outward form* (the image) of the former beast (ver. 12—15); persecuting to the death (ver. 15—17); and embodied *in an individual* (ver. 18).

Divine judgments now approach. The “harvest” (of faints) is gathered in by the heavenly reaper (xiv. 1—16); and the “vintage” (of wrath) is trodden (ver. 17—20). The *seven last plagues* (vials of wrath), cor-

responding to the seven trumpets and following judgments (viii.—xi.), are poured out (xv., xvi.); the ruin of *both* the foregoing forms of Antichrist follows (xvi.—xviii.); and *then*—after severe judgments on opposers (xix. 1—21), Satan is bound (xx. 1—3), the “first resurrection” is accomplished (ver. 4—6), and the martyrs are seen on thrones, but whether on earth or in the invisible world is not stated. After a given period, Satan is loosed (ver. 7), and a rebellion takes place, which ends in the destruction of the rebels by fire from heaven (ver. 8, 9), and the casting of the devil, the beast, and the false prophet into the burning lake (ver. 10).

The great judgment day now approaches. All the dead stand before God (ver. 11—13); Death and Hades are no more (ver. 14); the unwritten in the book of life are cast into the fire (ver. 15); the New Jerusalem descends from heaven, and the elect dwell there with Christ for ever (xxi. 1—8).

A striking symbolic description of “the Bride, the Lamb’s Wife” (ver. 9), is then given, under the figure of a glorious city (ver. 9—23), and “*saved nations*,” not *in* the

city,—into which nothing can enter that defileth,—but walking “in the light of it,” and healed by the leaves of a tree growing within it, unite with the “kings of the earth” (whoever they may be) in “bringing glory and honour” into it (ver. 24—27; xxii. 1—5). With warnings and exhortations the book concludes (ver. 6—21).

We have purposely avoided any notice of the symbolic numbers, such as the “forty and two months” during which the “holy city” is to be “trodden under foot” (xi. 2); the “thousand two hundred and threescore days” of the prophecy of “the witnesses” (ver. 3); the “three days and a half” during which they shall be “dead” and scorned (ver. 9); the “thousand two hundred and threescore days” during which the woman remains in the wilderness (xii. 6); the “times, time, and half a time” during which she is nourished there (ver. 14); the “forty and two months’” reign of the mystic beast (xiii. 5), or the “six hundred threescore and six” which are to indicate the name of the man of sin (ver. 18), since these would lead us on to disputed ground, and open up questions which it

would be impossible *here* to handle satisfactorily.

But we are far from regarding these numbers as unintelligible or unimportant, since, while they *conceal* rather than reveal *the precise dates*, they are supposed to mark out, they teach us this great lesson, that all the events of this dispensation *have their limits fixed by God*; that the time is short; that therefore nothing can justify us in saying—as many do—that, for aught we can tell, “the world is yet in its infancy, and may last ten thousand years,” or to exclaim against what is often called “*dreaming* of the coming of Christ during the existence at least of this or the next century.”

Good men would not speak thus, and “offend against the generation of God’s children” (Pfa. lxxiii. 15), if their faith had not been fearfully shaken in the inspiration of the Apocalypse, or at least in the possibility of gathering any practical instruction as to the future from its pages; an error, for which something like an apology may certainly be found in the folly and presumption which have too often characterized interpreters, and

in the almost endless diversity of opinions which have been given forth relative to the supposed date, object, structure, and proper analysis of the book.

