SIX SERMONS

ON THE INQUIRY

IS THERE IMMORTALITY IN SIN AND SUFFERING?

ALSO, A SERMON ON

CHRIST THE LIFE-GIVER:

OR,

THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL.

BY GEORGE STORRS,
EDITOR OF BIBLE EXAMINER.

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CHRIST THE LIFE-GIVER: OR THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL.

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH;

OR,

BRIEF NOTICE OF THE AUTHOR OF THE SIX SERMONS.

GEORGE STORRS, the subject of the following remarks, was born in Lebanon, N. H., December 13th, 1796. He was the youngest of eight children. His father, Col. Constant Storrs, was originally from Mansfield, Conn.; and was an industrious mechanic, serving, for a time, in the American Revolution as a wheelright. After the war of the Revolution he was married to Lucinda Howe, who was half-sister to the late Richard Salter Storrs, for many years minister of Longmeadow, Mass. After their marriage they removed to New Hampshire—the country being then a wilderness—and located in Lebanon, on Connecticut River; and by industry and economy became, what, in those days, was called a *wealthy farmer*. To them were born seven sons and one daughter. The mother of these children was ever watchful over their religious instruction, while the father was most studious to promote their temporal welfare. The mother invariably gathered her children around her, particularly on the Sabbath, to give them instruction in things pertaining to God, and our Saviour, Jesus Christ. She was not disposed to leave their religious education to the min-

ister, or any other less interested in their welfare than *a Mother*.

The Congregational and Calvinistic ministry was about the only preaching in Lebanon for many years. Very few of any other denomination ever preached there. The strong tendency to fatalism, in the Calvinistic preaching of that period, was a subject which the mother of these children did not fail to endeavor to counteract in the minds of her offspring, and to impress upon them unceasingly, that if they would seek the Lord he would be found of them. Such pious labor was not lost.

Though this family of children grew up to maturity, four of them died before their father; and six had gone down to the grave before their mother: two only survived her.

GEORGE'S mind was often deeply exercised on the things of religion from a child. Many anxious desires filled his heart that he might be a Christian. Early had his mother taught him to acknowledge "Our Father, who art in Heaven," and point him to "Our Saviour, Jesus Christ." Experimental religion, however, was a mystery to his mind, though one that he often anxiously desired to solve. Secret prayer was often resorted to, but he heard sometimes from the pulpit that, the man who cursed and swore was as likely—*yea, more likely*, to be converted than he who went to his closet to pray for the salvation of God. Such teaching made George feel sadly, as he thought his case was more hopeless than boys who he knew to be very profane, while he feared an oath. This influence, however, was counteracted by the vigilant instruction of his mother. Happy for him that he had *such* a mother. But for her instruction he has often thought and felt that he would never have been brought to a saving knowledge of God and His Christ. The sweet and heavenly strains of prayer, poured forth by that mother when she took George to her closet, and sought the mercy of God in Christ for him, made him forget or disregard the false teaching of the mere Theologian. Such scenes told on his heart not to be obliterated.

The preaching of the torments of hell never won his heart, though it often filled him with a dread of God, which was calculated more to drive him from God than to draw him to such a being. From fifteen to seventeen years of age was the most thoughtless period of his life. None of the terrors of preaching had any tendency to win him to the service of God; but at the close of the time last mentioned, in meditation, alone, far removed from all excitement, he became so affected with a sense of the *goodness* of God to him, that he resolved henceforth to seek the Lord till he should find Him. If he could pray for nothing else, he determined to pray daily that God would show him his need of a Saviour, which *theoretically* he understood, but *experimentally* he had not realized. His resolution being made, he pursued noiselessly and alone his purpose, light gradually breaking upon his mind till he was led to bow to Jesus, and come to God by him and found mercy. Months had passed away and no mortal but himself knew the exercises of his mind: he did not even communcate to his mother the revolution going on in himself. He took occasion, however, to listen to any persons who seemed disposed to converse on spiritual subjects, and often felt his heart encouraged by such conversation, though he took no part in it, but was an interested listener, unknown to them. This state of things continued for a year or more. During this period his only sister died. After her death his anxiety increased to be in a state of reconciliation with God, yet all his exercises were kept within his own bosom, except on one occasion to ask his mother---who was at the time confined by a fever---some indirect questions relating to God and Christ: after which he retired alone, and was overwhelmed with a sense of the love of God. Still he travelled on alone, sometimes believing and sometimes doubting. After months had passed away in this manner, he expressed to his mother, one day, that he much liked to hear a man talk who always talked sweetly about Jesus. His mother said to him---"George, do you think you are a Chris-

tian?" This was said with an anxious look which made him feel that a mother's heart was deeply interested. It was a question so unexpected that he almost faltered in answering it; but at length said, his mind was much interested on the subject. His mother replied—"I have long thought it was." This was as unexpected as her question, as he had no suspicion that any one thought him specially serious.

From that time himself and mother had frequent conversations, and she often prayed with him and for him, being a mother indeed, in more senses than one. He has never ceased to bless God for that mother.

At the age of nineteen he united with the Congregational Church, and about twenty others near his age united at the same time, who were the fruits of a revival at this period. Three years afterwards he was happily married to one of like faith in Christ. Two years passed and that wife was confined on a bed of sickness and suffering, which can never be known except to those who were witnesses of the scene. Four and a half long years of sickness, suffering and trial were then endured which terminated in her death.—She died most triumphantly, though a most painful death. Her husband stood by her bed-side and closed her eyes, when the dying struggle was over.

Prior to her death, Mr. Storrs had had his mind exercised with the conviction that God had called him to preach the gospel of Christ. He had exercised his gifts in the prayer and conference meetings of the church for years; and the thought had often occurred, that possibly he might have to proclaim Christ more publicly, and as a minister.

During the time of his wife's sickness, he was induced to hear a Methodist minister preach for the first time since he was interested in the things of religion. That minister he invited to his house, and also another of the same denomination. Their visits became a source of comfort to himself and wife. Ever after an intimacy existed between him and the Methodists; and about the time of his wife's death he united with that Church, and soon after commenced his labors as a

minister of the gospel. He joined the Methodist Traveling Connection in 1825, being then twenty-nine years old. The same year his second marriage occurred with a daughter of Col. Thomas Waterman, of Lebanon, N. H. His father-in-law was the first child ever born in Lebanon, and to the close of a long life one of the most prominent men in that town, being highly esteemed by all. Mr. Storrs traveled and preached among the Methodists till 1836, when he took the relation of a Local Preacher, but traveled more extensively than ever. For three years he spent most of his time lecturing and preaching on the subject of slavery, in a time which tried men's souls; as nearly the whole Methodist E. Church was hostile to an agitation of that subject. That hostility manifested itself specially through the Bishops, who endeavored by every possible means to suppress the discussion of the subject. That opposition convinced Mr. Storrs that *individual* responsibility was the true ground to occupy, and he could not submit to leave his responsibility in the hands of Bishops, nor any body of men, however good they might be. Without going into details of matters which led to such a result, he withdrew from said church entirely, in 1840, after a connection with it of sixteen years.

At this point it may be necessary to say, that Mr. Storrs never had a charge preferred against him for immoral or disorderly conduct at any period of his connection with the Congregational or Methodist Churches. And in severing his connection with them he was not actuated by hostility to them but by a deep conviction that his responsibility was to God *alone*.

In 1837—three years prior to his withdrawal from the M. E. Church—his mind was first called to a consideration of the subject of the final destiny of wicked men as being, possibly, an entire extinction of being and not endless preservation in sin and suffering.—This was by a small anonymous pamphlet put forth, as he learned, by Henry Grew, of Philadelphia. He read it to pass away a leisure hour while passing from Boston to New York. It was strange to him that so

plausible and scriptural an argument could be made in defence of a doctrine, which he had always regarded as unworthy of a serious consideration; for he had never doubted that man possessed an immortal soul.—A new train of thought had now been waked up in his mind; but he proceeded with great caution in examining the subject, and in conversing with any one upon it. He searched the Scriptures carefully, and sought every opportunity to get information from ministers, in particular. As the inquiry continued, the strongest arguments urged against this, to him, new view, served to carry his mind into the conviction of its truthfulness and scriptural basis. After several years investigation, conversation and correspondence with some of the most eminent ministers, and looking to God for direction he became settled that man has no immortality by his creation, or birth; and that "all the wicked will God destroy"—*utterly exterminate.*

He had counted the cost before he came to this conclusion. He had stood high in the denomination with which he was connected, and was greatly beloved by the ministers in the Conference, with which he had passed so many years. That Conference had given him, always, the most gratifying evidence of its confidence and esteem. Though he had, previous to the time now spoken of, taken a "local relation" he still enjoyed a high place in the affections of those ministers, and was ever happy to enjoy association with them.

To take a position, then, which should sever himself from them, and separate himself from the relation which had so long existed, with the certainty that he must for ever after be excluded from their pulpits, if not from their Christian regard, was a trial to his mind which could not have been endured except under a deep sense of the truth of that position which he now felt called to advocate and defend. Relying upon God, he chose to follow his convictions of truth to any and all other considerations; and he took his stand in defence of the doctrine, that there is no immortality out of Christ, and therefore wicked men will be con-

sumed—destroyed—or cease from life—be no more—"be as though they had not been."

He wrote three letters to a prominent and able minister of the Methodist E. Church, with whom he had been intimate. In reply, he acknowledged that he could not answer Mr. Storrs' arguments; and he never undertook it. On the contrary, after a few months, they had an interview, and examined the subject together, which resulted in his advising Mr. Storrs to publish the letters he had written him, but with a request to withhold his name. Accordingly, in the spring of 1841, four years after his attention was first called to the subject, two thousand copies of the "*Three Letters*" were issued from the press and sent abroad. This was not done without counting the cost.

At this period he was residing in Montpelier, Vt.; and expected likely he would never be called to preach anywhere again only as he did so on his own appointments, and near his then residence. Contrary to this expectation, he shortly after had an invitation to visit Albany, N. Y., which he did; and after preaching in that city three Sabbaths concluded to remove his family to that place in August, 1841. There he ministered to a small congregation, who came together on the principle of "Receiving one another as Christ had received them." The Bible was the only creed—Christian character the only test. For eight months he preached there without dwelling distinctly on his new views of Christian doctrine, though he had frankly told them what his views were, and circulated among them the "*Three Letters*" he had previously published.

He now felt called upon to come out more fully and distinctly on the subject, and he determined to do so. This gave rise to what has ever since been called the "Six Sermons," the special history of which we will here state.

Early in the spring of 1842, he determined to give *one* sermon that should embody all that might be desirable to present in relation to it. The appointment was made one week before hand, and public notice

given in the city papers. Monday previous to the time appointed he went to his study, and there spent the entire week in investigation, meditation, and prayer. Thus was the "*First Discourse*" prepared.—Never had he a deeper and sweeter sense of the Divine presence and blessing; and of being engaged in a work well pleasing in His sight; and he could as well doubt any other part of his Christian experience as to doubt that.

He found before the first week in his study was ended, that two discourses at least would be necessary to present the subject in a proper light. The time came for the first discourse to be delivered: it was Sabbath evening, and the house, for the first time since his mintry there, was full.

He informed the congregation that as his subject was a peculiar one, and he was liable to be misrepresented in what was said, he had determined to do what he had never done before—*i. e.*, *read* nearly all he had to say. At the close he gave out to preach another sermon on the same subject the next Lord's day evening. His second week was spent in his study in the same manner that the first had been; and thus was the "*Second Discourse*" prepared; but found there must be a third; and so did the matter proceed till he had prepared and preached the "*Sixth Discourse;*" and the history of the first week in his study is the history of the six weeks, each of which was spent in the same manner as the first. All this was without any reference to ever publishing. After the Discourses were ended, several who had listened to them desired their publication.—Accordingly he spent several weeks more in revising, reviewing, and preparing them for the press, and they came forth in May or June.

Such is the *origin* of his "Six Sermons," as they are now called. And he has never doubted, from that day to this, but what it was of God. His opponents, therefore, may not expect him to be easily shaken, whatever reaction they may suppose will take place; or though they may think the views are "making very little progress." They have made ten thousand times more

progress than Mr. Storrs ever expected in his life time. A brief history of that progress may not be uninteresting.

A few weeks after the "Six Sermons" were first published, at Albany, Mr. Storrs was visited by a man who was preaching the views of Wm. Miller on the second advent. He gave him the use of the "House of Prayer" in which to present those views. As the attention was deep, and the subject one of so much importance, if true, it was consented that he might repeat his course of Lectures in their place of worship, and Mr. Storrs became partially convinced of the correctness of the views advocated; so much so that he solicited the services of the late Charles Fitch, formerly a Congregational minister, who had embraced the views of Mr. Miller, to visit Albany and preach to the people on the subject. Accordingly a *Tent* meeting was appointed for that place, and thousands came out to hear that holy man of God, Mr. Fitch, who labored unceasingly and with great power in preaching the coming of the Lord. During his ministry there Mr. S. became settled that the doctrine he preached was true. Under this impression, he left his stated ministry in Albany to travel and preach; and for the next three months, in the fall of 1842, preached to thousands on thousands in relation to the coming of the Lord.—Thus, without seeking it, the providence of God had given him an influence over a multitude of minds, both ministers and laymen. He did not however introduce his *peculiar* views directly into his ministrations in public. He had no desire to do so. But as it was known that he held these views he was constantly met with inquirers, both ministers and private Christians, to whom he frankly stated his belief that "all the wicked will God destroy." The Six Sermons were sought for and read, and the truth on that subject spread while he kept silent, publicly.

At length the "organ" of Mr. Miller's views, "The Signs of the Times," Boston, Mass., came out strong against a minister who felt it his duty to preach what the end of the wicked would be as well as to preach

the coming of the Lord. That paper several times published remarks censuring that minister; and Mr. S. felt that as he held the same sentiments he was bound not to keep silence and let him suffer alone.—Accordingly, in Dec., 1842, under a deep conviction that God called him thereto, he revised the Six Sermons, and published an edition of five thousand in newspaper form, in the city of New York, where he was then preaching, and scattered them over the United States, at his own expense. A few weeks after that he gave them another revision and published ten thousand more and scattered them in the same manner. Thus was the seed sown, and it sprung up in all directions.

In the spring of 1843, he was invited to Philadelphia to preach on the advent, and thousands came out to hear. It was well known what his sentiments on the end of the wicked were, and there was an evident desire to hear something on that subject. Instead, however, of preaching on the subject, he had the Six Sermons stereotyped in the quarto form, and printed two thousand copies; these were distributed among the congregation to which he was then preaching; and there is little doubt but that most who then read were either convinced of the truth, or had their prejudices so far removed as to feel no opposition.

In the fall of 1843, he went to Cincinnati, Ohio, and spent several months. There also and in Indiana, some five or six thousands of the Sermons were scattered; and we know that the seed took root in that region.

It is proper and right that we should here state that Mr. Miller uniformly opposed Mr. Storrs' views on the immortality question.

The views maintained in the Six Sermons, in the winter of 1843 and 1844 had taken strong hold of many minds; and in Jan., 1844, Charles Fitch, of whom we have previously spoken, wrote Mr. Storrs a letter commencing as follows—

"CLEVELAND, Ohio, Jan. 25, 1844.

Dear Br. Storrs :—As you have long been fighting the Lord's battles alone, on the subject of the state of the dead, and of the final doom of the wicked, I write this to say, that I am at last, after much thought and prayer, and a full conviction of duty to God, prepared to take my stand by your side."

He then went on to state his "thorough conversion" to the views in question. This letter was indeed a cordial to Mr. Storrs. Mr. Fitch was a pleasant and powerful preacher, and carried with him a mighty influence. This letter from him was a dreadful blow to the opposers of the doctrine of the Six Sermons among the advent believers.

In May of the same year he wrote Mr. S. again, and commenced by saying—"I have received a long letter from Br. Litch, touching the state of the dead, the end of the wicked, &c. It would be exceeding pleasant to me, to be able to please him, and the dear brethren who agree with him, for I love them all, and could rejoice to concede anything but truth, to be able to harmonise with them in my views. But there is a friend who has bought me with his blood, and I take more pleasure in pleasing Him, than in pleasing all the world besides. I never preached my present views touching the state of the dead, and the destruction of the wicked, until fully convinced that I could no longer withhold them without displeasing my blessed Lord and Master."

He wrote another letter in July, 1844, giving a particular account of his "first impressions"—"the process of conviction," and his "conversion" to these views. In this faith Mr. Fitch lived and labored a few months; but his abundant labors brought on sickness, and in October, 1844, he fell asleep in Jesus, in the glorious hope of soon awaking at the voice of the Son of God.

About the same time as Charles Fitch, many other ministers in various parts of the country came into the

same views, and their number has steadily continued to increase to the present time.

In 1843 the Six Sermons were republished in England and circulated in various parts of that country, and must have attracted some attention, as they are referred to by several writers on both sides of the question there. About this time Dr. Lees, of Leeds, broke ground in England against the endless-torture doctrine, and man's natural immortality. Near the same point of time, Mr. Dobney, a Baptist minister, published his excellent work on "Future Punishment," in England, which has been republished here, and has been the means of bringing many to the truth. Mr. White, a Congregationalist minister, also published his "Life in Christ," taking the same side with Mr. Dobney; and several other ministers in England are on the same ground, and among those who favor it is Archbishop Whately; also Wm. Glenn Moncrieff, lately a minister in the Congregational Church in Scotland; and last, not least in labor, J. Panton Ham, Congregational minister, Bristol, England. The work is clearly spreading on the other side of the Atlantic.

But to return to this country. These truths are spreading all through the western States; both ministers and laymen are taking hold of them, and sinners are converted through their influence that could not be reached by the old horrible doctrine—"Ye shall *not* surely *die*"—"Ye shall be kept *alive* eternally, and tormented." In North Carolina Dr. Lee and Eld. Pritchard, both Baptist ministers, are doing battle for the truth on this subject. Dr. Lee has there scattered several hundred copies of the Six Sermons.

Dr. Pope, in the State of Missouri, has not been idle; but has circulated many of the Six Sermons and other works. More recently a number of ministers in various places, have espoused the cause of Life and Immortality only through Christ; and the conflict is waxing warmer continually.

For the sentiments contained in the Six Sermons, as now revised and much enlarged, Mr. Storrs alone is responsible, as he has steadily refused to let any man,

or any body of men, hold any responsibility for him or his views. It has not been, nor is it now, his object to establish a sect; as he has steadily refused to be recognized as in, what is called, a *church relation* with any body of men. He does, not, however, make his views of his independent responsibility a standard for the action of others; he desires all to act in harmony with their convictions of what truth and duty requires of them, as reponsible to God.

It may be proper in this place to say, that he labored statedly in the city of Philadelphia from Nov. 1844, to April, 1852, employing nearly all his time among that people, but never seeking for, or consenting to, an organization such as all sects labor to establish.—He believed that love was the bond of union, and that when that would not bind a people together they had better separate. For the last two or three years of his residence in Philadelphia he was called more to visit different parts of the country, and finally concluded to remove to New York, as a more central position for visiting abroad.

The "BIBLE EXAMINER" was started by him in 1843, as an occasional issue, at his own expense. It was continued in that way till 1847, when it was issued regularly each month, then in quarto form. With 1848 it was changed to a super-royal sheet of sixteen pages, and continued monthly till 1854, when it was issued *semi-monthly*. Its object is expressed by its *motto*---"NO IMMORTALITY, OR ENDLESS LIFE EXCEPT THROUGH JESUS CHRIST ALONE." In 1852 and 1853, in addition to issuing the EXAMINER, Mr. Storrs traveled thousands of miles, east and west, preaching to many people on the Life Theme. Since the EXAMINER has been issued twice each month, his labors have been nearly confined to it, and preaching in New York and vicinity. Thus situated, he resolved on a revision and enlargement of the "SIX SERMONS." While uncertain whether to attempt to publish them in this revised form, his plates for the quarto Six Sermons were destroyed by fire. He then resolved to go forward with the work he had been contemplating, which resulted

in the issue of the volume here presented to the reader.

A Phrenological description of Mr. Storrs, given in 1849, may conclude this account of the author of the Six Sermons. It is as follows :—

Mr. Storrs' physical and mental constitution is durable ; he has considerable force and energy of character, with fortitude, firmness and perseverance. He thinks for himself, but is open to conviction ; will not be forced, but may be persuaded. He is naturally confiding, but experience may have, to a considerable extent, corrected this predisposition to believe, confide in, or give credence to. He is a man of enlarged views, liberal sentiment, and a benevolent disposition. His object is *truth*, and this he strives to obtain, no matter at what sacrifice. He consults duty before expediency ; and would sooner stand *alone* with truth, than go with the multitude and be in error ; yet, he is not dogmatical in the advocacy of what he conceives to be the truth, but is rather persuasive, conciliatory and argumentative. He is a warm friend, a good companion, and an excellent counsellor.

He takes comprehensive views of things, examines both sides of all questions of a scriptural character, and decides according to the weight of evidence.—While he uncompromisingly advocates what he believes to be truth, in opposition to this and past ages, he does not sit in judgment on his opponents, but leaves them in the hands of God, to whom they must give account, and unto whom they stand or fall.

SIX SERMONS.

IS THERE IMMORTALITY IN SIN AND SUFFERING?

BY GEORGE STORRS.

SERMON I.

"May we know what this new doctrine whereof thou speakest is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know, therefore, what these things mean."—Acts xvii. 19, 20.

PAUL, the apostle, in preaching the gospel, came to Athens; he there beheld an altar incribed "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD." At the idolatry he saw, his spirit was stirred within him; hence he disputed daily with them that met him. He encountered certain philosophers—wise men, no doubt,—at least in their own estimation—and some of them said: What will this babbler say? Others said, he seemeth to be a setter forth of strange Gods. Doubtless they thought he was a heretic of the blackest stamp; yet they seemed disposed to hear him, before they passed final sentence upon him. In this respect they manifested a better disposition than many of the present day, who are so wise in their own estimation, that no one can advance a thought to which they will listen, unless it has first received the approbation of some doctor of divinity.

Not so with the men of Athens; strange as the things were that the Apostle taught, they were desirous to know what the new doctrine was. Not that it was new in itself, but only new to them.

Various errors exist among men in regard to revealed truth. These errors go to show how imperfect we are in knowledge—the mistakes committed in our education—the reluctance of the mind to investigate—and a want of moral courage to step aside from the track marked out by learned men, as they are thought to be, but who, most likely, have conducted their own investigations under the influence of the fear of being denounced as heretics, if they should be led to results unlike to those who are reputed for wisdom. But "if any man will be wise, let him become a fool that he may be wise," is the language of the apostle.

We honor God only so far as we have right conceptions of His character, government and purposes, and act in accordance with them. If we believe God will reward, or *punish* men contrary to His own word, we dishonor Him, however much sincerity we may possess. Truth and the honor of God are inseparable: and we cannot glorify our Heavenly Father by erroneous opinions. Yet, most professed Christians, if pressed on the subject, can give little better reason for what they believe, on many points, than that such has been the instruction they have received from men.

It is a solemn duty to study our Bibles, and form our opinions of what they teach for ourselves, as we must answer for ourselves. But in this study the adoption of correct principles of interpretation is of the first importance. Without this, our appeal to the word of God may only serve to confirm us in error.

The plainest truths of the Bible have been wrapped

in darkness by pretending that the language of the Scriptures has a mystical or *secret meaning* that does not appear in the words employed. Such a principle of interpretation is a libel on the Bible. That Book professes to be a *revelation;* and the Saviour says, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." The language of the Bible, then, should be explained as the language of any other book, i. e., according to its *plain* and obvious meaning: unless there is a clear necessity for departing from it. A strict adherence to this principle is necessary, if we would be saved from the wildest errors, and see the children of God united in one. With these remarks I proceed to

THE QUESTION AT ISSUE, OR POINT IN DEBATE.

The question is not, whether *man can* be immortal, nor whether the righteous *will* be immortal. These points are admitted and abundantly proved by the Bible; but the question is—Will the wicked who live and die in their sins, continue eternally, or without end, in a state of *conscious* existence? Or, once more —Is the punishment God has threatened to sinners an *eternal state of suffering and sin?* This involves the question of immortality. For if all men can be proved to be immortal, it seems to follow from the Bible, that the finally impenitent will be left in a state of endless suffering and sin.

THE ARGUMENTS IN PROOF OF MAN'S IMMORTALITY.

These are mainly three, viz: First—The desire all men feel for it. Second—That the soul is immaterial, uncompounded, indivisible, hence *indestructible*, and

therefore immortal. Third—That God *wills* the immortality of all men.

To these, perhaps, another should be added, viz :—"All nations and people have believed the soul immortal." To this last argument, I answer—There is no evidence that all nations and people have believed it. There is evidence to the contrary. In the "Dialogue on the Immortality of the Soul"—found in "PLATO'S DIALOGUES"—Socrates, having spoken of the nature of the soul, says—"Shall a soul of this nature, and created with all these advantages, be dissipated and annihilated as soon as it parts from the body, as *most men believe?*" Here the fact is brought out, that so far from its being a general belief that the soul is immortal, the exact reverse was true in Socrates' day. Socrates is supposed to have believed the souls of the good were immortal, and would ascend to the Gods at death. With respect to bad men, it is not so clear what his opinion was in regard to the final result with them. It seems, however, that he thought after they left the body, they wandered awhile in impure places, in suffering, "till they again enter a new body, and in all probability plunge themselves into the same manners and passions, as were the occupation of their first life. "For instance," continues Socrates, "those who made their belly their God, and loved nothing but indolence and impurity without any shame, and without any reserve, these enter into the bodies of asses, or such like creatures. And those who loved only injustice, tyranny and rapine, are employed to animate the bodies of wolves, hawks and falcons. Where else should souls of that sort go? The case of the rest is much the same. They go to animate the bodies of beasts of different species, according as they resemble

their former dispositions. The happiest of all these men are those who have made a profession of popular and civil virtues, such as temperance and justice; to which they have brought themselves only by habit and exercise, without any assistance from philosophy and the mind. It is probable, that after their death, their souls are joined to the bodies of politic and meek animals, such as bees, wasps and ants."

Surely, one would think that this is little short of annihilation itself. Socrates, after speaking of those who lived, "following reason for their guide," &c., says—"After such a life, and upon such principles, what should the soul be afraid of? Shall it fear, that upon its departure from the body, the winds will dissipate it, and run away with it, and that annihilation will be its fate?"

On this subject, Archbishop Whately, in his Lectures on "Scripture Revelations Concerning a Future State," speaks thus:—

"Among the heathen philosophers, Plato has been appealed to, as having believed in a future state of reward and punishment, on the ground that the passages in his works in which he inculcates the doctrine, are *much more numerous* than those in which he expresses his doubt of it. I cannot undertake to say that such is not the case; for this arithmetical mode (as it may be called) of ascertaining a writer's sentiments, by counting the passages on opposite sides, is one which had never occurred to me; nor do I think it is likely to be generally adopted. If, for instance, an author were to write ten volumes in defence of Christianity, and two or three times to express his suspicion that the whole is a tissue of fables, I believe few of his readers would feel any doubt as to his real sentiments. When a writer is at variance with himself, it is usual to judge from the nature of the subject, and the cir-

cumstances of the case, *which* is likely to be his real persuasion, and which, the one, he may think it decorous, or politically expedient, to profess.

"Now in the present case, if the ancient writers disbelieved a future state of reward and punishment, one can easily understand why they should nevertheless occasionally speak as if they did believe it; since the doctrine, they all agreed, was useful in keeping the multitude in awe. On the other hand, would they, if they did believe in it, ever deny its truth? or rather (which is more commonly the case in their works) would they allude to it as a fable so notoriously and completely disbelieved by all enlightened people as not to be worth denying, much less refuting, any more than tales of fairies are by modern writers?

"Even Aristotle has been appealed to as teaching (in the first book of the Nicomachean Ethics) the doctrine of a future state of enjoyment or suffering; though it is admitted by all, that, within a few pages, he speaks of death as the complete and final extinction of existence, "beyond which there is neither good nor evil to be expected." He does not even *assert* this as a thing to be proved, or which might be doubted; but *alludes* to it merely, as unquestioned and unquestionable. The other passage (in which he is supposed to speak of a state of consciousness after death) has been entirely mistaken by those who have so understood it. He expressly speaks of the dead, *in that very passage*, as "having *no* perception;" and all along proceeds on that supposition.

"But many things *appear* good or evil to a person who has no perception of them at the time they exist. For example, many have undergone great toils for the sake of leaving behind them an illustrious name, or of bequeathing a large fortune to their children: almost every one dislikes the idea of having his character branded with infamy after his death; or of his children coming to poverty or disgrace: many are pleased with the thought of a splendid funeral and stately monuments; or their bones reposing beside those of their forefathers, or of their beloved friends; and many

dread the idea of their bodies being disinterred and dissected, or torn by dogs. Now no one, I suppose, would maintain that all who partake of such feelings, expect that they shall be conscious, at the time, of what is befalling their bodies, their reputation, or their families after death; much less, that they expect that their happiness will, at that time, be effected by it. In fact, such feelings as I have been speaking of, seem to have always prevailed, even the more strongly, in those who expected no future state.

"It is of these posthumous occurrences that Aristotle is speaking, in the passage in question. But he expressly says, in that very passage, that "it would be *absurd* to speak of a man's actually enjoying happiness after he is dead;" evidently proceeding (as he always does) on the supposition that the dead have ceased to exist.

"The ancient heathens did but conjecture, without proof, respecting a future state. And there is this remarkable circumstance to be noticed in addition; that those who taught the doctrine (as the ancient heathen lawgivers themselves did, from a persuasion of its importance for men's conduct,) do not seem themselves to have believed what they taught, but to have thought merely of the expediency of inculcating this belief on the vulgar.

"It does not appear, however, that they had much success in impressing their doctrine on the mass of the people: for though a state of future rewards and punishments was commonly talked of among them, it seems to have been regarded as little more than an amusing fable. It does not appear, from the account of their own writers, that men's lives were ever influenced by any such belief. On the contrary, we find them, in speeches publicly delivered and now extant, ridiculing the very notion of any one's seriously believing the doctrine. And when they found death seemingly unavoidable and near at hand, as in the case of a very destructive pestilence, we are told, that those of them who had been the most devout worshippers of their gods, and had applied to them with various superstí-

tious ceremonies for deliverance from the plague, finding that the disease still raged, and that they had little chance of escaping it, at once cast off all thoughts of religion; and, resolving to enjoy life while it lasted, gave a loose to all their vicious inclinations. This shows, that even those who had the firmest faith in the power of their gods, looked to them for *temporal* deliverance only, and for their preservation in *this* life, and had not only no belief, but no suspicion even, that these Beings had any power to reward and punish beyond the grave;—that there was any truth in the popular tales respecting a future state.

"It may be thought, however, by some, that the wisest of the heathen philosophers, though they did not hold the notions of the vulgar as to the particulars of a future state of rewards and punishments, yet had convinced themselves (as in their writings they profess) of the immortality of the soul. And it is true that they had, in a certain sense; but in such a sense as in fact makes the doctrine amount to nothing at all. They imagined that the souls of men, and of all other animals, were not created by God, but were themselves parts of the divine mind, from which they were separated, when united with bodies; and to which they would return and be reunited, on quitting those bodies; so that the soul, according to this notion, was immortal both ways; that is, not only was to have no end, but had no beginning; and was to return after death into the same condition in which it was before our birth; a state without any distinct personal existence, or consciousness. It was the *substance of which the soul is composed*, that (according to this doctrine) was eternal, rather than the soul itself; which, as a distinct Being, was swallowed up and put an end to. Now it would be ridiculous to speak of any consolation, or any moral restraint, or any other effect whatever, springing from the belief of *such* a future state as this, which consists in becoming, after death, the same as we were before birth. To all practical purposes, it is the same thing as annihilation.

"Accordingly the Apostle Paul, when speaking to

the Corinthians (1 Cor. xv.) of some persons who denied the "*Resurrection* of the dead," (teaching, perhaps, some such doctrine as that I have just been speaking of,) declares, that in that case his "preaching would have been vain." To deny the "*resurrection*" is, according to him, to represent Christians as "having hope *in this life only*," and those "who have fallen asleep in Christ, as having *perished*." (v. 18, 19.) As for any such future existence as the ancient philosophers described, he does not consider it worth a thought.

"Such was the boasted discovery of the heathen sages! which has misled many inattentive readers of their works; who, finding them often profess the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and not being aware what sort of immortality it was that they meant, have hastily concluded that they had discovered something approaching to the truth; or, at least, that their doctrine was one which might have some practical effect on the feelings and conduct, which it is plain it never could. And such, very nearly, is said to be the belief entertained now by the learned among the East Indian Bramins, though they teach a different doctrine to the vulgar."

Thus, then, it appears there is no truth in the oft repeated assertion that all nations and people have believed in man's immortality, or an endless conscious survivance of a fancied entity called the soul. It was not true of the ancient heathen philosophers themselves, much less of the mass of the people.

So far from all nations and people believing the soul immortal, there were a large class among the Jews who did not believe it, viz.: the Sadducees, who said, "There is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit."

It may be replied—"The Sadducees were infidels, but the nation at large believed in the immortality of man; for the Pharisees taught it." I reply—These

two sects were both extremes: the first denying any future life, and the other making a future life dependent on what we now call *transmigration* of souls, rather than a real resurrection: and that idea probably arose from their notion of the soul's immortality.—These two sects are alike condemned by our Lord; and his followers are warned to beware of their doctrine: see Math. 16: 6–12. Both sects were corrupt in doctrine and in practice. Enough has now been said to show that all nations and people did not believe in the immortality of man.

I proceed to take up the three main arguments in support of man's immortality.

1. *The desire all men feel for it.* This argument can avail nothing, unless it can be proved, that what men desire they will possess. But men desire many things they never obtain. All men desire happiness; but does it, therefore, follow that all men will be happy? Certainly not. So, neither does it follow, because all men desire immortality, that therefore, they are immortal, or will all attain it. We might as well argue that because all men desire to be rich, therefore they are rich, or will certainly be so. The desire for immortality is, without doubt, a strong principle implanted in us by the author of our being, to excite us to a course of living that shall secure that invaluable blessing, which He designed to bestow upon man, if he would walk in obedience to to the law of his God.—Hence, the dread of the loss of it was to influence men in enduring whatever of trial might be their lot, during their sojourn in this state of probation; and, properly considered, will be a mighty stimulous to enable us to suffer even unto death, if need be, that we may gain ETERNAL LIFE.

2. It is said—"*The soul is a simple essence, immaterial, uncompounded, indivisible, indestructible, and hence immortal.*"

Here is surely an array of words that might deter a timid man from investigation; but, following the apostolical injunction, I proceed to *prove*, or examine, these assumptions.

1.) How do those who take this position know the soul is a simple essence? Again, What is a simple essence? can they tell us? Or, is it merely a phrase to blind the mind and hinder investigation? Surely the phrase communicates no idea to the mind of man—it is too vague to give any instruction—it is too subtile to admit of being the subject of thought, and therefore it must pass for an unfounded assumption.

2.) What is *immateriality?* Strictly speaking it is, *not material*—not matter. In other words—it is *not substance.* What is that which has no substance?—What kind of *creation* is it? If the Creator formed "all things out of nothing," it would seem that man's soul has taken the form of its original, and is *nothing* still; for it is *not matter*, we are told. If it is said—"It is a spiritual substance"—I ask, What kind of substance is that, if it is not matter? I cannot conceive, and I do not see how it is possible to conceive, of substance without matter, in some form: it may be exceedingly refined. I regard the phrase, immaterial, as one which properly belongs to the things which *are not:* a sound without sense or meaning: a mere cloak to hide the nakedness of the theory of an immortal soul in man; a phrase of which its authors are as profoundly ignorant as the most unlearned of their pupils.

3.) It is said—"*The soul is uncompounded.*" If that is true, then it follows that it is *uncreated.* I can form

no idea of a creation without compounding. If not compounded it is only what it was: no new idea is produced. Then, if the soul exists at all, as an entity, it must be a part of the uncreated: that is, it must be a part of God. If a part of God, how can it sin? Can God be divided against himself? But how is that God who is "without body or *parts*" to be separated into the millions of souls that have inhabited, and do inhabit this earth? And then these parts of God often meet in the battle field, slaying each other! Horrid work, truly, for parts of God to be engaged in! But we cannot stop here. Millions of these parts of God sin against other parts of God, and are sent to hell to be tormented eternally, and eternally to curse and blaspheme the other parts of God! Such is the inevitable result of the theory I oppose, disguise it as its advocates may.

4.) "The soul is *indivisible*," it is affirmed. Then, if a part of God, it is an undivided part of God; and there is not, and connot be, in the nature of the case, but *one* soul to the whole human family. If the soul is *indivisible*, how could Abraham give or communicate a soul to Isaac? It could not be an offshoot from his own, for that would make his soul *divisible*, and our opposers say it is "indivisible." I cannot see, if Abraham communicated Isaac's soul to him, but what it must still have been Abraham's soul in Isaac, if the soul is not divisible; and then I do not see how there can be more than *one* soul for the whole human family; and as that is "indivisible," it is a *family* soul; hence it follows that the action of any one man must be the action of the *family* soul; so if one man sins, it is a *family* sin, or if one man acts virtuously it is a *family* virtue. Again, as the soul is "indivisible," all men

must have the same common destiny: say, for example, if Abraham should be lost, Isaac must be lost, for the soul can't be divided! and so whatever is the fate of the first man, Adam, must be the fate of all his race, or else the soul must be divisible; and then, what would become of the theory of its indivisibility?—Happy for man, however, we have the assurance that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are saved, and that proves Adam and Eve were, and that all their posterity must inevitably be so too—for "*the soul is indivisible!*" Thus our opposers take a short and certain rout to universal salvation. Can they get out of that dilemma without abandoning their theory?

There is no avoiding these conclusions only by affirming that a soul is created for each new-born child. But if created, is it holy or unholy? If holy, does God place holy souls in unholy bodies to pollute and defile them? If souls are a new creation at birth, how is Adam's moral depravity transmitted to his posterity? as theologians affirm it is. But if they are created unholy, is any soul of man blameworthy for his moral depravity? These are questions for the theologians to solve who maintain the indivisibility of the soul: questions which are no longer to pass by any man's mere *affirmation.* Give us proof—"thus saith the Lord," for these assumptions about the soul.

5.) Shall it be affirmed the soul is "*indestructible?*" If so, it it because God has determined it shall not be destroyed, or because he lacks power to destroy it.—If it is the first, give us Scripture testimony of such determination. I hesitate not to say, there is no "thus saith the Lord" for any such assumption. If it is said, God cannot destroy it—I ask, did he create it? If so, does it take a greater exertion of power to destroy

than to create? or, did God so exhaust his omnipotence in the act of creation that it is not now equal to the work of reducing back to its original state that which he has made? If I were to affirm God's *inability* to destroy anything he has created I might justly be charged with being "*infidel.*" As it is, my opposers might more justly be charged with atheism; for they, in fact, deny Jehovah's omnipotence, which is equivalent to a denial of his being.

If to make their assumptions stronger they use the term annihilate, and say, "nothing can be annihilated —therefore man cannot be;" I answer, this position is wholly untenable, and is a deceptive play upon words. If a man dash in pieces a bottle, or burn a house to ashes, or consume a lamb in the fire, are not the bottle, the house, the lamb, annihilated? Say not, the elements of which they consisted still exist: *they* —the bottle, the house, the lamb—do not exist, *as such:* that *form* is annihilated. So when man ceases to exist, *as man*, he is annihilated. Not the elements of which he was formed: but as man he is no more. On the subject of annihilation, however, I may speak more at large in another place: I will only add now—If "God created all things out of nothing," as the theology of the age affirms, then he can, if he will, reduce all things back to nothing, or omnipotence has ceased to be omnipotent.

The attempt to prove the immortality of the soul, from its supposed indestructibility, is without force or truth; and with it falls the whole catalogue of assumptions, with which it is connected. He who created can destroy—"Fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell"—in *gehenna.*

The Philosophical argument for the immortality of

man's soul, when stript of all its useless attire, stands thus :—

1. There are only two primary substances, viz : matter and spirit.

2. Matter has no power of self-motion, or self-determination, however it may be organized.

3. Therefore, wherever we see matter endowed with this power, there must have been added to it an immortal spirit or soul, that is immaterial, &c.

This is the soul of all the philosophical arguments that have ever been put forth to prove man has an immortal soul. If the position is true it endows every animal, insect, or crawling worm upon earth with an immortal and immaterial soul just as *really* as man ; and strips Jesus Christ of all the glory of bestowing immortality upon man by his work and meditation.

Having examined the first two arguments in favor of the natural immortality of men, and shown, as I think, that they have no foundation in truth, the ground of argument is narrowed to the one point, viz :

3. *Is it the will of God that wicked men, who die in their sins, shall be immortal ?*

In determining this question, no man will be called master or father that now lives or ever did live. It will weigh nothing in my mind, what any of the (so-called) "fathers," have said or written; but what saith the testimony of God ? "To the law and to the testimony ; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

First, I call attention to what man lost by the fall. In order to understand this, let us look at man prior to the fall. He was a probationer. For what ? Not for life merely, as he was in the enjoyment of that. I conclude it was for *eternal life*, or, life uninterrupted

by death—figured and set forth before his eyes by the "tree of life"—as *death*, the opposite, was set forth by the "tree of knowledge of good and evil." Each of those trees, I conclude, were signs; the one of *Life*, the other of *Death*—not of man's body merely, but of the *whole* man; or, in other words, "Life and Death" were "set before" him. Eternal life must depend upon the development of a moral character in *harmony* with his Maker. If a development is made hostile and unharmonious, he is assured he shall not live, but shall "*surely die.*" Thus permanent disorder is guarded against in God's universe, and man had before him a standing call and warning—a call to obedience and Life; a warning against disobedience, or sin and Death. He disregarded the warning, and slighted the call—he sinned. Now, "The Lord said, lest he (man) put forth his hand, and take of the tree of life, and eat, and LIVE FOR EVER, he (God) drove out the man, and placed a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." That is as clear as language can express it, the Lord God determined, or willed, that man should not be immortal in his sin; or, in other words, by sin man failed to secure a *title* to immortality, and was cut off from the "tree of life;" or, the sign God had given him of eternal life, was "hid from" his "eyes."

That this loss relates to the whole man, and not to the body merely, as some suppose, I prove from the fact, that if it related to the body only, then there is not a particle of evidence in the transaction, of pronouncing sentence upon man, by his Maker, that any penalty was threatened to the soul—supposing man to possess such an entity—or inflicted upon it. There is surely none in the context; and it appears to me, that

if the exclusion from the tree of life, lest man should eat and live for ever, does not relate to the *entire* man, there is no evidence there that the denunciation of God against him affected any thing but his body.—It appears it was God's will that man should not be immortal in sin and misery; and this *will* is expressed in the text under consideration.

Again—that this loss related to the whole man, I prove from the fact, that our Saviour, in his address to one of the seven churches of Asia, says, "to him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God." How clear the reference, and how obvious, that it is the whole man that is spoken of; and that none are to have access to that tree, or have immortality, but such as overcome. Will it be pretended that this relates to the *body* only? If so, then it proves that the body will not be immortal, unless we overcome—for the objector has admitted that the loss of the tree of life was the *means* of death to the body; and unless he regains access to that tree, or that which it represented, he must remain under death; and, as access to that tree is to be had only on condition of victory, the impenisent sinner will not have an immortal body, if the objector's theory is correct, whatever becomes of the fancied soul.

But I wish to call attention further to the tree of life, to show that it related to something more than the body. Revelation, 22d chapter and 2d verse, we read thus:—"In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life," &c.; and at the 14th verse—"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the

city." The reference here is too clear to be misunderstood; no one will pretend that this relates to the body merely. By what authority, then, do they assume it, in regard to the "tree of life" in Paradise?

Allow me here to introduce an extract or two from Richard Watson. Few men have written better than he. His "Institutes" are well known among many in this country, as well as in Europe. In his sermon on "Paradise shut and re-opened," he has this remark—

"The tree of life was a kind of sacrament. As the promise of immortality was given to Adam, every time he ate of this tree by God's appointment, he expressed his faith in God's promise; and God, as often as he ate of it sealed the promise of immortality to man.—In this view, sin excluded man from the tree of life, as he lost his title to immortality." Again, Mr. Watson says, in his sermon on "The tree of life,"—"It has been suggested that it was the natural means appointed to counteract disease by medical virtue; and thus to prevent bodily decay and death. This" he says, "is not an improbable hypothesis; but we have no authority for it; and if we had, our inquiries would not be at at end. For this hypothesis relates only to the body; whereas we find the tree of life spoken of in connection with the life of the soul—not only with immortality on earth, but with immortality in heaven. Thus wisdom, heavenly wisdom, is called 'a tree of life, with reference to the safety of the soul; and the 'fruit of the righteous' is declared to be 'a tree of life,' with reference to its issue in another world.—Thus also in the visions described by Ezekiel, of the glories of the Church on earth, and of those of St. John relating to the Church in heaven, 'the tree of life' stands as a conspicuous object in the scenes of

grandeur and beauty which each unfold; and therefore as closely connected with ideas of spiritual life here and hereafter."

"It is not, therefore, without reason," he continues, "that many eminent divines have considered this tree as a constant pledge to Adam of a higher life; and since there was a covenant of works, the tenor of which was, 'this do, and thou shalt live,'—and as we know God has ever connected signs, seals, and sacraments with his covenants—analogy may lead us to conclude that this tree was the matter of sacrament—the eating of it a religious act; and that it was called 'the tree of life,' because it was not only a means of sustaining the immortality of the body, but the pledge of spiritual life here, and of a higher and more glorious life in a future state, to which man might pass, not, indeed, by death, but by translation."

"This will explain," continues Mr. Watson, "the reason why the fruit of that tree was prohibited after man had sinned. He had broken the covenant, and had no right now to eat of the sign, the sacrament, the pledge of immortality. 'Lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life and eat and live for ever: therefore, the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden. God resumed his promises, withdrew the sign of them, and now refused any token or assurance of his favor."

Mr. Watson add, "The Judge passes sentence, but the Judge also gives a promise; and man is bidden to hope in another object, 'the seed of the woman.' That seed was henceforth to be his *tree of life*."

Thus much for Mr. Watson. He did not hold the doctrine for which I contend, in regard to the final destiny of the wicked; still, there are passages in his

works which look strongly that way. This truth then comes full into view, *that there is no immortality in sin.* Or, in other words, God has willed that the wicked shall not have immortality. Adam being excluded from immortality could not possibly communicate it to his posterity: this invaluable blessing was ever after to be had *only* in Christ; for God has given unto us ETERNAL LIFE, and this life is in his Son; so that "He that hath the Son, hath *life*," whilst "he that hath not the Son of God hath *not life.*"

FACTS FROM GOD'S WORD FOR CONSIDERATION.