We fearlessly ask any person of ordinary intelligence to take his Bible, and to follow strictly the general outline we have just sketched, and then to tell us *wherein* lies the great obscurity, the element of doubt, the mystery and mystification supposed to belong to this prophecy. We have *expounded* it (if so slight an attempt may be called an exposition) *straight on*, just as we should any other book, and, we think, without any effort to make it favour particular views. The *result* is, a conviction that it is intended to depict, at least in outline, the leading events and general character of *this* dispensation; that it is intended to be *to us* what Old Testament prophecy was to the Jew—*clear* in outline, *obscure* as to dates and details; that our insight into its meaning will depend upon our freedom from pre-conceived notions, and on the amount of moral sympathy we may have with the Divine purposes; and that so far from its study being either unprofitable or

unpractical, it is eminently adapted to lessen in our eyes the force of this world's attractions; to strengthen bright and blessed hopes of future *usefulness* as well as joy; and to enable us to discern, through all the dark mysteries of God's government, the sunshine that reigns behind, and the glory that shall never be eclipsed.

In relation to the immediate object of our inquiry, we can only say that we discover nothing in the revelations of Scripture relative to this dispensation which leads us to believe that it is *the final one*; we think we see more than one indication of a dispensation yet to come, during which those who have, *in this or preceding economies, lived and died in ignorance of Christ's redemption*, may eventually be made acquainted with the great salvation, and by Divine grace, be led thankfully to accept it.

## CHAPTER IV.

*On the Second Advent and the Millennium.*

**B**EFORE entering on any consideration of the Second Advent, it may be as well to state that we are far from being unaware of the amount of prejudice which the subject excites whenever it is mentioned. "Pre-millennial advent views," as they are usually called, are, we know, by many, regarded as so essentially dark, narrow, and fanatical, as to demand nothing short of instant rejection. Nor can it be denied that, in the exaggerated form in which such views are sometimes presented, evil characteristics may fairly be regarded as, more or less, belonging to them. When a man has brought himself to believe that the world is "a devil-governed world,"—that men are now living under "the reign of Satan,"—that art, industry, commerce, and all the pregnant activities of

the time, are nothing else than "the play of folly, or the uproar of wickedness," it may very naturally be expected that such opinions will issue in consequences, injurious both to the individual himself and to society.

But we cannot for a moment admit that such extravagances are the necessary result of *seriously inquiring whether or no Scripture teaches* that the world *will*, "by gradual progression or natural inclination, by the advance of science, by better manners, by purer laws, by happier circumstances," or under—what many think may be expected—a large outpouring of the Spirit of God, "develop into that promised state in which the Divine will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven." Nor can we see why a conviction—whether it be a right or wrong one—that "miraculous and catastrophic dispensations" are at hand, should either "intoxicate the imagination," or "poison the intellect." Surely it should be remembered, that if men have been found foolish enough to announce their supposed Apocalyptic discoveries on this matter, to mixed popular assemblies of persons, every way disqualified for forming an opinion as to

their truthfulness or value, other men—such as Dean Alford and Mr. Birks—have addressed themselves to audiences “fit though few,” and have brought no mean amount of scholarship to bear, in support of views which shallow and flippant critics ignorantly deride.

Whatever be the true decision in relation to this question, it is certain that *far more turns* on the acceptance or rejection of a pre-millennial advent than is generally supposed. If, as is now commonly admitted, “these views appeared to the early Christians of the very essence of the Gospel,” and if their rejection is to carry with it—as it usually does—the conclusion that the apostles were, in regard to the nature of Christ’s kingdom, utterly deceived; that our Lord permitted them to remain, and finally left them, under so great a delusion; that Paul and Peter were, on this point, mistaken in their teaching; and that modern progress represents “the essential spirit and meaning of the Gospel,”—*then*, we are quite sure, the authority of Scripture will not long be regarded as paramount, and its claim as a Divine Revelation, to guide and control human thought, must be abandoned.

With these preliminary observations, we commence our search for the teachings of Scripture on this controverted topic.

The *fact* that Christ *will* yet come again to earth, is one which no believer in Divine Revelation can allow himself to doubt. *He* can scarcely be a believer in Jesus at all, who suffers himself to adopt the language of the scoffer, and say, "Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Pet. iii. 4). The *differences* which prevail among *real* Christians in reference to this important topic, relate exclusively to the *place* this great event is supposed to occupy in the world's history, and to the *character* it will assume.

"Millennarians," as they are usually termed, generally hold not only that Christ will, in due time, return and take unto Himself the kingdom,—a truth which few will be found to dispute,—but that His coming is *near*; that it is about to open by a series of terrific judgments on the unbelieving world; that it will be followed by the actual, personal, and visible reign of the Lord Jesus in Jerusa-

lem for a thousand years, in company with the risen faints, and that it will terminate with the last judgment—the everlasting perdition of the ungodly, and the eternal blessedness of all the redeemed.

Other Evangelical Christians—constituting, probably, the vast majority of the visible Church—maintain, on the contrary, that Scripture leads us to expect that, *before* the return of the Redeemer, a signal and unprecedented outpouring of the Spirit will be vouchsafed, in the power of which the world will be converted, and the principles of the Redeemer triumph in all lands. This they assert is the “Millennium” spoken of in the Apocalypse; and it is not, they say, till that period has passed away that the Lord will return in person to close the dispensation, and to take His children to Himself.

The texts by which each party seeks to support its own conclusions have been so often quoted, that it is needless to repeat them here. The first view (that of the millenarian) is supposed by its opponents to chill missionary enterprise,—to foster carnal views of Christ’s kingdom, and to promote

fanatical expectations relative to the immediate future.

The latter view is said, by those who disclaim it, to kindle worldly ambition in God's service; to promote unauthorized satisfaction with things as they are; to lead men to forget that they are but pilgrims and strangers here; and, by placing the return of the Lord in the far distance, to foster a belief, that in the improvement of the world *as it is*, rather than in the expectation of the coming of the Master, the Christian should find his solace and satisfaction.

In reply to the argument that many texts of Scripture speak of the coming of the Lord as *near*, the advocates of the more popular view urge that such expressions must be interpreted by the fact that eighteen hundred years have already rolled away since these phrases were penned; that death is to each individual Christian the coming of Christ; and that, when viewed in relation to the world at large, they find their natural interpretation in those providential visitations from God which are in Scripture from time to time spoken of as His "coming."

The millennarian responds, that fully admitting the fact that minor interpositions of Providence are occasionally called in Scripture the "coming of the Lord," no thoughtful reader can deny that such is not the *principal*, nor indeed the ordinary sense, of the words; that, while the judgments of God on individuals or on nations may be, and often are, figuratively called the *visitations* of His hand, the adoption of such language should not make us forget that *the coming of Christ*, in its proper sense, is a fact that will, in due time, be fully and literally accomplished,—as fully and as literally as His first coming was. He urges, further, that *the time* of the Lord's return is everywhere spoken of in the Bible as *unknown*; that, on the ground of this uncertainty, believers have always been urged to watch and pray; to remember that when He does come it will be unexpectedly—"as a thief in the night," and to cultivate that constant state of happy expectation which will lead them, with lamps trimmed and burning, to be ever waiting for the advent of the Bridegroom. To hold, he says, that *a thousand years* of felicity *must* intervene before

the coming, is practically to make the exhortations referred to unmeaning ; since in that case every man knows most assuredly that Christ will *not* return during his lifetime : while, on the other hand, to say that death is the coming of the Lord to each individual, is to substitute for *the new motive* to watchfulness, one which is by no means peculiar to the Christian dispensation ; and to exchange habitual joy in thinking of the Lord's return, for meditations on the gloom of the grave, and the inevitableness of a mortality which characterizes alike the child of God and the servant of the devil.

We are inclined to think, that, to a certain extent, both parties are right and both wrong. We are satisfied that there is not the slightest ground for connecting the glorious anticipations of the Old Testament prophets with any general spread of the Gospel under this dispensation ; that, linked as such predictions invariably are, with the *personal* advent of Messiah in humiliation, they can only be expounded in connection with his *personal* glorification ; and that to imagine they can find a fulfilment in connection with what the world calls " progress,"—in the all but mira-

culous development of mechanical forces,—in civilization, in science, and in art, is to reverse all experience in the history both of the world and of the Church; to forsake the paths of Christ for those of His great antagonist, and to seek the living among the dead.