Before I proceed further, I wish to call attention to a few facts from the Scriptures of divine truth.

The word "*Eternal*" occurs but twice in the Old Testament. Once in Deut. 23 : 27, and is applied to God—"The *eternal* God is thy refuge"—and once in Isa. 60 : 15, and is spoken of the city of God—"I will make thee an *eternal* excellency."

The phrase "*Eternity*" occurs but once in the Bible, viz., Isa. 57 : 15, and is applied to God—"Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth *eternity.*"

How common to hear men talk about *eternity*—and to hear ministers tell their hearers they are going into eternity—and urge that consideration upon them, to call up attention. "Prepare for eternity," say they. To my mind, it is evident, *that* consideration is not made use of in the Scriptures, to lead men to God. I conceive it is false, in fact, to say a man has gone into eternity, because nothing can be clearer than that time will continue endlessly to any being that had a *beginning*: if he continues in life a relation will always exist to the period when life commenced, and that rela-

tion cannot be separated from *time*. To say, then, that a man has gone, or is "going into *eternity*," is saying that which is not true; and to urge upon a person such a consideration is to be "wise above what is written." Jesus Christ, nor his apostles ever used it. They preached that men were perishing—dying—exposed to death—in danger of losing everlasting life—traveling in the way that leadeth to destruction, &c.; and exhorted them to repent—believe—to lead a new life—to save themselves from this untoward generation—to lay hold on eternal life, &c.—but never told their hearers—"You are hastening to eternity;" for, I repeat it, that is not true, in fact.

When men die they "*sleep* in the dust of the earth:" Dan. 12: 2. They wake not till Christ returns "*from* heaven;" or till the last trump. See 1 Corth. 15: 18, 32, 51, 52; Phil. 3: 11, 20, 21; and 1 Thess. 4: 13–18.

The phrase "eternal life," occurs no where in the Bible, except in the New Testament, and is always spoken of the righteous; it never has connected with it any qualifying terms, such as "happy," "blessed," or "miserable," &c., but simply denotes life in opposition to the death of the wicked. See Romans 6: 21–23. "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life; for the wages of sin is death: but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Here life and death are put in opposition, and no intimation is given that the death of the wicked is eternal conscious being in torments.

It is very common to hear people talk about a hap-

py eternal life—a blessed eternal life—a glorious eternal life; as though the language of the Bible were not explicit enough. Such additions to the word of God, give evidence, if we had no other, that there is something defective in their theory. Such additions ought always to be looked upon with suspicion; and, if received at all, be received with great caution.

In interpreting the Scriptures, if we would be saved from the wild fields of conjecture, and save ourselves from an entire dependence upon others for the knowledge of what the Bible teaches, we must have some settled principles of interpretation. The following I consider the most important:—

First—That words are to have their primary and obvious meaning, unless there is a clear necessity of departing from it. By their primary and obvious meaning, I mean the plain and direct sense of the words, such as they may be supposed to have in the mouths of the speakers, who used them according to the language of that time and country in which they lived, without any of those learned, artificial, and forced senses, such as are put on them by those who claim the right to be the "authorized expounders of the Bible." Such forced sense is, usually, nothing more than the peculiar notions they have been brought up in, and may have no better foundation than the superstition of some good old ancestor.

The next principle of interpretation I would lay down is, That it is a truth, from which we are not to depart without the clearest evidence, that words are never used to mean *more* than their primary signification; though they may be, and often are, used to signify something *less*. Not to adhere to this principle is to make revelation *no revelation*. Those who abandon

it may as well admit, at once, that the common people ought not to have the Bible, for it will only lead them astray. Why should Protestants boast over the Catholics in this respect? Do not both, virtually, claim that the language of Scripture is mystical, or has a meaning that does not appear in the common signification of the words? and, therefore, the Priests must interpret them to the people? Might we not as well give our Bibles altogether into the hands of these interpreters? Especially, if the plain common sense meaning of words is not to be followed, when there is no clear necessity for departing from it.

The primary meaning of the term *death* is, "the extinction of life." To say that when God threatens men with death, he does not mean they shall die, but be kept alive in eternal torments is not warranted by any ordinary use of language.

What should we think of a law that says, "For murder thou shalt die," if we were told the meaning is not, that the transgressor shall actually die, but be kept alive in undescribable torments, protracted to the greatest possible extent? Would any man think he was fairly dealt with by such an administration? And would he not have just cause of complaint at the want of definiteness in the terms used to denote the punishment threatened!

The term "*Immortal*" occurs but *once* in the Bible, viz.: 1 Tim. 1: 17; and is applied to God, "The king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God."

If we were to judge by the frequency that we hear the phrase "immortal soul," we should suppose it was the most common expression in the Scriptures. You will hardly hear a sermon without the preacher often telling, with great emphasis, about "the immortal

soul," as though he thought that qualifying term was all important to impress his hearers with a sense of the soul's value; not content, with the Saviour to ask—"What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" No, that would be quite too weak, in his estimation, and he must strengthen it by adding, "immortal." To show the absurdity of such a course, I have only to say—That which is immortal cannot be lost. Hence, the persons who use this qualifying term, have to add another, and say—lose all "happiness." Now, the loss of the soul, and the loss of happiness, are two very different things, and each capable of being expressed in appropriate language. To say, when our Saviour said, a man may "lose his own soul," he did not mean that he will come short of immortality, perish, or cease all sense and life, but only that he shall lose the happiness of his soul, is, in my mind, corrupting the word of God.

As in sermons, so it is in prayers. Men seem to think prayers have but little power, unless they spice them often with "immortal soul:" and they would probably regard you as an infidel, if you were to tell them the Bible no where speaks of an immortal soul. How often, too, do we hear men talk about "the undying soul," in direct contradiction of the testimony of God, which expressly declares, "the soul that sinneth, IT SHALL DIE." A hymn, often sung begins as follows:

"A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify,
A *never dying soul* to save
And fit it for the sky."

The same hymn ends thus:—

"Help me to watch and pray,
And on thyself rely,
Assured if I my trust betray,
I shall *forever die*."

How a never dying soul can forever die, it will take a poet to tell; or a very learned divine. Common people are not skilled in such palpable contradictions. The hymn under consideration is one of great beauty and excellence, with the exception of this defect.

The term "*immortality*," occurs only five times in the Bible, and is never spoken of the wicked; but is either applied to God and His Christ, or brought to view as something to be sought after, and to be found alone in Christ. "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for honor, glory, immortality, —eternal life," Rom. 2: 7. Why, I pray, are men to *seek* for it, if it is the inheritance of all?

"Shall *mortal* man be more just than God?" Job 4: 17. Man's body is neither just nor unjust in itself; this text, therefore, speaks of the *man*, as such; or the whole man, who is said to be mortal. Paul, in Rom. 8: 10, says, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead" (i. e. mortal, doomed to die,) "because of sin; but the spirit is life" (why? because the soul is immortal? No; but) "because of righteousness;" clearly implying that it is being righteous, or having Christ in them, and possessing the Spirit of God, that is to make them immortal. This is further evident from the next verse, where he assures them that their mortal bodies should be quickened, i. e. be made immortal by the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead.

Man is said to be "corruptible," in opposition to the "*in*corruptible God." See Rom. 1: 23. Again; "They that sow to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption," not immortality. See Gal. 6: 8. The wicked shall "utterly perish" in their own "corruption." 2 Peter 2: 12.

Concluding Remarks.

If the view I take of this subject be correct, then many portions of Scripture, which have been obscure on the common theory, become clear, beautiful and full of meaning and force. If men are really dying, according to the strict and literal meaning of that term, that is, the whole man, then the language in which they are addressed is strictly calculated to awaken attention, and move their hearts. For example: "In him was *life;* and the life was the light of men." Men are represented as sitting "in darkness, and in the shadow of death;" i. e. death is so near them that his dark shadow is over them; but Christ is "the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world;" thus showing them how to escape death. "The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world—I am the bread of life. This is the bread that cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and Not Die."

How natural and forcible these and similar texts are, on the supposition that man is actually dying. It takes not a doctor of divinity to see how appropriate the remedy to the disease. Men by sin have been cut off from the tree of life—they were starving, dying. Christ cometh: the bread of life—the feast is spread; hungry, dying souls are invited, without money and without price. Come, eat and Live. If you stay away, you Die. O come to Christ and live—yea, live forever, and *not die.* Amen.

SERMON II.

"Ye shall not surely die." Gen. iii. 4.

Our Saviour saith, the old serpent—"the devil, is a liar and the father of it." He commenced his attack on our race by saying they should "not surely die," if they did disobey God. He was successful in that game, and has played the same card, in some form, on men, ever since he first swept Paradise with it. He told Eve that the God of love could not give place to such feelings as to cut them off from life if they did disobey. He has never forgotten his success. True, he has turned his card since, but it is the same card still. It has still inscribed on it—"Ye shall not SURELY DIE." Now he makes use of it to insinuate that God does not love or pity man, seeing He has determined that man shall not DIE, but be kept alive in eternal and undescribable torments, for sins committed on earth, or hereafter to be committed in the theological hell, where it is impossible for the miserable ones to cease from sin!

As the doctrine, "Ye shall not surely die," had its origin with the old serpent, I cannot divest myself of the conviction that the notion that wicked men will be kept eternally alive in torments, and never die, had its origin from the same source, as it appears to be a perfect fac-simile; and that it was invented to inspire hard thoughts of God and keep men from turn-

ing to Him by repentance and faith, or confidence, and acknowledging their sins against the God of love. And I solemnly believe, this doctrine has kept more away from God, and driven them into infidelity, than any other doctrine that was ever promulgated. I am solemnly convinced that it has done more to destroy men than all other errors put together.

For, if some minds have been temporarily affected by it, they are seldom found to be uniform Christians, and hardly pretend to live in obedience to God, unless under some strong excitement; multitudes of others, without any proper reflection upon the claims of God's law, have rejected eternal punishment, because of the nature of that which the "orthodox" say is to be inflicted; whilst others have lived and died in real infidelity, or what has been called so, because they could not believe that a Being whose word declares that He "is love" could inflict such a punishment on even the worst and most bitter of His enemies.

But I will not detain you longer with an introduction. I shall attempt to show you, that the death God has threatened, as the wages of sin, is not immortality in misery, but an actual and *total* deprivation of life. I say, then, in opposition to the old serpent, if men do not come to Christ, that they may have life, they SHALL *surely die*—past hope, past recovery.

Let me here briefly recall attention to the question at issue. It is not whether man *can* be immortal, nor whether the righteous will be immortal, but will the conscious being of the wicked be eternal? Is the punishment of the wicked interminable being in sin and suffering? or an eternal cessation from life?

I use the term immortal, in these discourses, in its commonly received meaning, i. e. according to Grim-

shaw, "exempt from death;" and according to Walker, "never to die—never ending, perpetual." Strictly speaking, immortality is the development of *life* through an *indestructible organization*, so far as it relates to created beings.

In my first sermon I had brought the subject down to the inquiry,

WHAT ARE THE TERMS EMPLOYED TO DENOTE THE PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED.

Are they such as can, by any fair construction of language, be made to mean that the wicked are destined to a state of eternal sin and suffering? Let us keep in mind, that words are not to be so explained as to mean *more* than their primary signification, without an obvious necessity; though they may, and often do, signify *less*.

The terms employed are—*Perish—Utterly perish—Utterly consumed with terrors—Destroy—Destroyed—Destroyed forever—Destruction—To be burned—Burned UP with unquenchable fire—Burn them up, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch—Perdition—Die—Death—Second Death, &c.*

Let us now begin with the first of these terms, viz: "PERISH." Grimshaw, in his Etymology, says it signifies "to cease to have existence—to die—to decay." Which of these definitions is suited to convey the idea of eternal sin and suffering? Can that which is never to cease, be said to be *decaying?* Can that which has *interminable life* be said "to die?" Can that which is always to continue in being, be said "*to cease to have existence?*" I need not pursue that inquiry; it is a self-evident truth, that however the term *perish* may be used, in an accommodated sense, to signify something less than actual ceasing to be, it is even then

borrowed from its primary signification, and must be restored to it when there is not a known necessity for departing from it. In the case under consideration, there can be no such necessity, unless it can first be proved that men are immortal.

Paul, in 1 Cor. 15 : 18, says—"Then," (if Christ be not raised,) "they also that are fallen asleep in Christ are *perished*." What! in a state of eternal sin and suffering! The supposition is so absurd that my opponents admit that the term *perish* here means "to cease to be." By what fair interpretation of language can they ever make it mean any thing else, when spoken of the final state of the lost? Though the term is sometimes used to denote something less than an actual ceasing to be, it does not therefore follow that it is used to mean something far greater and more horrible. To apply this term to an eternal state of sin and misery, is to force a sense upon it which is most unwarrantable and unjustifiable, in my judgment.

Let us keep constantly in mind that the whole family of man, by their natural birth, have no access to the tree of life, consequently were perishing, were destitute of immortality. Now look at the following texts:

"God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, might not *perish*, but have everlasting life." Here everlasting life is the opposite of perishing. I pray, is everlasting sin and misery the opposite of everlasting life? The wicked, upon that view, have as really everlasting life as the righteous, though under different circumstances.

"For we," saith an apostle, "are unto God a sweet savor of Christ in them that are saved, and in them

that *perish*. To the one we are the savor of death unto death, and to the other of life unto life."

Here *perishing* and *life* are put in opposition, and the term *perish* is explained by the apostle himself, to mean *death*, and not life in misery.

I need not quote all the passage where this term is employed to express the final doom of the wicked, in which it is evident we are to receive it in its primary meaning, and no other. Before I leave this term, however, I must call your attention to one fact, and that is—in the Acts of the Apostles, the very place where we should expect to find, if any where in the Bible, the doctrine of eternal torments, because the apostles were addressing sinners, there is not a particle of evidence to support the common theory. On the contrary, the views I maintain are most clearly set forth by Paul, in the 13th chapter, in a discourse to the "blaspheming" Jews, telling them that they judged themselves "unworthy of everlasting life," and saying–"Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and *perish*." What an excellent occasion had the apostle to have aroused the Jews by the common theory, had he believed it.

Look at that chapter, and you will see, if there ever was a time in which the apostle was called to deal plainly, it was then. I ask if any preacher in these days, who believes in the immortality of all men, in preaching to such hardened sinners as the apostle addressed, contents himself with such language as the apostles here used? No. They first describe the misery of the sinner in hell, and then, with the strongest figures they can produce, go on to give an idea of its duration, which, after all, they cannot find language to describe. The apostle did no such thing. There

is not a particle of evidence of it in all his preaching and writings.

"DIE" AND "DEATH."

These terms primarily signify, "To perish—to come to nothing—the extinction of life." Hence, when these terms are applied to man, in regard to the final result of a course of sin, we ought to have good evidence that they are *not* to be understood in their *primary* meaning, before we depart from that interpretation; especially, before we fix upon them a sense so contrary to their proper signification as that of endless sin and suffering.

The apostle, in Rom. 1: 32, speaking of certain wicked characters, says—"Who, knowing the judgment of God, that they that commit such things are worthy of death," &c. In the 2d chapter, 5th verse and onwards, he speaks "of the righteous judgment of God," when "wrath" will be visited on the wicked; and the death spoken of is expressly called "perishing, as the result of the "indignation and wrath" with which the wicked will be visited "in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ." Death, then, as the apostle explains it, when applied to the punishment of wicked men, is to perish.

"The soul that sinneth it shall die," refers to its final doom. This will appear if we consider, men will die, i. e., leave this world, or state of being, whether they sin or not. Nor can it refer to a violent leaving this world, as some suppose, for all sinners do not die a violent death. I conclude, then, that it relates to the sinner's final doom.

"As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked, turn

from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" evidently looks to the same result, the final destiny of the wicked. Life and death are put in opposition: not life and conscious being in misery, but life and death, without any qualifying terms to lead any one to suspect that they are to be understood any other way than in their most obvious sense; and I cannot but think, if you were to put the Bible into the hands of a person who had never heard a word of explanation, he would so understand it.

Lest I should, in the present discourse, take up too much time in the examination of these terms, I will pass over the remainder of them for the present.

Having, as I judge, established the point that the wicked have not immortality, I might leave it to the believer in the opposite theory to prove *his* position from the Bible, and pursue the subject no further. I shall not, however, shrink from meeting the supposed objections to my view.

Objections Examined.

The objections do not arise from any positive proof in the Bible that the wicked are immortal, but from circumstantial evidence, drawn from expressions used in reference to the punishment of the impenitent. The first objection I shall notice is founded on the language of our Lord, "Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." It is said this proves the soul immortal. I remark—

First. Whatever this punishment is, it is put in opposition to "life." "If thy hand" or "foot offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter halt" or "maimed into life, than having two hands" or "feet," &c., "where the worm dieth not and the fire

is not quenched." Who does not see that here is the opposite of life, and therefore is death, or utter extinction of being without possibility of escape? In a parallel passage, our Saviour saith, "If thy right eye" or "hand offend thee, cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should *perish*, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."

Here the "worm that dieth not, and the fire" that "is not quenched," we see, is another form of expression for *perishing*.

Again, I remark, this expression of our Lord is a quotation from Isaiah 66 : 24, and is applied to the "carcasses" of men," which I presume my opponents will not pretend were immortal. But if the language in one place proves immortality, why not in the other? Then we shall have immortal carcasses as well as immortal souls. But the prophecy is describing evidently the kind of doom inflicted by the Eastern nations on the vilest offenders, who were not only slain, but their bodies deprived of the rights of burial, and either burned to ashes (which among them was regarded as a great indignity,) or left to moulder above ground and be devoured by worms. If the fire were quenched, they would not be utterly consumed, but something would remain—there would not be an entire destruction. It is manifest to every mind, if a fire is quenched or put out, the work of utter destruction is arrested, and something is left of the object upon which the fire kindled. The same may be said, if the worm die the carcass will not be consumed; but as the fire is not to be quenched, nor the worm die, therefore, they shall be utterly consumed, perish, cease to be found in the universe of God. The objector says, the idea of an unquenchable fire is, that it is never to go out. To

show the fallacy of this, I will suppose my house is on fire. When my neighbors arrive to my help, I say, effort is useless—the fire is unquenchable. Pray, what do I mean? That the fire will burn eternally? Any school-boy knows I mean simply the house will be totally consumed "Yes," says the objector, "that is true when the expression is applied to that which is consumable, but man has a soul that cannot be consumed." To this, I reply, That is the very point to be proved. The objector says he has, and I affirm he has not.

If it is still maintained that "unquenchable fire" means "never to go out," I refer those persons to an examination of a few passages of God's word on that question. 2 Chron. 34: 25, "Because they have forsaken me, and burned incense unto other gods, therefore my wrath shall be poured out upon *this place*, and shall not be quenched." Isa. 34: 9, 10, "And the land of Idumea shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever." Jeremiah 7: 20, "Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground, and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched." Also Jer. 17: 27, "Then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and shall not be quenched." Once more. See Ezekiel 20: 47, 48, "Say to the forests of the South, Hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I will kindle a fire in thee, and it shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree; the flaming flame shall not be quenched; and all flesh shall see that I, the Lord, have kindled it; it SHALL NOT BE QUENCHED."

Now, I wish to know if any man in his senses will pretend that all these fires that shall not be quenched are, "never to go out," in the strict sense of the term *eternal?* Does not any one see that so long as the things upon which the fire kindles are not proved to be immortal, the most extreme sense that can be fixed upon is, that there will be a total and irrecoverable destruction of them?

But as much stress is laid on the text under consideration, and on others where our Lord speaks of "*hell fire*"—*puros gehenna*—the fire of hell—we shall examine the subject more fully. Especially as by our Lord's using the expression "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," it is concluded that he teaches the immortality of all men, and the endless torment of the wicked. But, before we settle down on such a conclusion, it is better to examine the premises. I am disposed to think the conclusion is purely assumed. Let it be remembered the word in question "never occurs in the Septuagint Greek, nor in any classic author in the world." So says Dr. George Campbell, one of the most learned divines of the orthodox school of the last century. I remark, that it was never used by our Lord nor his apostles, when addressing Gentiles, whether by word or epistle. This fact speaks in thunder tones, as to its Jewish origin, and hence we are to look alone to Jews for an explanation of the term and its use.

The word is derived from "*Ge*," which signifies a "*valley*," and "*Hinnom*," a man's name. "*The Valley of Hinnom*," south of Jerusalem, "*once celebrated for the horrid worship of Moloch, and afterwards polluted with every species of filth, as well as the carcases of animals, and dead bodies of malefactors, to consume which, in order*

to avert the pestilence which such a mass of corruption would occasion, constant fires were kept burning."—Gr. Lex.

In the time of our Lord's personal ministry, a portion of the Jews used the phrase figuratively to denote the punishment of the wicked. As our Saviour adopted a figure of their own and used it only with Jews, it must be evident that he used it in harmony with facts. Now what were the facts in the case? They are these—Whatever was cast into the *fire of gehenna*, was cast there to be *destroyed*. If any flesh should fall outside of the fire, the *worms* devoured it, so that nothing there escaped utter destruction. No Jew was so stupid as ever to have conceived the thought that anything was thrown there to be *preserved*. The only idea that could have attached itself to this form of expression must have been that of a total and utter consumption, or destruction, without remedy, recovery, or escape. A Jew could understand it in no other sense; in any other sense the figure would have been both without meaning and without force.

This being the case, it is one of the strongest expressions in the Bible to disprove the common theory of the eternal preservation of the wicked in sin and suffering. The impenitent and incorrigible sinner, like the filth about Jerusalem, and the dead bodies of animals and men, if not utterly consumed and destroyed, would keep alive the plague in the universe; hence, they shall be "cast into the fire of *Gehenna—hell fire;*" or be utterly and totally destroyed, therefore "*fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna* —hell." Math. 10: 28. Just so certain as the filth about Jerusalem, and dead cascases were utterly consumed in the burning fire of the Valley of Hinnom, so certainly will God destroy both *soul* and body—that

is, the *entire being* of the incorrigible sinner, so that the universe shall be clear of these plague spots; then shall be fulfilled that which is written Rev. 5: 13, "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

Not a creature shall be left in conscious existence but what shall join in ascriptions of praise to God and the Lamb. Glorious time—happy hour. May you and I be of that happy number. If we would be, let us seek holiness of heart and life. In Christ alone is life; *know* him—*love* him—*obey* him, and then we shall join the blessed company John heard praising in the strains just described, which may the Lord grant us through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

The advocates of the common theory of endless sin and misery bring forward our Lord's words—

"These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." Math. 25: 46.

This text is supposed by many to sustain the theory of the immortality of the human soul, and the endless misery of the wicked.

It is said—"If the everlasting *misery* of the wicked may come to an end, so may the everlasting *bliss* of the righteous, as the self same word is employed to express the *duration* of the *misery* of the one class as the *happiness* of the other."

I answer—The text saith not a word of the happiness of the one nor of the misery of the other. But if it did, it would avail nothing to the advocate of the common theory, unless he could prove the two classes equally undying, and immortal.

The term *aionion*—translated *eternal* and *everlasting*, in this text—does not, of itself, prove either the righteous or wicked would have a perpetual and unending existence, because it does not necessarily mean *without end*. This can easily be shown by its use, and the use of its corresponding word—*oulom*—in Hebrew; which latter word occurs, in some of its forms, more than three hundred times in the Old Testament, and in a large majority of cases will be found to express a period, longer or shorter, that will have an end. Thus the Aaronical ministry is called an *everlasting* priesthood;" the hills are called "everlasting hills."