On the other hand, we see no evidence whatever *in the Book*, that Christ and His faints will in spiritual bodies ever inhabit Jerusalem, while men in natural bodies dwell around them, under the existing laws which now regulate human existence. The conditions of *the resurrection*, affecting *all*, may, and probably will, lead to results in some respects resembling the anticipations in question; but *the Millennium* is clearly a different period.

That the coming of the Redeemer is much nearer than is generally anticipated we doubt not; that the world is growing old, and hastening to a change, everything, to us, clearly indicates; that such changes will culminate in a manifestation of Christ,—by a signal destruction of men imagining “a vain thing,” and of “kings” and “rulers” taking “counsel together

against the Lord and against His anointed ;” by a “first resurrection ;” by “the binding of Satan ;” and probably by a large conversion of the Jews, and their return to their own land—we firmly believe : but there is nothing to show that the earth will now be purified by fire ; that the reign of the risen saints will be *visible* ; or that any of the ordinary conditions of humanity—beyond that absence of Satanic temptation which is implied in the binding of the great enemy—will be either altered or done away with. The “new heavens” and the “new earth” belong to a later period. They follow the vision of the great white throne, and the general resurrection of the dead.

The *testimony of Scripture*, in relation to THE SECOND ADVENT of Christ, may probably be summed up thus :—

It is *certain* as to the fact, but *uncertain* as to the time (Matt. xxiv. 44 ; 1 Thes. iv. 16 ; 2 Pet. iii. 10). The *expectation* of it is to be a constant motive to the exercise of watchfulness and holiness. It is to be *preceded* by the appearance of a false Christ (Matt. xxiv. 5—24) ; by a man of sin (2 Thes. ii. 8) ; by

the preaching of the Gospel *as a witness* to all nations (Matt. xxiv. 14; Luke xxi. 24; Rom. xi. 25; Rev. xiv. 6); *probably* by an extended conversion of the Jews\* (Hos. iii. 5; 2 Cor. iii. 16); *assuredly* by remarkable calamities (Matt. xxiv. 6—21). It is to be *accompanied* by a refurrection of dead faints (Matt. xxiv. 31); by a change of living ones (1 Cor. xv. 51; Phil. iii. 21; Col. iii. 4; 1 John iii. 2); by the judgment of believers (Matt. xvi. 27; Rom. xiv. 10; 2 Cor. v. 10; 2 Tim. iv. 1); and by a visible manifestation of Christ in the clouds of heaven (Dan. vii. 10; Matt. xvi. 27; xxiv. 30; xxvi. 64;

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\* Whether this will take place by, or at least *through*, the spectacle of the second advent we dare not venture to assume. Some have supposed that the conversion of St. Paul by *the sight* of the Lord—the only instance on record of the kind—may be regarded, *in its mode*, as typical of that by which his countrymen will be won at the coming of Christ. It *may* be so; and some passages of Scripture certainly seem to favour such an idea,—“They shall *look upon* Me whom they have pierced, and they shall *mourn* for Him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born” (Zech. xii. 10). This is not terror, but grief; not despair, but heartfelt sorrow.

Luke xxi. 27; Acts i. 11; 1 Thes. iii. 13; iv. 16; Rev. i. 7).

The testimony to "THE MILLENNIUM," or to the *continuance* for a thousand years of the state of things which is introduced by the second advent, is found only in the Apocalypse. The term occurs but once in the Bible (Rev. xx. 1—8). Whether it is there to be understood literally, or to be regarded as put for a long but indefinite period, is uncertain.

In order to understand the true bearing of the passage, it is necessary that the *connection* in which it appears should be carefully noticed.

The *seventeenth* chapter of the book in which it stands, furnishes a plain though symbolic account of the destruction of an anti-Christian power, called "the great whore that sitteth upon many waters" (xvii. 1), a term which is subsequently explained to mean, "that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth."