Those who think, because the same term expressing duration is applied to both classes, in the text under consideration, it is made certain that the wicked will exist as long as the righteous may be taught that they reason both inconclusively and dangerously. Take the following text, "The *everlasting* God." Isa. 40: 25; and compare it with Hab. 3: 6, "The *everlasting* mountains." Shall the mountains continue as long as God? How will the advocates of unending misery evade the conclusion on their premises, that the mountains will continne as long as God? Will they say, "We know the mountains will melt in the final conflagration?" True; and we know the wicked will be "burned up, and be left neither root nor branch," because, "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts;" Mal. 4: 1. But the Bible declares that God is "the King *immortal*:" not subject to be dissolved: while the everlasting mountains will be scattered and melted.

What is the argument, then, that the righteous are to continue in life while the wicked perish from life?

It is not alone in the expression everlasting or eternal, in the text; but in the fact that other texts assure

us the righteous "put on immortality, incorruption," at the resurrection; 1 Cor. 15: and, saith Jesus, "Neither can they die any more:" Luke 20. Thus their perpetuity in life is settled by language that can have no other sense than that of unending life and being: while no such language occurs in relation to the wicked. On the contrary, they are to be "*consumed, devoured, burned up, be destroyed, utterly destroyed, soul* and body," &c. Such expressions, in the absence of any text affirming the immortality of wicked men, must settle the question, if testimony can settle any point.

The stumbling stone of our opposers is, in their assumption that protracted *pain* and *punishment* are necessarily identical. But this assumption is false in fact. What is the highest crime known in human law? It is murder. What is the punishment for that crime? Is it the most protracted pain? Or, is it the *deprivation of life?* It is the latter: and that is called the "*capital* punishment;" not because the criminal endures more pain, or as much as he might by some other; but because he is cut off from life.

If it be attempted to evade this point by saying—"The criminal feels horribly, while awaiting the day of execution,"—I ask, if his feelings are any part of the *penalty* of the law? Certainly not. They may be a *consequence* of the crime; but the law does not say he shall feel bad, but that *he shall die.* But, say the advocates of the common idea of *pain*, as essential to punishment, "there is the dreadful hereafter to the criminal." I reply, whatever may be hereafter to him, that is no part of the penalty of the law under which he dies. So the Judge understands it, who pronounces the death sentence; for he concludes by saying, "May God have mercy on your soul:" i. e.,

"May you not be hurt hereafter." Thus, turn which way our opposers may, they meet a two edged sword that hews in pieces their notion of protracted pain and punishment being necessarily identical.

In the text under consideration, the Saviour expresses the idea of punishment, without any necessary idea of protracted pain. The word here translated punishment is *kolasin:* and it is never used, on any other occasion, in any of our Lord's discourses, as recorded in the Bible. When he speaks of *torment*, as he often does in the Gospels and in Revelation, he most uniformly uses the word *basanois*, but never, *kolasin*. *Kolasin* properly expresses punishment; and, strictly, the *kind* of punishment; as one meaning of the term is "*cut off*." The righteous enter into *life eternal:* the wicked are eternally *cut off* from life.

But we have an inspired Commentator on this declaration of our Lord; i. e., Paul, the apostle. Whatever *scene* is described Math. 25, and whatever *time* is spoken of, the same, in both respects, Paul speaks of 2 Thes. 1. They are both laid in one scene. Compare them together. "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him." Math. 25: 31. "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels." 2 Thess. 1: 7. Is here any mistake? Is not the scene the same in both texts? Is it possible to separate them? Again, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." Math. 25: 46. "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction." 2 Thess. 1: 9.

Here is no room to doubt but what Paul is speaking of the same punishment as Jesus; and the apostle declares the punishment is "*destruction*" not *preservation* under any circumstances; and the apostle tells us this

destruction is "from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." This last expression may have the sense of "out of his presence," but I am inclined to believe it has reference to the consuming fire that sometimes came out from the presence of the Lord, under the law given by Moses. As for example, in Lev. 10; 1, 2.—"Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron, took either of them his censor, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not: and there went out *fire from* the Lord, and *devoured* them, and they *died* before the Lord." Or, take the case of those who, in the rebellion of Korah (Numb. 16: 25,) had taken their censors to appear before the Lord, "And there came out a fire from the Lord, and *consumed* the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense." Here was no *preservation*, but a being *consumed, devoured;* so that they "*died.*" To this, most likely, Paul refers. The presence of Christ in his glory, with his only angels, will so overpower and fill with terror the wicked, who behold him, that they will *die*—be *destroyed*—by the sight. If Daniel, Dan. 10th, and John, the beloved disciple, Rev. I, both "fell *as dead*" at the sight of the glory manifested to them, and recovered not till a hand was laid on them, with a voice saying, *fear not*, how then shall Christ's *enemies* live when he shall appear in glory? They cannot: they have cultivated such a disregard for Christ, and contempt of him, in his absence, that when he appears in his glory his presence will fill them with such fear as to destroy them forever. No hand is to be laid on them, nor voice heard, to soothe their fears; and they are "*utterly consumed* with terror." Their punishment is "death—the wages of sin:" and it is irrevocable—it is eternal. Thus Paul

gives us a sure interpretation of Jesus' words, and enables us to speak with certainty as to the kind of punishment that is to be the portion of wicked men.

How death, from which there is no recovery, can be an eternal punishment, we will further illustrate. The highest punishment known in the law of God or man is *loss of life*, or death. The privation of life may be attended with pain or it may not. If it is, it is not *the* punishment, it is merely an accident attending the punishment. This truth is self-evident to the reflecting mind; because, however much the murderer might suffer in *dying*, *that* would not meet the claim of the law, or answer its penalty, unless his life is extinguished: he must "be hung by the neck *until he is dead*," saith the law.

If this man, when dead, could be restored to life in one year after, with the right to live, his punishment would be of only *one* year's duration. If a thousand years after, then it would have been of a thousand years duration: not of *pain*, but *loss of life*. If he is never to be restored, but to remain eternally dead, then *how long* is his punishment? Is it not *eternal*, in the strictest sense? It is an eternal deprivation of life. Such is the Bible teaching on the punishment of wicked men. And if we would live eternally we must come to Christ for that life. God has given to us eternal life, but that life is in His Son, and not in ourselves: See 1 John 5: 11, 12. It is the life-giving Spirit of God, bestowed on those, and those *only*, who come to Christ for it. This is that Spirit which raised up Christ from the dead, and by which, only, can any man be quickened to *immortality* and *incorruptibility*. Rom. 8: 11, with 1 Cor. 15: 45, 54; without it men perish—are destroyed—die, and "*shall be no*

more." Psalm 104 : 35. "Be as though they had not been," Obadiah 16 : "for the wages of sin is death;" Romans 6 : 23; and, "all the wicked will God destroy;" Psalms 145 : 20; yea, "They shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away." Psalms 37 : 20.

Another text, on which much reliance is placed, to support the common theory, is Jude 7th. "Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them, in like manner giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." Let us compare Scripture with Scripture. Peter, in his second epistle, gives us an account of this same matter.—He says, "If God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell—to be reserved unto the judgment; and spared not the old world, but saved Noah—a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example to those who after should LIVE ungodly," &c.

Thus Peter throws light on Jude. Both together show most clearly what displeasures God has manifested against sinners. It is concerning what has been done in *this* world, we are here told, that God has made an example to those who should *after* live ungodly.

Those judgments inflicted on the old world, Sodom and Gomorrah, are a standing, and perpetual, or "eternal" admonition, warning, or "example" to all men to the end of the world, that *live* ungodly.

Those judgments prove the utter destruction of the wicked, when God shall visit them for their iniquities. For, if Sodom and Gomorrah are an "*example*," as

Peter expressly affirms—then the wicked are to be "*turned to ashes*:" hence, are consumed, perish from being, and are no longer living conscious beings. Such, I am satisfied, is the scripture doctrine of the punishment of the wicked.

Concluding Remarks.

In my own mind the conclusion is irresistible, that the final doom of all the impenitent and unbelieving, is that they shall utterly perish—shall be "destroyed forever"—their "end" is to be "burned up, root and branch," with "fire unquenchable"—they shall not have everlasting life, or being, but be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord," the universe of God will be purified not only from sin, but sinners—and "the works of the devil" will be destroyed, exterminated; but "blessed and holy is he who hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power." Then there will be a "new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away." "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things have passed away."

The day when these tremendous scenes will transpire, I conceive, "is nigh, even at the doors." Yes, the time is at hand, when the wrath of God will be revealed from heaven—a day, described by the apostle, of "indignation and wrath; tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil." Then they that have "sinned without law shall also perish without law;" and a not less fearful doom awaits those

that have sinned in the light of the law and gospel both.

That awful day will soon overtake us; and who may abide the day of his coming? Behold, that day "shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, and all that do wickedly will be stubble;" as incapable of resisting the judgment that shall come upon them, as stubble is to resist the devouring flame.

Let us be wise now, therefore, and prepare to meet God. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little." "But blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

SERMON III.

"Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have *eternal life*, and they are they that that testify of me; and ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." John 5: 39, 40.

Some translate this text, "Ye do search the Scriptures," &c. It makes very little difference which way it is understood, whether as a command of what should be done, or as a declaration of what was done. Either way, it shows the immense value of the Scriptures, because they reveal eternal life: and it shows, too, that the object they had in searching, was to learn about eternal life. And further, it shows that the Scriptures are the proper place to search for that inestimable blessing. Every man is bound to do this for himself, and not trust to his teachers alone, as I fear too many do.

Teachers may be good men—honest men; they may intend to lead the people into truth, and preserve them from error: yet they are but men—fallible men, and may "err not knowing the Scriptures;" and besides, it is possible they may be bad men, who may have some other object in view than to "save souls from death;" but if this is not the case, and they are sincere, still it must be recollected, we have all received our education, from the first dawnings of intellect, under an influence that has necessarily given our minds a bias to a particular theory, or mode of interpreting the Scriptures; that mode may be right, or it

may be wrong; be it which it may, our teachers themselves have most likely had their opinions formed by it, and will teach it; but they cannot give an account for us to God; every man must give account of himself.

It will avail us nothing, at the judgment, to plead that our teachers taught us so,—or, that ecclesiastical bodies decreed or established such a belief, or articles of faith. It will roll back in thunder tones in our ears—"Every one must give account of *himself* to God." "You had the Scriptures, and the injunction to search them—and if you have erred to your ruin through false teaching, you have done it with the words of eternal life in your hands; but which you have trusted others to interpret for you, without giving that application of your own minds to the subject which it was your duty to do, instead of being absorbed by the things of time."

Would not such words be dreadful words in our ears at the great judgment day? Should we not then fully realize the truth of that Scripture which saith, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man?"

Teachers may be *helps* to understand the Scriptures, but should never be trusted as infallible guides; nor should they ever be allowed to decide authoritatively for us, what the true meaning of God's word is. Any such attempt on the part of teachers, is a manifest usurpation of the prerogative of Jehovah, and should always be resisted. Let teachers in religion keep to their appropriate work; which is not to be "lords over God's heritage," but to be "helpers" and "ensamples to the flock." They are not to decide who are heretics and who are orthodox, but to show men their sins—their perishing, dying condition, and point

them to Christ, the Great Physician, that they may "have life."

The expression of our Lord—"Ye will not come unto me that you might have life," shows that men are exposed to death. The question, with us, in these discourses, is, to determine what that death is:—whether it is eternal life in sin and suffering, or destruction of being. My position is, that it is the latter; and I have endeavored to establish that point from the standard version of the Scriptures; that version has its imperfections, but is as safe to follow as any of the improved versions, that have been, or may be gotten up in those times of strife among the multitude of sects that are in existence. How far I have been successful in my attempt, others will judge for themselves. No man can believe without evidence. Some, it is true, will not believe whatever the evidence may be, unless they could find the thing proposed for belief was likely to be popular. But no one need calculate on popularity who sets himself to follow truth wherever it may lead him. Our Lord himself was despised and rejected of men.

In my last discourse, I had brought down my examination of objections nearly to the close of the Bible. What remains for us to do, is, in the first place, to finish that examination; then, I shall take up objections from other sources; after which, I shall sustain my position by a mass of Scripture testimony not yet introduced but in part.

An Examination of Rev. 14: 9 to 14.

"If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead or 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."

It is maintained, with great assurance, that this text teaches, that "eternity of eternities" is the period of the torments of all wicked men; and, therefore, proves them immortal.

In order to make this text available to our opponents, they must prove *three things*. *First*—That it is spoken of ALL wicked men. *Second*—That it relates to their punishment beyond this life. And, *Third*—That the term "for ever and ever" is used in its primary and absolute sense of *endless*. Neither of these points have they ever proved, and I am persuaded they never can. It is not enough for a man to *affirm* all these points; let them *be proved*. I say again, it never has been done and never can be.

1. *Is this language used in reference to all wicked men?*

I answer, *no*. It is a specified class, viz: "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand." This is the *class* spoken of and threatened; and it comes almost infinitely short of embracing *all* the wicked.

Let us examine the connection and see when the "beast and his image" arose. The previous chapter shows that they did not come into existence till after the Christian era; nor indeed till the old Roman empire was in its *divided* state—as the ten horns clearly show—which could not have been earlier than the

fourth or fifth century after Christ. Hence, the wicked spoken of in the text under consideration, did not embrace any that lived *before* the Christian era, nor any that lived for three or four hundred years after. Here, then, is a large exception of the wicked. But we shall probably find a still larger exception, by an inquiry as to *which* beast is spoken of; for two are mentioned, *viz*: a *ten* horned beast, and a *two* horned one: and nearly all commentators are agreed that the two horned one came up at a much later period than the other; and some doubt if it has ever appeared yet. If the two horned beast is the one spoken of in the text under consideration, then an exception must be made of the wicked during the centuries that elapsed from the rise of the first to that of the second beast. Hence here is another large number of the wicked who are not embraced in the threatening. That it is the worshippers of the two horned beast, who are threatened, seems likely from the fact, that it is that beast that causes the *image* to the first to be made. Thus another period must elapse, after the second beast arose, before men could "worship *his image*;" and hence many other wicked would not be embraced in the judgment denounced in the text we are examining. Then we must inquire *who* or *what* power this "beast and his image" represent. Protestants, quite generally, say, it symbolizes *Papacy*. If that be so, then *no Protestant sinners* are included in the text; so that none of them need fear the threatening, whatever it embraces, unless they turn Papists. Possibly the Papist might say, the beast, &c., is Protestantism. If so, then all Catholic sinners escape. Thus, we see, it is a mere *assumption* to say, "This punishment foreshown, Rev. 14: 9 to 11" is "*precisely*" that to which

"*all the wicked* will be subjected," as *D. N. Lord* said, in his review of Dobney on Future Punishment, *Theological Journal* for 1850, p. 416.

The dynasty of rulers symbolized by this beast and his image are of late origin, if yet in existence; hence it is impossible that more than a small portion of the race of Adam can come under the threatening of chapter 14. This fact alone shows the absurdity of our opposers quoting it in support of their theory, which is, that all wicked men will be involved in endless torment.

2. *Does the judgment threatened in this text relate to wicked men beyond this life?*

Can our opposers prove that it does? They can *assume* it; but assumptions do not pass for evidence in these days of investigation. Have they any evidence of their position? If so, what is it? and where is it found? But as they have none, I proceed to affirm, that those inflictions, on the worshippers of the beast and his image, relate to judgments in this life, "*on the earth*," and not in some fancy hell in another world.

The previous chapter gave us an account not only of the beast and his image, but the threatening of the beast, "that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be *killed;*" verse 15. To counteract this, God caused an angel to make the terrible threatening in the text; and its appropriateness to deter men from obeying the beast is apparent.

The chapter following the text opens thus—"I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven *last* plagues; and in them is *filled up* the wrath of God." The original is "In them was completed the wrath of God.

Mark well, these plagues are the *last* on some body; and they are to have a *completion;* hence it is impossible that they can be eternal, or *endless.* Now observe, verses 7 and 8, it is said, "One of the four vital beings gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God," &c. "And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and *no man* was able to enter into the temple, *till* the seven plagues of the seven angels *were fulfilled," or completed.*

Let it be distinctly noted, these plagues are THE LAST, and that they COMPLETE *the wrath of God* on the power to be visited; and also that no MAN can enter into the *temple of God* till they are COMPLETED. Now what follows—If these plagues, or any part of them, fall on the wicked spoken of in chap. 14: 9—11, then either no man ever can enter the temple of God, or the wrath spoken of will have been completed, or finished. Now listen—"I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God [*where?*] UPON THE EARTH:" not in hell, nor the moon, nor any other fancy location. "And the first went and poured out his vial *upon the earth.*" Well, what happened? "And there fell a *noisome and grievous sore* upon *the men* which had THE MARK OF THE BEAST, and upon them which WORSHIPPED HIS IMAGE."

Here is the commencement of the exact fulfillment of the threatening in chap. 14. *There* we find the *threatening; here* the wrath in a course *of accomplishment,* and it has not missed the persons threatened. These plagues are *all* to fall on men upon the earth; chap. 16: 1; they are the "filling up of the wrath of God," and they are the "*the last:*" and till they are filled up

and completed, no man can enter the temple of God: then what becomes of "*the eternity of eternities*" of their torment? It has passed away, like other *fancies of mere theorists.*

The judgments embraced in these seven last plagues are fully developed in the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th chapters, and result in the entire destruction of "*Babylon the great*"—which seems to be only another symbol of the beast. Babylon is judged, condemned, thrown down, burned with fire, and to "*be found no more at* all," chap. 18: 21. The terrible torments inflicted on her, and her devotees, as set forth in the chapters named, is a full and perfect fulfillment of chap. 14: 9 to 11; and it is seen te be "*on the earth;*" and no support or countenance is given to the assumption of endless sin and suffering by it.

As I have shown that the threatened wrath is to be "upon the earth," and that it must have a *completion*, or no man can ever enter the "*temple in heaven*," it is unnecessary to spend time to prove that the term, forever and ever, in the text, is used, as often elsewhere, to signify no more than an undefined period. I might greatly extend remarks on this subject; but trust enough has been said to convince all candid inquirers, and more would not avail with bigots, and dealers in mere assumptions.

The last resort of the advocates of the eternal sin and suffering theory is Rev. 20: 10, "The devil was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone—and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever." In reply, —to say nothing of the fact that it is evidently a symbolical power that is here spoken of, I remark:

Some of the most learned men, and men, too, who believe in the common theory of unending sin and

misery, have admitted that the "terms 'everlasting,' 'forever,' and the like, are uniformly used in the Scriptures to denote the longest possible duration of which the subject to which they are applied is capable."

If this view is correct, and I see no reason to dissent from it, then the text under consideration proves that the devil and his associates in misery, are to be tormented during the whole period of their being: and of course cuts off restorationism; but does by no means prove that Satan, or wicked men, are immortal; on the contrary, we are expressly taught, Heb. 2: 14, that Christ shall "destroy the devil." Not destroy the "*happiness*" of the devil—that is done already; but his person, *his being*. Any other construction of the words, I conceive, is uncalled for and unnatural, unless it can first be shown that he is immortal, and that immortality can suffer.

It is further evident that the devils themselves expect to be destroyed. "Hast thou come to destroy us," said they to him who will finally do that work.

Whatever may be the views of the devil in the matter, the blessed God has said of the seed of the woman, that "It shall bruise *thy head*:" Gen. 3: 15. The work for which Christ was "manifested" will never be complete till the "old serpent's" *head is bruised:* which expression denotes the entire destruction of the life principle. Bruise a serpent anywhere, except his head, and he may live; but chrush that, and he dies. The devil then is to die. Whoever he is, or whatever he is, the *finale* is total destruction, however hard the death may be, or long in being accomplished.

The argument used by my opponents to prove the immortality of the wicked, is drawn from the language which speaks of their punishment, or torments. And

why do they infer, that this language proves the eternal conscious being of the wicked? Because, say they, the *soul is immortal!* *That* is the very point to be proved. Their argument runs thus:

First proposition:—The soul is immortal.

Inference:—The wicked will eternally sin and suffer

Second proposition:—The wicked will eternally sin and suffer.

Inference:—Therefore they are immortal.

Here an attempt is made to establish the truth of the first *proposition* by an *inference* drawn *from* that proposition; when the truth of that inference, itself, depends upon the truth of the first proposition. Nothing can be proved in this way to sustain the doctrine of the immortality of the wicked. It is reasoning in a *circle*, and assuming the whole question at issue, instead of proving it.

Here, again, I refer to the language of Richard Watson, in his "Institutes." Though he believed in the eternal being of all souls, yet he says, vol. ii. [1st Am. Edition] page 250, the notion "that the soul is *naturally* immortal is contradicted by Scripture, which makes our immortality a gift, dependent on the will of the giver." And again, page 167 and 168, 2d volume, he calls the doctrine of the "natural immortality of the soul" an "absurdity." The question then is, does God "give" immortality to any but the "holy?"

My opponents say, "*Yes;*" and I answer *No.* "Blessed and *holy* is he who hath part in the first resurrection *on such* the SECOND DEATH *hath no power.*" All others will forever be cut off from life and immortality.

OTHER OBJECTIONS.

Having examined every important text that I know

of, relied upon in the Bible to establish the common theory, I do not consider that my opponents have any claim upon me to answer other objections, not having their foundation in the Scriptures; as the book of God is the only infallible rule of faith. I have no fear, however, to meet and examine objections from other sources, and shall notice such as have come to my knowledge.

First, then, it is said, "The benevolence of God obliges him to inflict the greatest possible punishment, in order to deter men from sin."

To say nothing of the absurdity of such a proposition, it is enough to reply, that the common sense of every enlightened and Christianized people, as well as their *practice*, condemns such a view of benevolence.

The Legislature of this State have enacted a law condemning the murderer to death. Suppose the judge, on the conviction of the criminal, should proceed to pronounce sentence, by saying—"You, the prisoner, are clearly convicted of the crime specified in the law; you are, therefore, to suffer the penalty, which is, that you be tortured over a slow fire—and to prevent your *dying*, an able and skillful physician will stand by you, with powerful remedies, to prevent the fire from causing death; but said fire is to be as terrible as it can possibly be made, and without *intermission*. In this manner you are to be tormented till death shall come upon you from some other cause; which, however, should never take place if we possessed power to prevent it!" And then suppose the judge should add:—"That is the penalty of the law under which you are now to suffer!"

I ask if all New York, yea, all the nation, and the civilized world would not be horror-struck by such a

decision? Would not all conclude the judge was insane, and ought to be immediately removed from office? If he should attempt to justify himself, by showing that he had given a constitutional construction of the law of the State, would it not be thought that he was stark mad? And if he should succeed in establishing his position of the correctness of his decision, would not the whole State be in arms to alter or abolish such laws? and if they found that such a state of things was fastened upon them by some unalterable necessity, would not the State itself, with all its rich lands, be abandoned by its inhabitants, as some Sodom and Gomorrah that was nigh unto destruction?

If the case I have supposed differs from that attributed to God's law, and the administration under it—upon the common theory of death signifying eternal sinning and suffering—then I confess myself incapable of seeing the difference, except it be in *one* point, viz: the judge spoken of has not *power* to protract the sufferings of the condemned person beyond a *limited* period; God has *almighty* and *irresistible power* in punishing.

If, as is contended, the greatest possible punishment is required by benevolence, to deter men from sin, why do we not see civilized nations adopting that principle in enacting their laws? The fact is, the legislation of all nations who acknowlege the Bible, gives the lie to such a theory. And how is it accounted for, I ask, that those nations, that are called "Christian nations," have so far modified their laws as to be at an almost infinite remove from those called savage? Is it not because, though men have not in reality become Christians, yet the Bible has had such an influence on the

mass of mind, that the conviction is almost universal among them, that no "cruel or unusual punishments" shall be "inflicted?" to use the language of the Constitution of the United States. I ask again, if this fact does not prove that the influence of the gospel is against the common theory of eternal misery? Or in other words, do not the principles of the gospel, carried out in practical life, give the lie to the theory I oppose?

Punishment in some form, to transgressors, all admit is requisite to maintain government. But let us inquire what is the design of punishment? It may be said to consist mainly in two particulars, viz: 1st. To prevent the recurrence of crime on the part of the transgressor; and 2d. To deter others from the commission of crime.

Let me now ask, Is it necessary that the impenitent sinner should live in a state of eternal sin and suffering to prevent the recurrence of sin on his part? This will not be pretended by any sane man. So far from it, the advocates of the theory I oppose, maintain, that the sinner will be eternally sinning, and eternally being punished for those sins; which, however, neither does nor can produce reformation; nor, in fact, is it designed to. Upon the common theory, then, sin and the works of the devil never will be destroyed, and the punishment does not answer the end of punishment, in preventing the recurrence of crime; for it will be eternally recurring. But if the sinner is actually destroyed, and ceases to be, there is an effectual prevention of the recurrence of sin, on the part of the transgressor.

If, then, the end of punishment is answered, so far as the sinner is concerned, by his utter destruction,

and cannot be by the opposite theory, let us now inquire whether the eternal conscious existence of the sinner in torments, is necessary to deter others from sin? To suppose that it is, is to suppose that the inhabitants of heaven are kept in subjection to God, on the same principle that slave-drivers keep their slaves to their toil, *i. e.*, by the terror of the lash, or some other fearful torture. No such principle, I apprehend, will be needed in the presence of God and the Lamb—and that, too, after our state of trial is over for ever, and the righteous are crowned with eternal life, and made kings and priests unto God, to reign for ever and ever, filled with unmeasured consolation, and surrounded by immeasurable glory.

Besides, if the wicked are all destroyed, and mingle no more with the righteous for ever, the greatest temptation to sin is removed. The past recollection of evil will be all-sufficient to prevent sin, even on the supposition that it were possible for temptation to arise, which is not likely when the righteous dwell in the immediate presence of God and the Lamb, where there is fullness of joy and pleasures for ever more. Surely there can be no need, to persons thus situated, to listen to the groans of the damned, and gaze on their torments to keep them in obedience. The thought to me, is little short of blasphemy.

But, the notion that benevolence requires the greatest possible punishment to be inflicted, is expressly contradicted by the Bible. Our Lord Jesus Christ informs us that some "shall be beaten with few stripes." Of course the greatest possible punishment is not inflicted, but only such as is necessary to secure the honor of a violated law, and answer the end of government.

It is said, "sin is an infinite evil, and therefore the sinner must have an infinite punishment." And I ask, if it may not be said, in an important sense, that that punishment, from which a sinner never recovers, is infinite? But how is it proved that sin is an infinite evil, which is committed by a finite being in time? The answer is, it is committed against an infinite God. I reply, that, upon the same principle, a punishment inflicted upon a finite being, in a limited time, is an infinite punishment, because inflicted by an infinite Being.

Again, it is objected to my views, that "it is no punishment at all." "If," continues the objector, "the wicked are to be struck out of being, it is quick over, and that is the end of it."

The man who can make such an objection as this, gives sad evidence that he is sinking below the brute creation, in his sensibilities; for a brute makes every effort to live, or protract its life as long as possible. Besides, he manifests that he has no clear conception of the value of life: he, in fact, tells his Maker that he does not thank Him for life. But does the objector really feel that what he says is true? Is it nothing to die—to be *cut off from life*—to perish "like a beast"—to lose that which may be filled up with unmeasured and unending enjoyment? Is all this nothing? Is it no punishment? If so, in the objector's mind, I repeat it, he is already too degraded in the scale of being to be expected ever to rise above a *mere animal*. His case is exceedingly hopeless. He may count himself a Christian, but I fear he is ignorant of the grand principle which characterizes such, *viz: love to God.* If be possessed that, *death*—to cease eternally from conscious being—would be to his mind the most tre-

mendous punishment. The advantage of teaching this punishment, is, it is something definite to the mind; and therefore more likely to influence a rational being, than a punishment of which he can have no clear conception, and the justice of which does not commend itself to the human understanding.

Henry, in his Commentary, says—"By the damnation of the wicked the justice of God will be eternally satisfy*ing*, but never satisfied.

This doctrine is undoubtedly correct, on the supposition that the common theory is true; but it represents God as incapable of satisfying his justice, or as wanting in a disposition to do so. Either of these positions, one would suppose, are sufficiently absurd to be rejected by a reflecting mind.

The penalty of God's law is something to be inflicted, or it is not; if it is not to be inflicted, then men may not be punished at all for their sins; but if it is to be inflicted on the impenitent, then it cannot be eternal sin and suffering; for in that case, it would only be inflict*ing* but never inflict*ed;* indeed, in that way justice could not be said to be even satisfy*ing;* for that cannot be said to be satisfying that is *never* to be satisfied; that is a plain contradiction. Could a man be said to be satisfying his hunger if it was impossible ever to satisfy it? Or again, is the "grave" satisfy*ing*, of which the wise man says, that it is "never satisfied?"

Benson, the Methodist commentator, outstrips Henry. So far from the justice of God making any approach towards satisfying itself, according to Benson, the sinner outstrips justice in the race. Speaking of the damned, he says:—"They must be perpetually swelling their enormous sum of guilt, and still running deeper, immensely deeper, in debt to divine and in-

finite justice. Hence, after the longest imaginable period, they will be so far from having discharged their debt—that they will find more due than when they first began to suffer."

How much glory such a theory reflects upon the infinite God, I leave others to judge. The same Benson says in another place—"Infinite justice arrests their guilty souls, and confines them in the dark prison of hell, till they have satisfied all its demands by their personal sufferings, which, alas! they can never do."

So, it seems, the Great and Infinite Being is perfectly incapable of obtaining satisfaction to his justice! But I will not dwell upon this point.

I will call your attention to one thought more before I close this discourse. Are we to suppose that the Creator of all men will inflict a punishment on men of which he has given them no intimation? For example—wicked men who have not revelation to unfold the unseen world. Are we to believe that they are to be punished by being plunged into a state of necessary sin and eternal suffering? a state of which they had never heard?

They have had no intimation of eternal conscious being in misery. They know there is misery, for they experience it, but they have always seen misery terminate in death. Of misery followed by death, they have something more than intimation; but of eternal suffering they can have no idea. No—nor can we, who have that doctrine taught us by ministers. We can have no idea of a life of misery that never results in death. We may have illustrations given us, but they cannot touch it, and no finite mind can have any conception of it; this is evident from the illustrations used to attempt to describe it; for example—Benson

after painting the unutterable miseries of the damned, till his own soul chills with horror, and his "heart bleeds," thus attempts to describe the duration of that misery:

"Number the stars in the firmament, the drops of rain, sand on the sea shore; and when thou hast finished the calculation, sit down and number up the ages of woe. Let every star, every drop, every grain of sand, represent one million of tormenting ages. And know that as many more millions still remain behind, and yet as many more behind these, and so on without end."

Now I ask if any definite idea is conveyed to the mind by such an illustration? And if not, what influence can it have upon men? If it produces any action, it must be as lacking in definiteness as the ideas that possess the mind.

Tell a man of something concerning which he can form a definite idea, and it must have more influence upon him. Tell him he is dying, perishing—really, actualty, literally, not figuratively perishing: of that he can form some idea, and hence, it will be more likely to move him to right action, than that of which he can have no such definite knowledge.

Concluding Remarks.

I have endeavored to establish the position, that men are perishing; in other words that they are laboring under a fatal disease, that will result in death, or in utter extinction of conscious being, unless it is removed. All men are dying. The death to which they are hastening is the effect of sin, and sin is the transgression of the law of their moral nature, which will as certainly result in the entire dissolution of *the man*,

so that he will cease to be man, as the violation of the law of our physical nature will result in the death of the body, unless that order can be restored which has been interrupted by these violations.

In this view of the subject, we have a beautiful and forcible parallel between the disorders of the body and those of the mind—and between the attempts to heal the body, and the attempts to heal our moral diseases, or to save us alive. There are, it is true, quacks in both. I will not stop now to determine who they are in either case; my business is to show unto men their disease and danger, or their sins, and the consequences to which they lead; and then point them to the sure the faithful, the kind and glorious Physician, the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. He came down from heaven, and entered our moral graveyard, where souls are dying, and proclaimed Life—ETERNAL LIFE.

He calls us to to believe in him. And what does this faith imply? It implies, of course, that we feel we are morally diseased and dying. No man would ask, or receive the aid of a physician who felt himself whole; for "the whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

Again, faith in Christ, the great Physician, implies confidence in his ability to heal, or save us alive. No may employs a physician in whose skill he has no confidence. When a sick man finds one in whom he has perfect confidence, he shows his faith in him something like this: "Doctor," he says, "I know you are a skilful practitioner, and I believe you perfectly understand my disorder, and I wish you to undertake for me—I wish to put myself entirely under your care." "But," the doctor replies, "I cannot heal you, unless you will

strictly follow my directions; no medicine, however valuable, and no physician, however skillful, can restore health, and prolong life, if you persist in the violation of the laws of your physical nature; you must therefore determine to give yourself entirely up to follow my directions, or you must die; you can have your choice."

Now, if the man consents to do this, he acts faith in that physician; and when he gets well, he will doubtless give the doctor all the credit of his cure, and be very likely to recommend him to others. Now, my hearers, that is faith, active faith. Go to Christ the great Physician, in the same way, and your sins, which are a moral disease, will be removed, and you, who are perishing, dying, will be made alive—yes, have life, and live eternally: but if you refuse the great Physician, you must die—die past hope, past recovery—die under an awful weight of guilt—die eternally. But you do not die without a mighty effort on the part of Christ and his followers to save you. Jesus wept over dying men when here on earth; and with all the compassion of the Son of God, in the most tender pity he said, in the language of my text: "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life."—Shall the Saviour make this lamentation over any of us? O, come to Christ and live.

SERMON IV.

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." 1 Thes. v. 21.

To prove, in the sense of the text, I conclude, signifies to try—to bring to the test. The apostle was far from adopting the theory of some, in the present day, who seem to think it evidence that a man is a heretic if he presumes to examine for himself with regard to the truth of those theories which men, who have been in reputation for wisdom and piety, have seen fit to baptize as the true faith. They may have seen the truth clearly, or they may not. Whether they have or not, it does not release us from the obligation of *proving all things* for ourselves. Not to do this, we might nearly as well have been constituted idiots; as, in point of fact, we make ourselves so, by taking, for truth, without investigation, the opinions of fallible men.

We are not indeed to despise helps in our investigations; but every thing is to be brought to the test—the infallible words of God.

Nor are we to allow ourselves to think, as some seem to maintain, that we are to exercise a blind faith in a theory, however contrary to reason. Reason, it is true, cannot find out God, nor the things of God, unaided—Hence God has been pleased to give us reve-

lation; and that revelation is made to man's reason, or understanding. To talk about believing that which is contrary to reason, is the most consummate folly. Is it possible for a man to believe that two and two make six? or that unequal things are exactly equal? To propose such absurdities for belief is to attempt to annihilate all tests of truth, and leave a man to wander in the mazes of conjecture. We hardly know which to pity most, the man who attempts such a work, or those who are duped by it.

The fact is—God appeals to man's reason. "Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord." The disciples "communed together, and reasoned." See Luke 24: 15. Acts 17: 2, we are told, "Paul, as his manner was—reasoned with them out of the Scriptures." And chap. 18: 4, "He reasoned in the synagogues every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks." Before Felix he "reasoned" till his royal hearer trembled.

We may rest assured, then, that God has given us our reason to be used; and we are commanded to be ready to give a reason of the hope that is in us.

There may be many truths that reason can never find out; hence the necessity of revelation; but revelation can contain nothing contrary to reason—that is impossible; for, I repeat it, it would be no revelation at all, but darkness and obscurity itself. Reason then occupies an important place. It is its province to judge of the truth of that which professes to be a revelation; if that professed revelation is clearly contrary to reason, no man can credit it but a rank fanatic: It is to confound truth and falsehood, and take away all power of discriminating between them.

Reason, however, is to be allowed to do her work

untrammeled. Reason may be blinded. There is no way in which it is so likely to be perverted as by the love of sin. If men are in love with sin, and are determined to persist in it, they may expect to reason incorrectly—though their decisions, in that case, can hardly be said to be the voice of reason; it is rather the voice of passion, or appetite; for, even in such cases, the strife of reason, to be heard, is easily discovered, if a man will observe the workings of his own mind. But our Saviour has decided that the man who "will do" the will of God, i. e. has a purpose, or determination, to do that will, wherever it may lead him, "he shall *know* of the doctrine."—Before reasoning, then, we should see to it that we have that purpose: else we may go astray.

With these remarks, I proceed to a further examination of objections to the theory I advocate. If those objections are reasonable, and the unreasonableness of them cannot be shown, then you are bound to "hold" them "fast," as "good." If they are to your mind shown to be without reason, as well as without Scripture authority, you are equally bound to give them up.

Examination of Objections Continued.

It is said, "the *fathers* believed in the *endless* torments of the wicked." In reply, I remark, Our Lord and Master has prohibited my calling any man *father*. But, if the fathers, as they are called, did believe that doctrine, they learned it from the Bible, or they did not. If they learned it there, so can we. If they did not learn it from the Bible their testimony is of no weight. It may have been an error that early got into the Church, like many others.

Mosheim, in his Church History, tells us, as early as the third century, that the defenders of Christianity, in their controversies, "degenerated much from primitive simplicity," and that the maxim which asserted the innocence of defending truth by artifice and falsehood, "contributed" to this degeneracy. And he adds:—

"This disingenuous and vicious method of surprising their adversaries by artifice, and striking them down as it were, by lies and fictions, produced, among other disagreeable effects, a great number of books, which were falsely attributed to certain great men, in order to give these spurious productions more credit and weight; for, as the greatest part of mankind are *less governed by reason* than authority, and prefer in many cases, the decisions of fallible mortals to the unerring dictates of the divine word, the disputants, of whom we are speaking, thought they could not serve the truth more effectually than by opposing illustrious names, and respectable authorities to the attacks of its adversaries."

This practice, spoken of by Mosheim, increased as the darker ages rolled on; and through those dark ages, what there are of the writings of the "fathers" have come down to us. It is a truth, also, that the practice of corrupting the simplicity of the apostolic doctrine was commenced much earlier than the third century. Enfield, in his philosophy, says: "The first witnesses of Christianity had scarcely left the world when" this work began. Some of the "fathers" seemed intent on uniting heathen philosophy with Christianity, and early commenced the practice of clothing the doctrines of religion in an allegorical dress.

You may judge, my hearers, what dependence can

be placed upon the "fathers" in settling what is Bible truth.

Again it is said,—The Jews held the doctrine of eternal conscious being in torments. This is proved, not from their Scriptures, the place where it should be found, if true, but from the writings of Josephus.

The same may be urged against the infallibility of some things found in Josephus, as in the "fathers;" for it is certain, as I have before shown, that there was a large class among the Jews that did not believe it; viz. the Sadducees, who did not believe in the existence of spirits at all, and of course could not have held to their eternal conscious existence in sin and suffering.

But what if the Jews did believe it? They believed too "many other such like" foolish things. Are we to go to their ignorance and superstition to learn the knowledge of the Most High? The fact is, the Jewish Scriptures, the Old Testament, no where teach that doctrine.

My attention will be called to Isa. 33: 14. "Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" This looks the most like teaching that doctrine of any thing in the Old Testament. But the text itself refutes the theory it is brought to prove; for it tells us, expressly, the fire is a *devouring* fire. What is the meaning of the term "devour?" According to Walker, it signifies "To eat up"—"to consume"—"*to annihilate.*"

Surely then, my opponents gain nothing from this text, for it is wholly in my favor.

Besides, such questions often imply the *impossibility* of a thing; e. g. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" i. e. These is no escape. So—

"Who shall *dwell* with devouring fire?" implies the impossibility of any person doing it, as it it will utterly destroy, or consume him. I will give the objector one text from the old Testament, that he may weigh along with this. It is Ps. 92: 7, "When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that shall be *destroyed forever*." I have said, the Jewish Scriptures no where teach the common theory; so far from it, they wind up with the most solemn declaration, calling the attention of all men to the fact, "Behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven: and *all* the proud, yea, all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall *burn them up*, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."

But suppose I were to admit, that the Jews did hold the doctrine of endless suffering, as my opponents say: what then? Why, say they, that is strong evidence it must be true; because, if it had not been, the Saviour and his apostles would have taught the contrary.

I reply, first: Many of the Jews believed in the pre-existent state of souls; or, their existence in some other body prior to those they now inhabit. It was owing to this idea, that we find the disciples of our Lord in John 9: 2, asking him, "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was *born* blind?" This question shows, that even the apostles had imbibed the notion common among the Jews at that time. They supposed that in some previous state he might have sinned; and hence, as a judgment, was born blind. Does not the same reasoning which says, the Jews believed in the eternal sinning and suffering of the wicked, and therefore it must be true, because the Saviour did not refute it, prove that the doctrine of the transmigration

of souls is true, because the Jews believed it, and our Saviour did not refute it?

But again,—I maintain, that Christ and his apostles *did teach the contrary of endless* sin and suffering: and that, as clear as language could make it; and I think I have already shown this. I have read the New Testament carefully through, and noted down every text that speaks of the final destiny of the wicked; or that can be construed as referring to it. Let us look at these texts, and see if any language could well express more clearly and forcibly, the *utter extirpation* of the wicked.

TESTIMONY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

1. *John the Baptist.* Math. 3: 10—"Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast *into the fire.*" It appears to me—

This language imports, clearly, an utter extinction of being, and nothing short. Again in the 12th verse, John says of Christ—"He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Here the language denotes nothing less than the previous: and is, most clearly, a reference to the words of the Lord by Malachi, chap. 4: 1. John 3: 36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: he that believeth not the Son shall not see life."

John, then, does not teach the common notion of eternal conscious being in torments, but utter destruction of being, if there is any meaning in language. If, then, the Jews did hold the doctrine of endless sin and suffering, or the immortality of the wicked, as some pretend, John's preaching was directly calculated to overthrow it. The next witness is,

2. *Jesus Christ, our Lord.* Math. 5: 29, 30—"For

it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." Let it be kept in mind that the term *perish*, primarily, signifies "to cease to have existence." Now, I ask the candid, if the one member here is not, by our Lord, put in opposition to the whole body? and if so, is not the sense of this passage expressed thus—If one member is diseased it will cause the whole body to perish unless that member is removed; better, therefore, that one member should be cut off and perish than that the whole body perish.

But, again, Math. 7: 13, 14—"Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat; because strait is gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life."

Here, as destruction is put in opposition to life, and signifies to be consumed; or, as Walker says, "In theology, eternal death," it cannot mean eternal life in sin and suffering, but a "ceasing to be;" unless we would confound the use of all language, and adopt the notion, that the common people cannot understand the Bible, and therefore it ought not to be put into their hands. In fact, have we not come to that pass already?

How much short of this is it, when we are told, at least indirectly, that the language of the Scriptures is so figurative, or mystical, that we are not to give the obvious and literal sense of the words, as in reading other books?

But let us hear our Saviour further: Math. 7: 19—"Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." The same idea and the same language as that used by John the Baptist. I ask if it imports any thing short of utter destruction?

Math. 10: 28—"Fear not them which kill the body

but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to *destroy both soul and body* in hell." I ask if this language does not clearly imply, that God is able to kill the soul?—whatever the term soul imports—and does it not as clearly affirm, that he will kill or destroy utterly the wicked? I have no fear for the answer from the candid and unprejudiced.

Once more; Math. 13: 40, 50—"As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world: the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just; and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." How is it possible for words more clearly to denote an utter destruction of being, accompanied with the most bitter anguish? How can these words be tortured to mean *eternal conscious* existence in sin?

Math. 16: 25, 26—"Whosoever will save his life shall lose it," &c. "For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

Here is no idea of eternal conscious existence, or a miserable eternal life: but a loss of *life*. It could not be a loss of the soul, if the soul continues in being. No, says the objector, it means loss of happiness to the soul. I reply, a loss of happiness is one thing, and the loss of the soul is another and a very different thing. Suppose I should interpret the expression, "Whoever will save his life shall lose it," to signify that the person who seeks to save his life shall lose, not his life, but the happiness of it! Would not the objector himself call it a perversion of the Scriptures? But it is no more a perversion than for him to say, the loss of the soul means only the loss of its happiness.

Again, Math. 18: 8, 9—"Cut off thy hand; pluck

out thine eye if" they "cause thee to offend," for "it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed," or "with one eye, than to be cast into everlasting" or "hell fire."

Here the punishment is the *opposite of life*, which it could not be, if the wicked are to have endless life or eternal conscious being.

Thus then we fail to find, in the language of our blessed Lord, the doctrine of eternal existence in sin and suffering; but we do find that the punishment of the wicked will result in the loss of life; preceded by sufferings more or less protracted; set forth as the anguish fire produces on this corporeal system, and by the "wailing and gnashing of teeth." We find, then, if I mistake not, no countenance to the supposed Jewish notion of eternal sin and misery.

3. *Peter's Testimony.* Acts 3: 23—"Every soul which will not hear that Prophet shall be destroyed from among the people." This language cannot relate to a temporary destruction, nor, as some suppose, to a violent destruction from this world, unless it can be shown that all who have refused to hear Christ have been thus destroyed. But this cannot be done; for, many unbelieving Jews have existed on earth to this day.

Besides, the original is much more expressive than our translation. The term translated *destroyed* is *exolothreutheesetai;* which Dr. Bloomfield in his "*critical*" notes on the Greek text, edited by Prof. Stuart,—says, "is a word found only in the Septuagint and the later writers; signifying to '*utterly exterminate.*'"

In this text, then, we have a clear testimony against the idea of endless sin and suffering, or the immortality of men in sin.

Acts 8: 20—"Thy money perish with thee." Again, 2 Peter, 2: 1—"Bring upon themselves swift destruction." Also 12th verse—"These as natural beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, shall utterly perish." This, certainly, does not look like teaching the common theory, that the wicked are immortal; and I know not how any form of expression could more forcibly teach the utter extermination of the wicked. At the 17th verse, he says of certain wicked characters, "To whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever." This expression, to my mind, carries the idea of a total destruction; as light is sometimes put for life in the Scriptures; as, for example, "the life was the light of man," so darkness is put for death; and the "mist of darkness forever," I conceive, implies an utter extinction of being.

But again, 3d. chap.—"The heavens and earth—are reserved unto fire again the day of judgment and *perdition* of ungodly men." "Perdition," according to Walker, signifies "Destruction—Ruin—Death—Loss, Eternal Death." Which of these definitions favors the common theory of eternal conscious existence?