The *agents* of destruction are, in this instance, ten "horns" (symbolic powers), which have long carried (or sustained) "the

adulterous city." These horns are explained to be "ten kings" (or rather governments), which receive *power as kings* one hour,\* with a federal head, called symbolically, a "beast" (ver. 12). These are the declared enemies of Christ (ver. 14), and *become* the enemies of "the whore." They "make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire" (ver. 16). They all act under "the beast"—*whatever that term may mean*—for they "give their power and strength unto him" (ver. 13).

The *eighteenth* chapter describes the

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\* It should be noted that the "ten kings" are not actual monarchs at the time here referred to; on the contrary, they "have received no kingdom as yet" (xvii. 12). Further, these ten horns, or powers, must not be confounded with the ten horns mentioned earlier in the prophecy (chap. xiii. 1), which interpreters generally suppose to stand for the barbarous kingdoms of which the Papal empire was originally composed. *Here* the ten horns probably represent *democracies*, for they only receive *power as kings* "one hour" (*i. e.*, for a short period), which power they *give to* a central head, or mystic beast (xiii. 11, and xvii. 11, 12). The number ten is, probably, in both cases symbolical. The persecuting power consists of *united* kingdoms, whether more or less than ten is unimportant.

destruction of a "great city," apparently the same "city" mentioned as the "great whore," but now called (in consequence of some important change brought about by the fall of the adulterers), "Babylon the Great" (ver. 2). The destruction in this case is not, as in the preceding instance, effected by another and a younger power, or form of evil, but immediately from heaven. The imagery would lead to the supposition that volcanic agency is employed (ver. 18):—"Her plagues come in one day" (ver. 8), nay, "in one hour is she made desolate" (ver. 19). She falls "like a great millstone" into "the sea," and is "found no more at all" (ver. 21).\*

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\* These two events,—the spoiling of the "great whore," and the destruction of "Babylon the Great," are not to be regarded as synchronous. They do not occur at the same time, nor do they *immediately* follow one another. The first (the "great whore") seems to be ruined *before* the advent of the second—the mystic beast (xiii. 10), which only revives its "image"—probably its æsthetic character and priestly organization (ver. 15), and then persecutes to the death (xiii. 16 to xiv. 5). It is *as the seat of this last form of antichrist* that Rome (if she be the city intended) is called "Babylon the Great," and as such is destroyed by volcanic agency (xvii.).

The *nineteenth* chapter opens with joy in heaven on account of the judgment of the "great whore" which did "corrupt the earth," and the avenging of the blood of the saints (xix. 1—6). After this, "the marriage of the Lamb" takes place. Heaven opens, and one appears who is named "the Word of God," the "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (ver. 13 and 16), before whom perishes the "beast," the "false prophet," the "kings of the earth," and "the remnant" (or rest) of the anti-Christian host.

And now we enter upon what is termed THE MILLENNIUM. The *twentieth* chapter, after announcing the binding of Satan for "a thousand years" (xx. 1—3), introduces to us "thrones," and persons sitting upon them, to whom "judgment is given;" and soon afterwards, "the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands," are seen, and they "live and reign with Christ a thousand years" (ver. 4), but whether on earth or elsewhere is not stated.

*This*, we are distinctly told, is "the first resurrection" (ver. 5). The Millennium and the first resurrection are therefore clearly identical.\*

But what, we must now ask, is this phrase, "the first resurrection," intended to imply? Is it to be regarded as meaning only the resurrection of those "martyrs" of the last persecution, who are now admitted to the high dignity of reigning with Christ? Or, is the phrase to be extended so as to include *all* the "dead in Christ"? As St. Paul plainly teaches the latter, the question must be regarded as decided by him; for a plain, didactic composition may always be used to expound that which is symbolic, where the object of the writers is the same, and their *authority* equal. The probability is, that the martyrs of the last persecution only are *named*, because this particular prophecy relates only to them.