Again at the 9th verse, Peter says: "The Lord is not willing that any should *perish*," &c. Lastly he tells us, at the 16th verse, that some "wrest the Scriptures to their own *destruction*."

Thus I have noticed every passage found in Peter's testimony concerning the final destiny of wicked men; and I ask, if it were not for the trammels thrown around our minds by tradition, if we should ever give any other interpretation to these texts than the plain obvious one of *destruction of being?* So it seems to me. I come to—

4. *James' Testimony.* Let us now hear what he has

to say. 1st chap. 15th verse, he says: "Sin when it is finished bringeth forth *death*;" and again, 5th chap. 20th verse, he says: "He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a *soul from death*." How can a man maintain that the soul is "deathless," with such testimony before his eyes? And why should we submit to this mystifying the plain language of the Holy Spirit to keep an old theory alive, which cannot live in the light of a literal construction of scripture language, and when no good reason can be given for departing from the literal meaning?

5. *John's Testimony.* 1st John 22: 17. "The world passeth away and the lusts thereof; but he that doeth the will of God *abideth forever*." The inference is irresistible, that the wicked *will not* abide forever."

Again—Rev. 20: 14, 15. "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the *second death*. And whosoever was not found written in the *book of life* was cast into the lake of fire:" i. e. they experience the *second death*, a death of the whole man: and this because they would not come unto Christ that they "might have *life*."

Let us hear this apostle once more. Rev. 21: 8. "But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abomninable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second *death*."

Other passages in Rev. supposed to refer to the final punishment of the wicked, I have noticed in another place. I leave my hearers to judge to which theory, that of *endless* being, or *destruction* of being, the testimony of John belongs.

6. *Jude's Testimony.* Sixth verse, he says: "The

angels which kept not their first estate, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." Here we have an account of sinning angels, and learn that they are "reserved;" but for what are they reserved? First—for judgment; i. e. to be judged; and the fair inference is, they are after that to receive their punishment, according to the declaration of Peter, that "God knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment *to be* punished." I suppose it will be admitted by all, who believe in the existence of fallen angels, that they are now *tormented;* but *that* is not *the* punishment they are to have for their sins, though it is a *consequence* of their sins. What, then, is to be their punishment? Let them speak for themselves. "Art thou come to destroy us?" said they to him of whom the apostle says to the Hebrews, he shall "destroy him who had the power of death, that is the devil." But if the testimony of the devils, nor that of the apostle are sufficient, then hear that of the "Lord God" Himself. Addressing the old serpent, the devil, he said: "The seed of the woman shall *bruise thy head;*" an expression so familiar to all, that I hardly need add, that no language could more forcibly point out the utter destruction of the devil.

Again—Jude, speaking of certain wicked characters says,—"Wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." The figure here used denotes an utter, total, and eternal obscuration, or disappearing.—No language could more forcibly denote the utter destruction of the wicked—of their *being* itself, so that they appear no more forever.

7. *Testimony of Paul.* If there is immortality in sin and suffering, we shall expect to find that doctrine

clearly stated by such a writer and preacher as "Paul" the "Apostle of Jesus Christ." In other words, if the punishment of impenitent sinners is endless life in misery, Paul cannot be supposed to overlook it, who had constantly to preach to sinners of the worst class, and often speaks of their doom. Now, if it should appear that Paul never once gives countenance to the doctrine of the immortality of the wicked, or their conscious being in endless suffering, then it must be evident he did not believe that doctrine. It will be my object to examine fully what Paul did say and teach on this question; and not a text shall be omitted where he touches the subject.

In Acts 13: 40, 41, Paul utters a strong word of caution to his hearers on the danger of despising the gospel. Does he say, "Behold, ye despisers and wonder and" sink to *endless misery?* No. What then? "*Perish.*" This phrase does not mean *preserve*, under any form or circumstances, but "to decay, to die, to cease to have existence, to be destroyed." Again, at verse 45, the Jews are found "contradicting and blaspheming," showing an awful state of wickedness. If Paul is a faithful servant of Jesus Christ, we shall expect him to state in the strongest and most emphatic terms the danger of such wicked conduct: but we find not a word that gives countenance to the notion that these wicked men were *immortal*, and would be tormented eternally. Just the reverse of this is clearly expressed: "Seeing ye put the word of God from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of *everlasting life*, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." What can be plainer and more forcibly expressed? It was "everlasting life" they forfeited by their sins; and that is the highest penalty of God's law, or Paul was unfaithful..

The next place where we find the apostle speaking on this subject is Rom. 1: 29,–32. Let us first attend to the description he gives of the wickedness of those of whom he speaks. He says, v. 28–31, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those thing which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable unmerciful."

Can a blacker catalogue of sins be furnished than this? Surely if any men deserve unending being in undescribable torments these do. Let us hear what further the apostle has to say concerning them: "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy" of endless torments in hell fire! Is that what they "are worthy" of, Paul? "No, I did not say any such thing." Well, what did you say? "I said they are worthy of DEATH." Is that all? Those who profess to be your "regular successors" tell us such wicked men are immortal, and cannot die, but must live eternally in misery. However, we believe you, and think those who claim to be your 'successors" may not have sufficiently heeded the apostolic injunction to "beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit; after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the [pagan] world, and not after Christ."

I now follow the apostle into Rom. 2. After showing that God's judgment of men will be impartial, both

on the Jew and Gentile, he give us to understand who will have "*immortality, eternal life*," viz: those "who *seek for*" it, by a "patient continuance in well doing:" while the opposite character will have "indignation and wrath:" and that this will be the case with all who have sinned "without law," or "in the law;" so, that "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ," they shall "*perish*." In this chapter, then, the apostle gives no countenance to the theory that wicked men are *immortal*, or that any man can have immortality unless he "*seek for*" it: all others shall experience the "wrath" which they have "treasured up," under which they shall "perish" in the day of judgment. To "perish" and have "immortality, eternal life," are put in contrast by the apostle.

Next, look at Rom. 6: 21–23, "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the *end* of those things is *endless torments!*" Have we read Paul right? Does he talk thus? Let us look again. "For the end of those things is *death*." Modern divines say it is "endless misery"—Paul says it is "death." Which shall we believe? Paul continues, "But now, being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the END EVERLASTING LIFE," He then adds, "For the wages of sin is" everlasting life in undescribable and unutterable torments! Is that right? Did he say so? He ought to say so, if modern theology is true. Let us take off the old sectarian spectacles and look at this text again. What did Paul say? He said "the wages of sin *is death*." Well, we thought so; but his words have been so often "tormented" to make them speak "endless misery," we did not know but we might be mistaken, and that death meant life. "No,"

cries the apostle, "The *gift* of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Thus Paul has a perfect contrast—Death to the sinner—Life to the saint. One *dies*, and his death is eternal: the other *lives*, and his life is everlasting. Thus far Paul is clear of the heresy of endless life in sin and suffering.

Rom. 8: 13, the apostle says, "If ye live after the flesh, ye *shall die;* but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye *shall live.*" How perfectly plain. It needs no learned perverters of God's truth to make common sense men understand it. So sure as one lives, the other will die: and just as certain as life implies consciousness, death implies unconsciousness. "*To be*, or *not to be*," depends on the character men form here. If they have been made free from sin and had their fruit unto holiness, they *live*, by the gift of God, eternally. If destitute of this character they die, and thus reap the wages for which they labored.

Rom. 9: 22: the apostle inquires, "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" What, Paul! Are you coming out a *Destructionist?* Beware how you favor that class of men, for we hate them, as Ahab did Micaiah. 2 Chron. 18: 7.

Again, Paul says, Rom. 14: 15, "*Destroy* not him with thy meat for whom Christ died:" and verse 20. "For meat *destroy* not the work of God." Now, that is provoking, Paul: we called you, as Balak did Balaam, to curse our enemies, and behold thou hast blessed them altogether. But, come I pray thee unto another place—and curse me them from thence. Very well, answers Paul, we will go to 1 Corth. 1: 18:

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that are to be *endlessly tormented* foolishness." Will not the endless misery theorists cry out now, as did Ahab king of Israel to Micaiah, when he said with the false prophets, Go ye up to battle, and prosper, &c.; and the king said, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou say nothing but the truth to me in the name of the Lord? Very well—if truth is what you want, then I, Paul, say, "The preaching of the cross is to them that *perish* foolishness." Well, have you anything more so say? Yes, "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God *destroy*:" 1 Corth. 3: 17. More destruction! Yes—"and through thy knowledge shall the weak brother *perish*, for whom Christ died:" 1 Corth. 8: 11. And, "if the dead rise not—then they also that have fallen asleep in Christ are *perished*:" 1 Corth. 15: 17–18. Worse and worse—truly Paul, you only prophecy evil of our theory: for, you not only teach the wicked are to be destroyed, but that the saints who die are perished if there is no resurrection, and if so, they cannot be conscious now! But we are not satisfied yet, Paul; so please come with us to another place, it may be we shall make out these Destructionists heretics from there. We turn to 2 Corth. 2: 15–16, "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that" are *preserved in endless misery!* Have we read Paul right? No—He did not say any such thing. What did he say? "In them that *perish*." But, don't that mean *preserve?* No, for "to the one we are the savour of *death* unto DEATH; and to the other the savour of *Life* unto LIFE." But, Paul, by such testimony do you not corrupt the word of God? "No—we are not as *many* who corrupt the word God, but as of sincerity, but

as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ:" v. 17.

Alas for the advocates of inherent immortality—take Paul to what place they will, he is stubbornly set in giving no countenance to their Pagan fable. Let them, however, try him to their heart's content, and Balak like, drag him to another place. Gal. 6 : 8, What do you see now Paul? "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap *corruption*, [not immortality,] but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap *life everlasting*." Phil. 1 : 28, "And in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God." Also, chap. 3 ; 19, "Whose END IS DESTRUCTION." 1 Thes. 5 : 3, "Sudden *destruction* cometh upon them, and they shall not escape." Shall not escape what? Destruction. But they would escape it if eternally *preserved*. Now, Paul, do let us try you once more : come to another place. Speak now, we pray thee, so as to confirm our theory this once, for we cannot bear to think we and our fathers have been in error, and that we are not *gods*. 2 Thes. 1 : 9, "Who shall be punished with everlasting" *preservation* in undescribable agonies, where "the *presence* of God in his vengeance scatters darkness and woe through the dreary regions of misery ; for God is present, himself, in hell to see to the punishment of these rebels ; his indignation kindles, and his incensed fury feeds the flame of their torment, while his powerful *presence* and operation maintains their being,—and renders all their powers most acutely sensible ; thus setting the keenest edge upon their pain, and making it cut most intolerably deep." Now, immortal-soul believers, shout and clap your hands, for you see Paul

is fairly and fully on your side! But stop one moment: we have made a mistake. We began with Paul, but the railroad track has got so badly worn by much travel that we run off, and took Benson's track, in his Sermons on Future Misery. Badly as we are off the track of Paul, we must get back again. We start anew then: "Who shall be punished with *everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power," &c. Thus Paul differs from Benson and his immortal soul coadjutors immensely.

Again, the apostle, in speaking of the man of sin, chap. 2: 10, says his working is "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that *perish*, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved: and for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned [condemned] who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Then Heb. 6: 8, he says, "That which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose *end* is to be burned;" *not preserved;* for John the Baptist declares, Math. 3: 12, that the chaff, same as thorns and briars, shall be "*burned up* with unquenchable fire;" no preservation, but utter destruction. Let us hear Paul once more, Heb. 10: 26–27, "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." *Devour*, which signifies *to eat* up, *to consume, to annihilate.* "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition," [*destruction,*] v. 39.

Thus closes up the testimony of Paul. I have now placed before you every word that he has spoken on

the doom of the wicked, so far as recorded in the Bible. And where is one solitary expression that gives countenance to the theory of endless sin and suffering? Again I ask—Where? Paul a sustainer of the God-dishonoring theory shadowed forth in the words of Bensom, quoted above, which is the doctrine of all who, like Benson, believe in endless misery! No—never. Paul did not so learn of Christ. The endless sin and suffering theory was manufactured in a Pagan and Papal mill. Paganism is the *father* cause, and Papacy the *mother* cause of the fable of endless torture to any being in the universe. Well did Bishop Newton say "*It is impossible for any creature to live in endless torments.*" And again he said, "God is love; and he would rather not have given life, than render that life a torment and curse to all eternity." Whatever Bishop Newton might think or say, a greater has said, even the eternal Jehovah himself—*The soul that sinneth it shall die:* Ezek. 18: 4, 20. Also, by the Spirit of God, the Psalmist says, But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke they shall consume away: Psa. 37: 20.

Concluding Remarks.

God, has set life and death before us. We are called upon to choose life. God invites, commands, expostulates, entreats, and warns; but God cannot compel man to turn from death without destroying man's moral agency, which would be, in fact, to *un*man man, and make him as incapable of higher happiness as any other mere animal. Man must turn and live, or he will pass on and die,—die because he would not have life;—die because he is unfit for any purpose of life—

wholly disqualified for the employment of life. And the sinner, persisting in the course of sin and death, will as certainly pass the period of being restored, and when death entire must be the result, as certain as the man with a fatal physical disorder will certainly, by neglecting proper medical aid, pass the period when death cannot be arrested. And if you would think the man unwise, and acting insanely, that procrastinates, and puts off application to a proper remedy in such a physical disorder, how much more is every careless and dying sinner chargeable with folly and madness, who delays applying to Christ, the great Physician? Every day increases the danger; and every day the moral disease is increasing in malignity —every day is bringing the sinner nearer to that point, where, when once past, there is no recovery—destruction and death must follow.

Let none, then, delay longer:—God is now calling —"look unto me and live." The Lord Jesus Christ is stretching forth his hands, and saying,—"This is that bread which came down from heaven, that a man might eat thereof and not die." "Whosoever drinketh the water that I shall give him"—it "shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Hasten to Christ, then, who only has eternal life to give—believe in him, trust in his power and skill to make alive; abide by his directions—follow him. Remember no man can come to the Father but by Christ. There is no other way of salvation, or eternal life, but by the Son of God alone. All other physicians and remedies are of no value. If you stay away you die. O, come to Christ and live.

SERMON V.

"These were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily whether these things were so."—Acts xvii. 11.

Paul and Silas were persecuted at Thessalonica, for the doctrine they preached, and had to leave that place. The Thessalonians seemed to think it was no matter what Scripture proof the Apostles could present in defence of their position; that question they would not examine. It was enough for them to know it was turning "the world upside down," bringing something to their ears that differed from their long established ways of thinking; that was not to be endured at all; hence what they lacked in reason and argument, they made up in contempt of these disturbers of the established order that existed among them; and they rejected the Apostles without giving the subject an examination. Not so the Bereans—they first heard—then examined the Scriptures to see whether what they heard was in accordance with the sure rule and test by which all theories are to be tried. They did not go to their creeds—articles of faith—nor doctors even, but to the Scriptures themselves,—and this they did daily. No wonder inspiration should call them noble. They manifested a noble and praiseworthy spirit: and

it is left on record for our learning. Happy are we, if we act on the same principles.

No man is worthy the name of a minister of Jesus Christ who asks his hearers to receive what he says for truth, without being satisfied, by a personal study of the Scriptures, that it is truth.

With these remarks, I now proceed in the examination of objections to the theory that the finally impenitent will be utterly destroyed, or rooted out of the universe of God.

Further Objections Considered.

It is is said, because "the destruction of the wicked is not so terrible as interminable existence in misery, that therefore it does not present an adequate motive for repentance, but diminishes the proper restraints of sin."

I have already answered, in part, this objection; but, I would here inquire—does not the threatening of the loss of all the glory of immortality, and the total extermination of life and being, present a sufficient appeal to the fears of men, if they can be moved by that principle at all? If the loss of all the glorious displays of God's wisdom, power, and love, that will be eternally unfolding, in eternal life, together with the actual sufferings the sinner may endure, prior to his utter destruction, are not motives sufficient to lead to repentance, the mind must be too stupid to be moved by the idea of endless torments. Besides, we know that the greater portion of men have remained impenitent under the preaching of the theory I oppose: and I here repeat what I have before said, that I solemnly believe the natural tendency of that theory is

to make men infidels instead of Christians: they cannot credit it; and, thinking that it is taught in the Bible, they reject revelation altogether.

Another objection, it may be proper I should here notice, is, it is said, upon the theory I advocate, "The punishment God has threatened is, that He will put an end to the miseries of the wicked." I answer—It is no such thing. It is not that He will put an end to their miseries, but to their being, and of course, to all hope of life and happiness. That an end of conscious misery is necessarily implied, I admit; but that is no part of the threatening. Let the objector apply his argument to the law which says, the man who commits murder shall die; i. e. says the objector, the law threatens to put an end to the murderer's remorse and misery!

I have already noticed that one of the arguments that men are immortal is, that all men desire immortality. Yet the same persons tell us, that some men had much rather be totally destroyed than to have the very thing they desire, viz. immortality. That men do desire immortality I have not denied; but if they do, they cannot at the same time desire utter destruction. Man loves life, and prefers it to death. "All that a man hath will he give for his life," is a truth, though uttered by Satan. Men at present can be but little affected by the common theory of endless sin and suffering, because, it is utterly impossible for any finite mind to have any clear idea of such a punishment. Destruction of being, or death, is something that strikes the senses, and reaches the understandings of men, and must therefore have more present influence on their minds, in leading them to forsake sin, than that of which they can have no clear conceptions.

Besides, so long as you allow that man's being is eternal, you cannot divest his mind of the idea, though it may be secretly indulged, that somehow he shall escape from that punishment; even though he cannot at present give any definite idea how it is to be done. Hence multitudes plunge into the doctrine of restorationism.

Some tell us that "spiritual death is the penalty of the law." I answer, no such phraseology is found in the Bible; and the manner it is usually employed, tends rather to *confusion* in the mind than the conveying of any definite idea. It is intended, I suppose, to convey the sentiment that impenitent men are unholy, and have no rational conceptions of God, and the things of God. But this sentiment is capable of being expressed in language less obscure and equivocal. Men are said in Bible language, to be unholy, sensual, carnally-minded, not having the knowledge of God, earthly, devilish, lovers of their own selves, proud, lovers of the world, hateful, and hating one another, &c.

All these expressions are sufficiently definite to be understood; but "spiritual death," if it means anything, signifies something analogous to the death of the body. By bodily death, if I may employ that expression, we mean that the body ceases all action sense, and life. Then, if spiritual death is analogous, it must mean that the spirit ceases all action, sense, and life. In that sense, I have no objection to admitting that *it is* the penalty of the law. That penalty when inflicted, will cause all life to cease. But if the term is employed in any other sense to signify the penalty of the law, I demand the proof. Where is it? *Where?*

If it be said, "the death threatened to Adam must

be a spiritual death, as it was to take place in the *day* he eat the forbidden fruit," I reply, if the penalty was spiritual death, in the sense the objector means, and if the penalty, as he understands it, was executed in the literal day that Adam eat that fruit, then the death of the body and the "wrath to come" was no part of the penalty, as neither of those events took place till nearly a thousand years after.

The penalty was not, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die;" but as the Hebrew language has it—"dying thou shalt die." That very day the promise of immortality was withdrawn, by man's being cut off from the tree of life; and the whole man commenced dying. The existence of man from that hour became one of pain, sorrow, misery, and is hastening to its wind up, and will result in the utter extermination of his being, unless counteracted by eating "that bread that came down from heaven, that a man might eat thereof and not die." Christ is that "tree of life whose fruit is for the healing of the nations." "God has given unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," and abiding on him must result in death: for that is the unalterable wages of sin throughout the universe of God.

Let us examine this point further, i. e. the idea that the penalty of the law of God is spiritual death. Turn to the account of man's creation, and the prohibition given him.

"The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life," [literally, *lives*,] "and man became a living soul."

Did God address this living soul, when he said, In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die—or, "in *dying* thou shalt die?" To say otherwise would be an absurdity.

To maintain that the death threatened was spiritual death, it appears to me, is to confound man's sin with his punishment; if by spiritual death is meant, man became insensible to his obligation to his Maker, and to his own condition as a sinner, and lost all disposition to obey God; and that, I suppose, is what is meant by it. Strange penalty that! What would you think on reading the law which says, "For murder a man shall die," if some person should tell you it did not mean that the murderer should "be hung by the neck till he is dead," but that when he has committed the act of murder, he should immediately become *insensible* to his obligation to regard lawful authority, and to his own condition as a murderer, and lose all disposition to obey any law? Would you not think such an interpretation of law was "murdering the king's English?" and would you not also think that the man's insensibility and want of disposition to obey any law, was an additional circumstance in his guilt, instead of being his punishment?

This insensibility to God and his claims upon us, is our sin, and not our punishment, nor the penalty of God's law. To represent it in that light, is to furnish sinners with a perfect excuse for living in insensibility to God's claims upon them. If this state of spiritual death, as it is called, is the punishment of sin, or the penalty of the law, what man is *now* to blame for remaining in it?

The fact is, this insensibility to God and his claims upon us, is an aggravation of our sin, and not

our punishment, nor the penalty of God's law. To represent it in that light, is to furnish sinners with a perfect excuse for living in insensibility to God's claims upon them. If this state of spiritual death, as it is called, is the punishment of sin, or the penalty of the law, what man is *now* to blame for remaining in it?

The fact is, this insensibility to God, and his claims upon us, is an aggravation of our sin, and not the penalty of the law. The Bible represents this state as a high crime. "Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider; O that they had hearkened unto me," &c. Why all this complaint, if insensibility, or spiritual death, is the penalty or punishment that God has inflicted on men for sin? Did God complain of men for not escaping out of his hands, and so avoiding the punishment? As well might the government complain of the murderer for not slipping the noose of his halter when hanging by his neck, on the supposition that spiritual death is the punishment inflicted for sin. Let no man comfort his soul with that delusive idea. Depend upon it, our insensibility is a most horrid sin. Let the Almighty himself speak to such souls; and what is his language to them? "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver."

But there is still another view of this subject. The idea of spiritual death being the penalty threatened is not supported by a solitary text in the "law or prophets." In every instance where the phrase "*surely die*" occurs, it is manifest that a *literal*, and not a spiritual death is intended, unless the text Gen. 3: 17, is an exception; if it is an exception it is for our opponents to prove it such, and not *assume* it, as they

uniformly do. When the Lord told Abimilech, Gen. 20th, "Thou shalt *surely die*, and all that is thine," it was not a spiritual death threatened. And when God said of the murmuring Israelites—"They shall *surely die* in the wilderness," it was not a spiritual death spoken of: see Numb. 26 : 65. And when Jehovah spoke by Ezekiel—"When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt *surely die*," he was addressing those who were, what our opponents call, spiritually dead, for they were "wicked." Were they to die another spiritual death?

I repeat it—There is no such doctrine in the "law and testimony," expressed by Moses or the Prophets, as that spiritual death is a penalty of sin. Least of all, is there any foundation for such an assumption in the case of Adam; and I now proceed to notice, that the Hebrew preposition, here translated *in*, is *b*; which has the sense not only of *in*, but *against*, *after*, &c. This preposition is prefixed to the Hebrew word *ium—day*. The text is *bium: b* being the *prefix* determines as to the use of *ium*, i. e. what day is meant. The context shows that *b* is used in the sense of *after*; and the text reads, "*after* the day thou eatest thereof *thou* shalt surely die:" expressing the *certainty* of his death, and not of the particular day in which that death should occur: the penalty would certainly be inflicted, but the precise time of its infliction God kept in his own power, and unrevealed, as it has been to each individual of Adam's race since.

God's own deffinition of the penalty, when he called Adam to account fully sustains the view here taken—"Dust *thou* art, and unto dust shalt *thou return*." Thus spake the great Lawmaker and Judge; and none can safely amend the definition He gave of the

threatened penalty. It was not, "Dust thy *body* is;" but *thou—the man.* No exception of an *entity*, called an "immortal soul:" a most important exception, if true, our opposers being judges; for they insist upon it, though Adam's Maker is silent on the subject.

I judge this point is sufficiently settled; at least till the opposers can produce something more like proof than any thing that has ever yet appeared on their side of the question.

Some tell us, that by the destruction of the wicked is meant the destruction of their sins; and others, the destruction of happiness. What ground have these persons for their assertions? The destruction of sin, of happiness, of being, are entirely distinct ideas; though the latter involves the others, yet each is capable of being expressed in appropriate language. With respect to the latter, I know of no way in which it could be more appropriately or clearly set forth than it is by our Lord, in Math. 10: 28—"Fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Compare this with the expression of the apostle,—"Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord," and with Ps. 92: 7,—"The wicked shall be destroyed for ever." What testimony could be more explicit, that those who obey not the gospel are to be punished with destruction of *being* and not of their *sins* or *happiness* merely.

One other objection I will here notice from the Bible, which was passed over in my main argument. It is founded on Daniel 12: 2,—"Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting concontempt." It is said, "they must have consciousness to *feel* shame."

1 reply: Shame signifies not only a passion felt when reputation is lost, but the disgrace and ignominy, which follows men for bad conduct long after they have passed away, personally, from knowledge. Take the case of a traitor to his country. For example, the conduct of Arnold in the American Revolution. He is never thought of without the *shame* of his evil deeds connected with him; and it is a shame that is everlasting—never can be wiped off, though he ceases to live to be conscious of it. He may be said, truly, to be a subject of everlasting "contempt," i. e., he is despised, and scorned for his vile conduct, and always will be while the love of freedom exists.

I see no difficulty, therefore, in the text under consideration. Here also, as I have often remarked elsewhere, the punishment is put in opposition to life. The natural inference is that those who do not awake to *life*, perish from life.

The text then, is far from proving they will *live* eternally in sin and misery. At most it can be made to mean no more than an overwhelming sense of their guilt and folly, when they awake.

There is one other text I will here notice, as it is of the same nature of the one in Daniel. John 5: 28, 29, "The hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation."

Let it be observed here, that *life*, is the reward named for them that have done good: the others come forth, but it is not to *life;* for it is a resurrection to damnation, or condemnation, for, so the word signifies. The only question, then, to settle is—what is the pun-

ishment to which they are condemned? That it is a punishment from which they never recover, I have no doubt. But is it everlasting life in sin and suffering, or is it death? I think it is the latter. In connection with the words under consideration, our Saviour said, at the 24th verse, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." This text throws light on the other, and shows that our Saviour intended to be understood, by the damnation, or condemnation of evil doers, a condemnation unto Death, not to life in sin and suffering. I conceive this text, then, gives no countenance to the common theory of eternal being in undescribable torments, but shows that Death and not Life is the portion of those who have been doers of evil.

Again, it is said, by way of objection,—Your "doctrine was held by the Arians—is now held by the Unitarians—that it is *Christianism*—and finally, that is is Elias Smith's doctrine."

Whether these marvellous objections are true or not, I did not know, as I had never conversed with any of the above-named classes on the point, and know not that I ever read a paragraph from any of them on the subject till after I delivered my original Six Sermons. But suppose what the objector says is true; it does not touch the question of the truth of this doctrine, nor at all shake my faith. We know the time was, when the grand argument against some points of doctrine was "That's Arminianism"—"That's Calvinism" —or "That is what the Methodists hold." Such language has passed for a very good argument to frighten enslaved minds, in the absence of a better.

But I may ask, whether, in a Christian land, there ever was a sect having no truth in their theory? and whether any sect will have the pride to arrogate to themselves that *they* have *the truth*—the *whole* truth—and *nothing* but the truth? If there is such a sect, it had better repair to Rome immediately, and get confirmed for infallibility.

The fact is, truth lies scattered among all denominations; none of them have the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Some have more than others. The guilt of all sects lies, to a great extent, in that intolerant spirit, that, in point of fact, claims for itself infallibility, and harbors, to a greater or less extent, the idea that "there is no salvation out of" *their* "church;" whilst inspiration declares that "In every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness" [i. e. according to the light he has or may possess] "is accepted with him."

Again, it is said, "You have gone half way to Universalism." That is, I have granted that even Universalists have some truth: though it is rather of a negative than of a positive character. They do not believe in eternal sin and suffering; and I have admitted, that in this, they are right. Unhappy men!—must they be so "chased out of the world," to keep up the warfare upon them, that amongst all they pretend to hold for truth, they are so blinded, that they have not so much as one negative truth?

I am glad in my heart, if I can approach one step towards Universalists, without sacrificing truth; for I hope thereby to gain some, and save them alive, by removing out of their hands their main argument for universal salvation: viz. that "The idea of the eternal consciousness of innumerable human beings, in un-

describable torments, is irreconcilable with the perfections of God, and that therefore all men will be saved." The hearer seeing no other view of the subject, but eternal sin and suffering, or Universalism, takes hold of the latter.

Every one, who has had anything to do with Universalists, knows this is their main fort; and here it is they always wish to meet their opposers—and their converts are made more from the exhibition of the horribleness of the punishment, which their opposers say is to be inflicted upon the wicked, than any other, and all other arguments they use.

If, then, I have taken this weapon from their hands, which is no where explicity taught in the word of God, am I not better prepared to come down upon their hearts and understandings by the express declarations of the Most High, that, "The soul that sinneth it shall *die;*"—that, the wicked "Shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord;"—that they shall be "Cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the *second death;*"—that they shall "utterly perish"—"be destroyed forever"—"be consumed with terrors"—"shall not see life"—be cut off forever, from all the pleasure derived from "everlasting life," because they have refused to come to Christ that they might have life?

Is there nothing awakening in all this? Nothing calculated to arouse the sinner to seek life? And the language too is Scriptural, and less likely to objection than the *un*scriptural language of "immortal soul"—"deathless spirit"—"always dying and never dead"—"eternal being in torments," &c. &c., all of which are of human invention, to say nothing of some of them being a contradiction in terms, and a flat denial of the

testimony of God, that "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

To talk of a "soul *always dying and never dead;*" or, of "a *death that never dies*," is such an absurdity, that I wonder how it was ever believed by any man who thinks for himself. A doctrine that involves such a palpable contradiction is not to be promulgated for truth, unless we wish to bring discredit upon revelation itself. And I cannot divest myself of the conviction I have so often expressed, that the theory I oppose has driven many thinking men into infidelity. That any man can embrace it, I cannot account for, except from the fact, that they have been early taught it, and the dread of feeling the indignation of bigoted men who think it a crime to depart from what they or their fathers have baptized "orthodox."

Another objection to the theory I advocate, and perhaps the one that stands most in the way of its being received for truth, is,—"If this doctrine is true, why has it never been found out before?"

I do not know but it has been found out before. I lay no claim to being the discoverer of it. I am told that Samuel Bourne of Birmingham, and John Taylor of Norwich, held the same sentiments, "in substance, making due allowance for the shape and color they have received from the peculiar mind of Mr. Storrs." Whether that was true or not, I did not know at the time I first advocated the views here promulgated, as I had never seen their writings. My attention was called to the subject by a small pamphlet, in 1837. Who was its author, I did not know, as it had no name attached to it; but afterwards learned it was by Henry Grew, of Philadelphia. I read it, but did not think much of it at the time. I suppose I felt like the

objector; i. e. if this view of the subject be true, why is it that Christians and ministers have not learned it before? Nevertheless, I could not resist the impression to examine the subject for myself. I did so from time to time for several years, and conversed with ministers on the subject; for I would not *then* allow myself to speak upon it with laymen, lest I might lead them into a belief of a doctrine which I had not fully investigated, and be the means of their going astray. I studied the Bible, reading and noting down every text that spoke of, or appeared to have reference to the final destiny of wicked men. The result of my investigations and convictions I have laid before you. I published a small pamphlet on the subject in 1841. In 1842, I preached my original Six Sermons in the city of Albany, N. Y.. But few Reviews have ever appeared; and all of them that I have seen have tended to confirm me in the general correctness of the position I maintain on this great question.

The fact that a particular view of religious truth is *new*, is no proof of its incorrectness; it may be a reason why we should not embrace it without thorough investigation. How many things passed for truth in the dark ages of the church, that have since been exploded! and when they were first brought to light, the "innovators," as they were called, were branded as "heretics."

We should do well to remember that we have but just emerged from the dark ages of the church; and it would not be at all strange if we should find some "Babylonish garments" still worn by us for truth; or to speak without a figure, we have no reason to suppose that the Reformers, as they are called, divested themselves of all the superstitions and false interpre-

tions that had been put upon the Bible, when ignorant men were kept in awe by the supposed sanctity of the priests.

The Reformers may have done well, considering their circumstances, and the prejudices of their education; but must we sit down and quietly follow exactly in their steps, without employing the understanding and Bible God has given us, to see if there are not things "new," as well as "old" in God's blessed word? Our Saviour saith: "Every scribe which is instructed unto the Kingdom of God, bringeth forth out of his treasures, things new and old." Must we, then, confine ourselves to the old track; and must every thing that is new be rejected? Apply that principle to the arts and sciences, as well as religion, and the world is at a dead stand.

There are many points of doctrine that a few years ago passed for truth, that are now rejected. That this is the case in science, generally, no one will doubt. How long is it since men were satisfied that the world is round and revolves on its axis? Those who advocated such a theory, no doubt, were thought to be stark mad!—To the minds of their opponents, it was as clear as the light, that the world was flat—their fathers had always believed so; and all the reservoirs of water would have been emptied long ago, if the world turned over!—Copernicus, it is said, was compelled, by public opinion, to keep his discovery of the true solar system to himself more than thirty years. And Galileo, for avowing his belief in the same system, was cited to appear before the Pope, and condemned to prison, while his writings were publicly burned in the streets at Rome.

Men had lived thousands of years before the circu-

lation of the blood was discovered. When that discovery was made, it was ridiculed and opposed as a most dangerous error, and as promising no good to the world; and this too, by the learned and knowing ones, and years passed away before the theory was generally received.

If it is a fact, in science generally, that false theories have been held for ages, may it not be so in religion? Since my recollection, the theory has been held, and promulgated for Bible truth, that there were "infants in hell not a span long"—and that "God made some men on purpose to show His power in their eternal torments in hell fire." Yes, and that He "*decreed* all their sins which led to that result," and sent "the gospel to some people on purpose," i. e. with the design "to increase their damnation!" And it is within my remembrance, that a man was not considered orthodox who did not hold these views. But, I doubt if any man now can be found who holds such sentiments; or, if he does, will be willing to avow them.

Is it to be wondered at, then, if in an age when such shocking absurdities are but just passing away, there should be found still left a remnent of doctrine belonging to the same class?

Mr. Benson, the eminent English minister, to whom we have before referred, in a sermon on "The Future Misery of the Wicked," says, "God is present in hell, in his infinite justice and almighty wrath, as an unfathomable sea of liquid fire, where the wicked must drink in everlasting torture—the presence of God in his vengeance scatters darkness and wo through the dreary regions of misery. As heaven would be no heaven if God did not there manifest his *love*, so hell would be no hell, if God did not there display his

wrath. It is the *presence* and *agency* of God, which gives every thing virtue and efficacy, without which there can be no life, no sensibility, no power." He then adds—"God is, therefore, himself present in hell, to see the punishment of these rebels against his government, that it may be adequate to the infinity of their guilt; his fiery indignation kindles, and his incensed fury feeds the flame of their torment, while his powerful presence and operation maintain their being, and render all their powers most acutely sensible; thus setting the keenest edge upon their pain, and making it cut most intolerably deep. He will exert *all* his divine attributes to make them as wretched as the capacity of their nature will admit."

After this he goes on to describe the duration of this work of God, and calls to his aid all the stars, sand, and drops of water, and makes each one tell a million of ages: and when all those ages have rolled away, he goes over the same number again, and so on forever.

And all this he brings forth with a text of Scripture that asserts the wicked "shall be punished with *everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord." Such a description as here given by Mr. Benson needs no comment—it *defies comment*—no language could be employed to make a subject look more horrible than what he has used. He dwelt upon the subject, himself, till his own soul was filled with horror, and he cried out—"Believe me, my poor fellow mortal, thou canst not, *indeed thou canst not* bear this devouring fire! Thou canst not dwell with these everlasting burnings!"

There must be some defect in a theology, it seems to me, that leads *great men* into such palpable contradictions.

Mr. Benson preached two whole sermons on these subjects, in which he scarcely produced a text of Scripture in support of his theory—they appear to be, throughout, a work of *imagination*.

I consider, to charge the infinite God with the design and determination of exerting His almighty power in holding innumerable human beings in undescribable torments, in a state of necessary sinning and blasphemy, is of the same character as the other horrible doctrines that I have named; and is not to be believed without the clearest and most positive testimony. Such testimony the Bible does not furnish, to my mind, and therefore, I reject such a theory as opposed to the Bible, to reason, and to common sense: and I have very little doubt, the time will come (perhaps I shall not live to see it) when that theory will be generally exploded. The theory I advocate has one great difficulty to overcome, viz: the strong prejudice of early education, backed up by the consideration that the common theory has been so long the established faith of the church. But, even that difficulty is overbalanced by the fact, that the sympathies of our nature, and reason, are opposed to the common theory, and are towards the views I advocate, when once presented to the mind: and a spirit to examine for ourselves, instead of leaving our thinking to others, has gone forth in the earth.

If the fact that a theory has long ago been settled, and always believed by the "fathers," is a good reason for rejecting, as untrue, any other theory, then the Jews have the best reason they could desire for rejecting Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. The *Jewish Church* "long ago" decided that he was *an impostor*, and crucified him as such. The Jews of the present

time, then, may say—"Our church long ago settled the point, that Jesus was not the promised Messiah; and who were better qualified to judge than they to whom the Scriptures were committed, and in whose language they were written? Besides, our *fathers* have always believed and maintained that Jesus was an impostor. Hence, we consider it a settled point."

Now, I ask, if such an argument is not quite as good and forcible, as the one used by some of my opponents, that my view must be false, because, as they suppose, the church long ago fixed on the opposite theory as true, and their fathers have always believed it? Let such persons make no more attempts to convert the Jews. Indeed, they ought to turn Jews.

The notion that there is life in the soul of the wicked, or a principle that cannot die, was taken from the Platonic Philosophers, and was introduced into the Church, as a Scripture doctrine, in the third century.

Mosheim, in his Ecclesiastical History, Vol I. p. 86, says:—"Its first promoters argued from that known doctrine of the Platonic School, which was also adopted by Origin and his disciples, that the divine nature was diffused through all human souls; or in other words, that the faculty of reason, from which proceed the health and vigor of the mind, was an emanation from God into the human soul, and comprehended in it the principles and elements of all truth."

Such, I conceive, is the true origin of the doctrine of the natural immortality of man. It originated in heathen philosophy, and was grafted on Christianity to its immense injury. No wonder Paul, Col. 2: 8, said—"Beware lest any man spoil you through *Philosophy* and vain deceit, after the *Traditions* of men, after the *rudiments* of the world, and not after Christ."

Whether others see as I do on this subject or not, it is a matter of unspeakable consolation to me to believe, that the devil and all his works will be utterly destroyed; and that a universe will appear unstained by sin, misery or death.—If others believe the contrary, it will be no cause why I should disfellowship them, provided they walk in obedience to the will and word of God. The Lord, I trust, has delivered me from that spirit of bigotry which would shut out from my christian regard and fellowship any man, simply because he does not agree with me in sentiments, especially if he is striving to live in a holy life, by obeying the commandments of God; for, "this is the love of God that we keep His commandments"—and "he that saith he loves God and hateth his brother, is a liar and the truth is not in him."

In conclusion, I would say, to all, if I know my owu heart, I have no selfish purpose to serve, in taking the foregoing views. It has been a subject that has employed my thoughts, more or less, for years past; and it was not till after much searching the Scriptures, and prayer to God for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that I came to the conclusion here promulgated. If it is not truth, let it fall; and may the Lord hasten it. But with my present light I can see no other way, and see no reason to doubt the correctness of my general view on the subject.

That there are no weak parts in my argument, I do not pretend: I should claim to be more than man if I did.—My desire is to know the whole will of God, as revealed in His word: and when satisfied what truth is, I trust, never to shrink from proclaiming it, however unpopular; or whatever may be the reproach I may endure on account of it. Whether the doctrine I

have advocated is true or false, matters not to me personally, further than truth is concerned. For, by the grace of God, I intend to "fight the good fight of faith," and "lay hold on eternal life." All those that do this, I know, for the Bible declares it, will be crowned with "honor, and glory, and *immortality*." Those who do not do it, will "not see life." Awful indeed, will be their end. O, that sinners may awake to see their danger, and fly from the doom that awaits them.

To perish like a beast—to perish without hope—to perish without recovery: to be consumed—devoured—burned up—blotted out of life as too vile to live—they having formed such a moral character as to make a living existence a curse to themselves, and a curse to others: to be so unlike God and good beings as to make it a moral necessity that they should be "*destroyed forever!*" What a character! What an end! "Why will you die?" Turn to God through His Son, our *Life-Giver* and Lord; "lay hold on ETERNAL LIFE."

SERMON VI.

"I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.—Isa. lvii. 16.

We are too apt to take the words of Scripture and apply them to all men indiscriminately, without regarding the character of the person spoken of. In this way we pervert the word of the Most High, and sometimes comfort those whom God has not comforted. I conceive, that has been done with the words of my text. They have been applied to all men; when the context shows, most clearly, they are spoken only of the "contrite ones," who are "humble and contrite" under the judgments, or chastisements that God had inflicted upon them for their sins: while it is expressly said, in the same connection, there is "no peace to the wicked;"—God's wrath abideth on them; and abiding on them, they will certainly "fail." The term "fail," used in the text, though it has other significations, is, I think, generally used by the prophet Isaiah, to signify "to perish." He says, 21: 16—"All the glory of Kedar shall fail." And 19: 13—"The spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof."

I consider the sense of the text, then, to be this—"With those persons who truly humble themselves, and repent, under my rebukes, I will not continue my displeasure—for if my wrath should remain upon any man he would utterly perish, soul and spirit, as surely as I have made him."—Hence, the doctrine of the text seems to me, to be—1st. God is the Creator of the souls and spirits of men, and, of course, *can* DESTROY them. 2d. If God's wrath should continue, upon any man, without being withdrawn, it would certainly cause him to "fail"—perish; or cease to exist: he could not continue in being under it. 3rd. But upon those who do repent, that wrath shall not abide.

These remarks have chiefly been made to meet an objection that man is composed of three parts—body, soul and spirit; and that, though his body and soul might perish, his spirit could not. I have used the term *soul* throughout my discourses in its broadest sense as including the essence of what constitutes a man; and I am satisfied that is the general sense in which the Scriptures use it, though in some texts it is used in a more restricted sense.

It is a matter of indifference how it is applied in my text; for the expressions are such as to include the whole man, and to show that every man on whom the wrath of God abideth will perish—utterly perish—body, "soul and spirit."

I shall now proceed to notice one of the evils of the opposite theory; or the maintaining that such expressions as die—death—destroy—destroyed—destruction—burned up—perish, &c., are not to be understood literally, i. e. according to their obvious meaning, when spoken of the final destiny of wicked men.

ONE EVIL OF THE COMMON THEORY OF ENDLESS BEING IN SIN AND SUFFERING, IS,

It sustains the mischievous practice of mystifying, or making the Scriptures to have a secret or hidden meaning, in the plainest texts.

This mischievous practice was brought into the church, almost as soon as the Apostles had left the world. The converts from heathenism seemed intent on uniting heathen philosophy with christianity. Hence they must find an abundance of mysteries in the Scriptures; and the practice of allegorizing, i. e. making the language to contain something that does not appear in the words, commenced and generally prevailed, before the third century. This was done, doubtless, with a view to lead heathen philosophers to embrace christianity, as affording them a fruitful field for their researches. But it led the church astray into the wild fields of conjecture; and every lively imagination could find hidden wonders in the Bible; while the plain literal meaning of the text was disregarded. That fatal practice increased from age to age, till the simplicity of the gospel was totally eclipsed, and the obscuration has not wholly disappeared to this day.

This practice has given occasion to honest people, as well as to infidels, to say, "You can make any thing out of the Bible," or "play any tune upon it." And this is true, if men are to be allowed to take texts which have a plain, obvious, and literal signification, and call them mystical or figurative, when there is not a clear necessity for doing so. The Scriptures themselves often notify us when the language is to be understood figuratively; and frequently those figures are explained, and the literal interpretation given.

The common method of making the terms life and death mystical, or figurative, i. e. to mean something more, and far different from what appears in the literal and obvious signification of the words, I conceive is unwarranted by the Scriptures, and tends only to throw confusion upon the plainest subjects of the Bible, and also to take away the force and beauty of very many otherwise clear and intelligible portions of God's word.

Let me now call your attention to texts, the beauty and force of which are greatly weakened and obscured by such a course.

Deut. 30: 15, "I have set life and death before you, therefore choose *Life*, that both thou and thy seed may live." Again, Ps. 16: 11, "Thou wilt show me the path of *life;* in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures forever more."

Now let us contemplate some portions of the New Testament, in view of the theory I oppose, and the one I advocate, and see on which they have most force and the clearest meaning. Look at the young man who came to our Saviour with an important inquiry, Math. 19: 16—What does he say? Is it his inquiry, "What shall I do to escape endless misery or suffering?" No: but, "What shall I do that I may have eternal life?" How plain the question, on the theory I advocate, and how appropriate the answer, "If thou wilt enter into life," &c. Not,—if thou wilt escape endless life in torments,—not, if thou wilt have a "happy eternal life," but simply,—If thou wilt enter into life. What simplicity, beauty, and force! all is natural, and easy to be understood.

Again, John 3: 15, 16, "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For

God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." All here, again, is natural, easy, and forcible, on the theory that the wicked are actually to die or perish if found rejecting Christ, who only has eternal life to give. But on the theory I oppose, we must have a whole sermon to explain the meaning of the term *perish*, and make it appear that it does not mean "extinction of being," but eternal life in sin and misery! I once heard a Doctor of Divinity in New York city preach a whole sermon on that one point; and that, too, after he had admitted that the primary meaning of the term is "extinction of being." It seems to me it is taking quite too much pains to make obscure the meaning of a word, that of itself is easy to be understood.

In the same chapter, at the 36th verse, it is said: "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." He is already condemned to death, and is dying; eternal life is offered in the Son of God, he that will not accept it, through him, shall not possess life, but the wrath of God shall abide on him to the full execution of the penalty, which is "*death*, the wages of sin." Again, John 5: 28, 29,—"The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good to the resurrection of *life*; and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation," or condemnation: but to what? not to eternal life in sin and misery, but to *death*—for that is the wages sin has earned. Here the language is natural and forcible, on the view I advocate, and the contrast of *life and death* is perfect; but I ask any candid man if it is so on the view I oppose?