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\* By what strange process "the Millennium," as revealed in Scripture, can ever have come to be identified, as it has, with the universal spread of the Gospel under this dispensation (whether such an expectation be well founded or not), it is impossible to imagine. In the Bible there is not a shadow of excuse to be found for thus appropriating it.

The "dead in Christ," then, being all "raised," and the living faints "changed," the "rest of the dead," we are told, "lived not again until the thousand years were finished" (xx. 5).

In the mean time, the occupations of earth go on as usual, the severity of human probation being, however, modified by the binding of Satan, and by the consequent absence of *his* temptations. The *result*—for a brief reference to the end of this period (Rev. xx. 7—9) informs us of it—is, that, notwithstanding the absence of superhuman seduction, the enmity of the unrenewed heart remains the same, and consequently, when Satan is again loosed, those who remain unconverted,—“the nations,”—are deceived as readily as ever, and, vainly supposing they can destroy the faints, are themselves destroyed by fire which comes down from God out of heaven.\*

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\* The objection sometimes made to this view is, that since Satan's temptations are the chief cause of man's ruin, the binding of the great enemy will be all but equivalent to the cessation of moral evil. But this is unreasonable. Such a notion supposes that man has no native tendency to self-will and to departure from God; that he

With this catastrophe the Millennium appears to end,—the great white throne appears, and the dead, small and great, stand before God.

Solemn, indeed, is the thought (whatever view we may take of details), that, as a fact, we ourselves are at this moment living in the midst of an *undeveloped* scheme; that amid all the activities and ambitions of the world,

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is, in fact, never “drawn away of his own lust, and enticed” (Jas. i. 14), a doctrine utterly opposed to that of the Bible. Far more probable is it, as has been suggested by Mr. Birks, that “the moral purpose of the binding of Satan is specially intended to destroy this secret delusion by which men excuse their sins; and to bring out in full relief the fact that man is prone to forsake God, *even without any external temptation.*”

We fully admit that the moral trial of man will, under the circumstances supposed, be much less severe than it now is. We imagine that God intends it should be so. The race *now* is for a kingly crown,—the prize of a high calling in Christ Jesus; for this is the day of the ingathering of the Church; and the struggle is, unquestionably, a fearful one—hopeless, indeed, but for the great Captain under whom we fight. The race *then* will be simply for the ordinary privileges of a Divine citizenship; for the Church, before the Millennium, is complete and with its Lord,—the probation, therefore, is reduced accordingly.

it is hastening to its end ; and happy, indeed, is he who, *pausing* amid the many occupations and excitements of daily life, *takes time to remember* that whatever may be the nature or the extent of the differences that exist among Christian men relative to the time or the manner in which these great events will occur, their *certainty* is scarcely a matter of dispute among those who accept the Apocalypse as an inspired book.

Respecting THE MILLENNIUM, as revealed to us in Scripture, we are *directly taught* no more than this :—

(1). That, after a terrific scene of judgment, apparently connected with a visible manifestation of the Lord Jesus *as Conqueror*, and occasioning the utter destruction, both of Babylon and its anti-Christian hosts, Satan is to be *bound* for a period spoken of as a thousand years ; that during this period—visibly or invisibly—the martyrs of the last apostacy are to reign with Christ.

(2). That at the end of this period Satan is to be loosed ; that he will again deceive the nations, and gather them together against the saints of God ; that this host will perish, like

its predeceffor, miraculoufly,—not, however, by the fword, but by fire from heaven, by *that fire* which is to enwrap the earth, and to introduce the general refurrección and the laft judgment.

This, we fay, is all that is *directly* ftated. We judge, however, from other portions of Scripture, which appear to correpond with “the firft refurrección,”—

(1). That not the martyrs of the laft apoftacy *only*, but all the elect Church will enjoy priority in refurrección, and live and reign with Chrift during the period referred to. We confider, as we have already faid, that St. Paul teaches this both to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xv. 23, 24), and to the Theffalonians (1 Thefs. iv. 16); that he refers to *this* day (the fecond advent of Chrift, which introduces the Millennium) as “the day of redemption,” to which the children of God are “fealed” by the Holy Spirit (Ephes. iv. 30); that this is “the coming of our Lord Jefus Chrift,” for which Chriftians are ever to “wait” (1 Cor. i. 7); that this is “the day of the Lord,” which “cometh as a thief in the night” (1 Thefs. v. 2).

But *we do not think* that the great conflagration spoken of by St. Peter, and also called "the day of the Lord" (2 Pet. iii. 10); *or*, "the day that shall be revealed by fire, and try every man's work of what sort it is" (1 Cor. iii. 13); *or*, the day in which God "will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained" (Acts xvii. 31), is to be associated with the introduction of the Millennium. These events, or "days," do not come till the thousand years have passed away.

We regard the MILLENNIAL period—from all that is revealed about it—to be neither more nor less than the appointed period during which Christ rules the world *as a conqueror*, and with "the rod of iron." It is the period when all outward and violent manifestations of wickedness are to be *repressed by force*; but there is nothing whatever to show that it is a period during which the world is inhabited exclusively or mainly by *renewed* men. On the contrary, the readiness with which "the nations" (evidently put for the great masses of mankind) listen to the seductions of Satan the moment

he is loofed, but too plainly indicates that their hearts were not given to God.

Let us, however, not be miftaken here. We do not mean to *exclude* moral and fpiritual influences, but fimplly to fay that the “binding of Satan” implies mainly *repreffion*; the abfolute hindrance, not only of perfecution, but of rapine and violence,—the putting down of all *war*, whether between individuals or nations. In that day will men caft their “idols of filver,” and their “idols of gold, which they had made each one for himfelf to worfhip, to the moles and to the bats.” But it will be under the influence of *terror*; not as a confequence of their converfion, but “for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majefty, when He arifeth to fhake terribly the earth” (Ifa. ii. 19—21). Then will the peoples “beat their fwords into ploughfhares, and their fpears into pruning-hooks” (ver. 4). Then will the univerfal peace that prevails juftify the language of the prophet,—“The wolf fhall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard fhall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together.” But again we fay,

this will come to pass, *not* because all men have come under the blessed influence of the Gospel, but because the Lord will then reprove iniquity by smiting "the earth with the rod of His mouth," and "with the breath of His lips" slaying the wicked (Isa. xi. 1—8.)

That during this period the Jews will be settled in their own land, and be the metropolitan nation of the world,—that "the Lord will assemble the outcasts of Israel, gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth, and make them the instruments of spreading the Gospel over the whole world, we cannot doubt; for "the root of Jesse will then stand for an ensign of the people," and "to it shall the Gentiles seek;" and the *knowledge* of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea; but that even this *does not imply* the universal reception of the truth, or the subjection of the human will to God, is plain, as we have just said, from the fact that no sooner is Satan loosed than the nations are deceived, and again array themselves in direct opposition to the Redeemer (Rev. xx. 8).

From the testimony of Scripture,—and we

have endeavoured to view it apart from any theories or pre-conceptions,—we cannot but conclude that the Millennium is the season when Christ is to rule “in the midst of His enemies” (Pfa. cx. 2); that it forms the intermediate link between this dispensation and the resurrection; and that it should be regarded as winding up the mediatorial economy, and being the immediate precursor of the last judgment.

The *time* of the Lord’s “appearing”—the day and the hour when the Master will come—is indeed not known, nor is it intended to be known; but amid all the folly that has so often marked popular writings on this subject, it is well to remember, that while *that day* will come upon the world in general with the terror and unexpectedness that mark the visitation of “a thief in the night,” there are those of whom it is said, “But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief” (1 Thes. v. 4); and that as it was in the days of Daniel, so is it now: “None of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand” (xii. 10).

END OF VOLUME THE FIRST.