Again, at the 39th and 40th verses: "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they that testify of me; and ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

They were looking not for eternal happiness merely, or an escape from eternal torments, but for eternal life. Yet when the only physician who could give that priceless blessing calls them to come to him for it, they would not come; and, as a matter of course, they are not saved "from death." Look at the following texts, in the 6th chapter of John: "Labor for the meat that endureth unto everlasting life. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life, unto the world. I am the bread of life. And this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him may have everlasting life. He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. This is that bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever. The words I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

That simple life and death are put in opposition, or clearly implied in these texts, is too plain not to be seen by any person of common attention. "*Not die—eternal life.*" Now, a man shall "not die," if the theory I oppose is true, whether he come to Christ or not; and it would have been just as easy to have expressed the doctrine of eternal being in sin and suffering by unequivocal language, as in that, the literal interpretation of which must necessarily lead astray, if that doctrine be true.

Again, John 8 : 12, "He that followeth me shall have the light of life." And at the 51st verse, "If a man keep my sayings he shall never see death." Again, in 10th chapter, "I am come that they might have life. My sheep hear my voice * * * and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life,—and they shall never perish," &c. Does not this language clearly imply, that those who do not follow Christ will perish? Yes, says the objector, their happiness will perish! But I ask, if such an interpretation is not forced and unnatural? Our Saviour says no such thing. *Perish* is put in opposition to *life*. By the simple and natural meaning of the terms, there is great beauty and force in the language. Besides, to admit of a departure from the literal meaning of the term perish, throws us into the regions of uncertainty; and if one man may say it means his happiness shall perish, another may say it means his sins shall perish, and so on. But if it signifies simply what the word imports—a destruction of being—then his happiness and his sins perish with him, as a matter of course, and there is no obscurity about it.

Again, John 11 : 25, 26, "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." How forcible and full of power are these words, literally understood! But say, to die, means loss of happiness, though the person still lives, and you at once strip the expression of our Lord of the energy which it possesses in its plain and obvious meaning.

Again, John 14 : 6,—"I am the way, the truth, and the life : no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

Also, Rom. 5 17—"If by one man's offence, death

reigned by one, much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign *in life* by one Jesus Christ; therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, [i. e. unto death;] even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men, [i. e. in its offer,] unto justification of life. That as sin hath reigned unto death, [i. e. unto condemnation to death,] even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

That the death spoken of, here, is a literal death the context clearly shows; it was that death that came into the world by one man's sin (verse 12,) and which "reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression:" (verse 14.) If then the *death* is *literal* so is the *life* offered, and promised; and that life is only to be obtained "through righteousness," or becoming righteous, and "by Jesus Christ."

Now look at such expressions as the following: "The crown of life,—The word of life,—The grace of life. He that hath the Son hath life,—he that hath not the Son of God hath not life,—The water of life,—Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life,—This do and thou shalt live,—Because I live ye shall live also,—We shall also live with him,—Be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live,—God sent his Son, that we might live through him,—If one died for all, then were all dead," i. e., dying, doomed to die; as the body is dead, because of sin, i. e., doomed to die, though not yet actually dead. "Who died for us, that

we should live together with him." These, and a multitude of other texts of Scripture, all speak in plain and unequivocal language, if the view I take of the final destiny of the wicked is correct; otherwise, and if figurative, the imagination must be employed to explain them; and then we find ourselves let loose in the wild fields of fancy; and who shall decide where we shall stop?

In these sermons I have endeavored to show that man by sin lost all title to immortality; and had it not been for the "seed of the woman" the race would have utterly perished, or ceased to be, and would have been as though they never had been. There is not a particle of evidence that the original threatening embraced a state of eternal sin and suffering, that idea has puzzled our greatest and most learned divines, to tell how an atonement could be made adequate to redeem men from such a punishment. To meet the case, they have gone to the idea that God, himself, suffered to make the necessary atonement; and then they have started back from that position, as being impossible that the Godhead could actually suffer, and so have substituted the "human body and soul" of Jesus Christ, as united with the Godhead, and the human nature of Christ only suffering. This has led others to deny an atonement altogether, as they have contended that the man Christ Jesus, while the Godhead did not suffer, could not, by any sufferings he might endure, give an equivalent for endless torments in the fire of hell. Pressed with this difficulty, the advocates of the endless sin and suffering theory have been led to say, it was not necessary to an atonement that the sufferer should endure the very same punishment that the guilty were liable to, but only such as

should show that God would not let sin go unpunished. Others have taken advantage of this admission to deny the necessity of an atonement at all, and hence have opposed the idea of one. This has resulted in a still further departure from truth, and they have taken the position, that if man suffers for his sins, himself, that is all sufficient; and that his sufferings are bounded by this life, or at most, to a very limited period in a future state, after which he will have an eternity of happiness.

Now all this confusion and conjecture, for I can give it no higher name, I conceive, arises from not clearly understanding what man lost by the fall, for himself and posterity. In order to understand this subject I shall conclude these discourses, with general remarks on Adam's state, trial and failure.

The extravagant manner in which Adam's knowledge and holiness has been insisted on by nearly all theologians, I am disposed to think, is not sustained by either the works or words of God. Adam has been represented as the very perfection of knowledge and and holiness at his creation. The facts stated in regard to his creation are so few, that from those alone we might be left in doubt as to Adam's perfection as an intelligent and moral being; yet we shall find by observing God's order in his works in connection with revelation the real state of Adam at creation.

GOD'S WORKS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN PROGRESSIVE:

Or, as Tertullian says—"In the Creator's universe all things occur in the order of gradual development, each in its proper place." That is—Whatever God has accomplished, so far as known to us, has ever been by a gradual development and a steady accumulation

from a lesser to a greater. The work of creation was not accomplished in a day; but, from the first movement of "the Spirit of God upon the face of the deep," each succeeding day gave birth to some new development in the process of formation; every day increasing perfection; though every part of the work was perfect in its kind for the designed object or use. I stop not here to inquire whether the materials of which the earth was formed had been in a process of accumulation for untold ages prior to the Spirit moving upon the mass to bring order and arrangement out of that which was "without form and void," it might have been so without at all affecting the accuracy of the Mosaic account of creation—but the fact that the actual production of the "heavens and the earth" was by a gradual process is undeniable.

The revelation that God has seen fit to make to men has always been gradual and progressive: all was not revealed at once; and what has been communicated, as prophecy, has had a gradual and progressive development and accomplishment. Take Abraham as an example. First, he is called to "get out of" his "own country"—then he is shown "a land" that is promised him—a son of promise is presented to his mind, Isaac—he learns his seed is to be in bondage 400 years—after that to be brought into the land of Canaan—that from him was to proceed *a seed* in whom "all the families of the earth were to be blessed"—that his posterity should be as the stars of heaven for multitude, &c. All these things in their accomplishment were gradual and progressive, occupying many centuries, and are to have still further developments before the greatest perfection is attained contemplated in these providential works of God.

What is true in the case just contemplated, is true in the general course of God's dealings with men. The Fetus does not come to maturity to be ushered into the world in a day; and when the child is born how slow the process by which even its physical nature arrives at maturity; equally gradual and progressive is the development of its mind and mental energy. Improvements in the arts and sciences, on which side soever we look, and in all departments, are gradual. Many of those improvements are the work of ages; others are brought forward more rapidly. A single thought at first set the train in motion that has resulted in mighty developments, which have astonished, delighted, or benefitted mankind. It were easy to trace out a multitude of particulars, but to the reflecting mind this is unnecessary—it will readily call them up.

THE CREATION OF MAN.

Where is the evidence that God acted contrary to what is, evidently, His established order in the Creation and Development of Man? In other words—Where is the evidence that Adam was, at the first period of his existence, such an intellectual and moral giant as the current theology makes him? I am persuaded there is more fancy and assumption than proof of any such giant-like knowledge and holiness as has been attributed to him. It appears to me these assumptions have grown out of that misanthropic spirit which takes delight in maligning Adam's posterity under the pretence of honoring God, and has been the prolific parent of hatred to our fellow men, instead of that love which God requires; and its tendency is to produce despair in the minds of men of ever attaining to that knowledge and holiness which God requires.

ADAM'S INTELLECTUAL NATURE.

I see no reason for departing from the analogy of God's works on this point. His intellect was gradually developed, most likely, like any child's. The animal, or physical, first appears—then, gradually maturing, the intellect commences its development, with *one idea* or thought at a time. Up to the time Adam took the forbidden fruit he is, evidently, very imperfect in the development of intellect. But says one, "he must have been very wise and knowing, for he gave names to all the cattle, &c." What if he did—does that prove him a giant in knowledge? I know it is said, he gave them names descriptive of their natures, but I know, also, that such a position is a mere *assumption* without proof. Who can tell now what name Adam gave to one of the "living creatures?" And if they could, how can it be proved that that name is any more descriptive of its nature than any other? Parents now delight to try the intellect of their little children; and it not unfrequently happens that these children give some very odd names to some things, and their parents delighted with this effort to use intellect often adopt the name the child has given to an object; and for a time will use the odd name with much pleasure, because it proves to them an opening mind, and this gives them joy. This circumstance of Adam,s giving names to beasts, &c., is but a sorry proof of his being such an anomaly in knowledge as our modern theology represents him to have been.

ADAM'S IGNORANCE.

On the other hand his ignorance is notorious. He was too ignorant to know he was "naked;" for he was naked and was "not ashamed." Why was he not

ashamed? You may say, "because he was innocent;" but, that was not all—he did *not know* he was naked; see Gen. 3 : 7; he was ignorant, like children, who, to some years, have no more shame than Adam had, and for a similar reason—they have never been taught it; and their intellects are not enough developed to discover it. Further, Adam was so ignorant that he did not know the difference between good and evil. It is useless to say, he could not have known this without he had sinned; for God knew that difference, as is evident from his language, Gen. 3 : 22, "the man has become AS *one of* US to *know* good and evil." This language is further proof that Adam had been too ignorant to discern between them, previously. But God had that knowledge without having sinned; and, at a proper time, doubtless, would have communicated it to man, had he been obedient and waited the gradual and progressive order established by his Creator; and thus would have attained that knowledge without the evil that attended his neglect to heed his Maker's instruction. Again—"Adam was a figure," or type, "of him that was to come;" see Rom. 5 : 14, and compare with 1 Corth. 15 : 45. The Second Adam was the anti-type. Did the type come into the world with more knowledge than the anti-type? Jesus was a child—for a time helpless—without knowledge; for "the child Jesus *grew*—and *increased in wisdom* and stature, and in favor with God and man:" Luke 2 : 40, 52. Shall we admit these things of Adam the second and deny them of Adam the first?

ADAM'S HOLINESS.

As on Adam's knowledge the most extravagant notions have been assumed, so in regard to his holiness

the most unbounded descriptions have been given of its extent, and how it pervaded his entire being, regulating all his faculties, members, and senses; so that he has been made to appear as the sum of all perfection, and a perfect giant in moral life and power. All this has been done, doubtless, thinking to honor God, and the better to show off what monsters in depravity Adam's posterity are. Such persons never seem to have once thought in what a ridiculous light their view places the Creator of Adam; and how perfectly irreconcileable such theory is with the easy victory temptation had over him. Did his Creator make him a giant in holiness, and then suppose there would be any temptation, in the midst of unbounded enjoyment, by simply directing him not to eat of a solitary tree? The idea is supremely absurd—thousands of his posterity have withstood and overcome temptations far greater than that by which Adam fell. Adam at creation had no *moral* character—he was *neither* holy nor unholy. There is not one word said of Adam's being holy at his creation. The same is said of him that is said of all the other works of God—he was "*very good*"–the same is said of "*every thing* God had made;" see Gen. 1: 31; but not one word is said of the holiness of any of them. Holiness is a *relative* quality, and presupposes action towards some other being, preceded by knowledge and understanding, based on choice. Without this there cannot be either holiness or unholiness in any created thing. I conceive that all the talk about Adam's holiness is "mere patch work"—designed to patch up the work of God, but has only shown the pride of men's hearts in desiring to "be as God." Adam was a "very good" *animal*, of the highest order—designed to be king, or to have dominion, over

all the others; and possessed with those more perfect faculties which made him capable of developing a moral nature, or of manifesting moral actions, by certain appliances called a command, law, or prohibition. Without such command, law, or prohibition, there could have been no development of moral nature, or character; and man would have only remained the *highest of animals*, and like them remained very good, but without the character of holiness or unholiness, for the very sufficient reason, there was nothing to develop such a relative quality.

That Adam was a mere animal, at creation, is further evident from the account of creation; Gen. 2: 7 —"The Lord God formed *man* of the dust of the ground," &c.; and verse 19, "Out of the ground the Lord God formed every *beast* of the field, and every *fowl* of the air," &c. These last the Lord caused to pass before Adam, to see what he would call them, at the time when he proposed to make Adam "a help meet," or a companion suitable for him: among none of them was such a help meet to be found. Adam was superior to them all, and designed to be their lord; Gen. 1: 26; yet, he had the same origin, i. e. from the dust of the ground, with such an organization as gave him faculties for higher developments, and capable of moral manifestations; or, capable of attaining unto *holiness*. "The first Adam was made a *living soul;*" 1 Corth. 15: 45; *not* "an *immortal* soul"—that error lies at the root of all other corruptions of the Scriptures and the truth of God. The honor of making man an immortal being was reserved for the *second* Adam—he it is that is "made a *quickening* spirit," or through and by whom any man can attain to immortality; 1 Corth. 15: 45—49.

Adam then was first developed, if I may use that phrase, *an animal*, with an *aptitude* to attain knowledge superior to any other animal; and herein was to consist the "*image* of God" in which he was created; as appears from Col. 3·: 10—"Renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:" *not*, renewed in knowledge after the image of Adam; but, after the image of Adam's *Creator*. Adam, himself, after being formed of the dust of the ground, needed and was designed to have this renewal [this *renovo—to make new*] in knowledge after the image of his Maker.

Adam therefore did not "lose the image of God," as the current theology teaches; and for which teaching there is not one word of authority from Genesis to Revelation; nor did he lose holiness, for he had none to lose prior to his trial; till then a moral character was not developed—till then he was very good, in common with the animals and other works of God, but was no more holy than the beasts of the field were holy: he could not therefore actually lose what he did not really possess. He did possess a *capacity* for holiness; that capacity he did not lose by his disobedience; but, it developed itself in a wrong direction—it now for the first time, became *manifest* that he possessed such a power—he now, for the first time, came to know the difference between good and evil—he knew not the one from the other previously; but now, said God, "the man is *become as one of us* to know good and evil"—has attained to a knowledge that exhibits the *image* of God: he has indeed attained to it by an improper course; but still he has attained it. But, says one, "Adam lost knowledge." So speaks the current theology; but, it is to give God the lie, and charge the God of truth with uttering a falsehood.

God declared he had *gained* knowledge. Who is this that blasphemeth his Maker by affirming the contrary? But, continues the objector. "It is evident that Adam lost knowledge, for he attempted to hide himself among the trees of the garden, which he would not have done if he had not lost the knowledge of God's omnipresence." This is another pure assumption. Where is the evidence that Adam ever had the knowledge of God's omnipresence? Or, that any such knowledge had ever been communicated to him? There is none—he seems to have regarded God as any child regards his father; and when he is conscious he has been doing wrong he is afraid to see his father, and strives to hide himself; just so Adam acted, and for the same reason—i. e. "*shame.*"

ADAM'S TEMPTATION.

Many people murmur and complain about Adam's Temptation; they seem at a loss to know which to blame most, Adam or his Maker. They might as well complain that we had not all been left to grovel in the region of the animal appetites, with no capacity for higher and God-like attainments. I have already shown that to develop moral qualities, or to bring out *holiness*—which is but another word for *self-government*—there must be trial of some sort. God adapted the trial to Adam's *weakness* and IGNORANCE—He gave him the least possible trial that could have been used to develop a moral character at all, or to test man as to his capacity of self-government. If he could not govern himself, he could not govern the creation at the head of which his Maker designed to place him, in dominion. I say, the prohibition out of which the trial was to grow, and which proved the occasion of

his temptation, was the very least it could be. Look at it—Man's intellectual nature was not yet developed. His Maker therefore adapted his enjoyments to his present capacity—or animal nature—by causing "every tree to grow out of the ground that is *pleasant to the sight* and *good for food*," &c. In the delightful garden in Eden he placed man, with full and unrestrained liberty to regale and enjoy himself to the utmost extent of his present capacity, with but *one* solitary restriction. How very trifling this. There was no want of means for enjoyment. The restriction was designed for his advantage, by leading him to develop and form a moral character, and learn self-government, which would open up a new, more noble, and God-like source of happiness and enjoyment. In this view the restriction was one of love and good will. If man's capacity for a moral nature could be developed, and a character of holiness established by this easy test or trial, God determined it should be; but if that failed to bring out a holy moral character He determined to place the race under a course of discipline more severe, i. e., one of labor in sorrow, and death: and at the same time, to the favor already bestowed upon man, to add a "*much more* abundant" supply of aid to attain unto holiness, through the blessings to be bestowed in another dispensation, to be immediately opened for Adam's posterity if man failed in the present trial. "Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God," and also of his goodness and love to man!

Here I stop to ask—How is it possible that character can be known or developed without trial in some form? For example—How can it be known that a man is a temperance man, and able to govern himself

in reference to inebriating drink, if he has never had a trial? To try him, would you put that drink under bars and bolts that it was impossible for him to break? If such a course could be called a trial, you might try him fifty years, and both he and yourself would be just as ignorant at the end of that period as at its commencement as to his capacity for self-government; and he, on that point, would not be a particle more holy than the first day of that period. To bring out and fix a moral character, in that respect, he must have access to the liquor; but you, as a benevolent man, if he was ignorant of the fact, would warn him that if he did indulge his taste to any extent, intoxication and shame would follow. Thus situated, denying himself, or practising self-government, would be a virtue, and he would, by every victory over the temptation, have a new consciousness that he was capable of governing himself, and a renewed evidence of the exalted character of manhood, and thus be led to a higher and more holy estimate of the excellency and glory of that Being who had created him with such powers, or capacities. If in the supposed case the person should fail of self-government, and partake the inebriating liquor, the intoxication and consequent shame that follows his failure are a *mercy;* because calculated to arouse him to an effort to gain a temperance character, the importance of which he may now see more than before.

Apply this illustration to the case of Adam. A moral character, holiness, or self-government could not have existed, in fact, without trial; and that would have been no trial which had placed it out of his power to act wrong. The least trial that could be employed was first used, with the information be-

forehand that if that failed to produce a holy moral character, man would be *subjected* to a much more severe trial, i. e., "*dying to die*"—implying sorrow, suffering, and labor, to wind up in "DEATH."

ADAM'S FAILURE.

Adam failed to bring out a holy character in his trial. That is no proof of any defect in his constitution, or creation; nor of any moral depravity previous to that time; nor did that "*ruin*" his posterity, as the self-styled orthodoxy affirms; nor, bring "the wrath of God" upon them. True, they were "subjected to vanity, [or, suffering and death,] not willingly, but by reason [or, in the wisdom] of him who hath subjected the same in hope," and in promise of deliverance from that death by a second Adam, the seed of the woman. All the acts of God towards Adam, after his sin, manifest *mercy*, not wrath. He told them, indeed, that they must now be subjected to sorrow, labor and death; but at the same time spoke to them words of encouragement and hope for their seed, or posterity. He also provided for their clothing, and guarded them against inflicting upon themselves the curse of immortality in sin, by removing them away from the tree of life; which, instead of being a curse, was a blessing; that they might not by any possible means inflict upon themselves an immortality in sin and suffering. Thus the notion that Adam died a moral death is proved to be a mere outburst of a distempered imagination: he never had moral life before he sinned: he had only animal life: the death to which he was subjected was only animal. God in wisdom, and for man's good, put the race under a severer discipline, as parents often do their children, and that *in love* and the most tender

pity and good will. How is God—the God of love—often dishonored by the representations of his dealings with our first parents and their posterity because of their failure. No wonder men are made infidels by such blasphemous insinuations—no wonder men bewilder themselves, and are lost in the fancies which grow out of their absurd and contradictory theories.

The most blasphemous part of all is, that the God of Truth and Love is represented as causing Adam's posterity to inherit a morally depraved nature, "whereby they are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and that continually:"—*Assembly's Catechism.* When will such reproach of God our Maker have an end? "Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end;"—*Psalmist.* What has the doctrine of man's natural immortality done? Blasphemed God—both deified and devilized man—exalted Satan—reviled the Bible—fed infidelity—nourished and brought up Universalism—robbed Christ—filled the world with hate and hypocrites. This it has done—"ignorantly, in unbelief," I hope. Let men learn to call their sins their own, and acknowledge the long suffering and love of God, till they shall both hate their sins and abandon them, from a deep conviction of the amazing wrong they have done to God by living contrary to that course his love and kindness has marked out for us, that we might attain "unto holiness, and that the end might be everlasting life, through Jesus Christ," the Son of God, and our *Life-Giver.*

There is, in my judgment, not a particle of evidence, in the Bible, that Adam lost anything for his posterity except access to the tree of life; and hence entailed upon us corruption and death. Doctors of Divinity

have puzzled their own brains, and those of students in theology, with labored efforts to find out what infants need to have done for them, and how God does it, to fit them for heaven. Long and labored arguments and inquiries have been entered into about the depravity of infants—how they are justified—how they are made holy—and whether all of them go to heaven, or a part to hell, &c. &c. The whole of these discussions have only served to make darkness darker. The truth, I conceive, is very-simple, and that, perhaps, is the reason why great men overlook it. It is simply this—Adam lost all claim to immortality—and therefore could not communicate it to his posterity, any more than an impoverished parent could communicate riches to his children; the consequence is, all his posterity are born, not liable to eternal sin and suffering, but liable to perish, to lose all life, sense and being; and what they need, previous to personal sins, is simply salvation from perishing, or they need immortality, eternal life. Christ came to redeem man from death, or that loss of being to which he was exposed, and open eternal life to all; or, he "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light." But that eternal life is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ. Under the Gospel we are required to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, as he that "came down from heaven" to give "life unto the world." This is the great test question; because he that truly receives Christ, receives all the other truths connected with his mission to earth; and he manifests that faith by obedience; so that a true faith is as certainly known by the conduct and conversation, as a living man is known from a dead carcass. And for a man to pretend that he has faith in Christ, while he does not

walk in obedience to all the known commands of God, is as absurd as to say, that a sick man has faith in a physician whom he refuses to employ, and whose directions he will not follow.

I conceive, all the "evil nature," about which there has been so much discussion in the world, that man inherits, from Adam, is a dying nature; the entire man perishing. By Adam "all were dead;" i. e., the natural tendency of all born of him was to perish, in the sense of ceasing to be.—Christ died for all, "that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." Adults then pass from death, i. e., from condemnation to death, unto life, through or by faith in Christ—and thus are said to be born again. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh—corruptible, like him from whom it sprung; so, that which is begotten of the Spirit, of the spiritual, living Adam, Christ, is spirit; is endowed with that Spirit which will raise them up from the dead, or "quicken their mortal bodies," or, hath eternal life; according to the Scripture which saith, "he that hath the Son hath life," whilst "he that hath not the Son hath not life."

If I mistake not, then, the true state of the case is this.—All the offspring of Adam, are destitute of immortality; God has given His Son Jesus Christ to die for us, that we might not perish, except by our own fault. He sets "life and death before men," and calls upon them to "choose life," that they "may live;"—if they will not come to Christ they perish under an insupportable load of guilt and shame, for having preferred animal pleasures—which, when they are the supreme pursuit, are the pleasures of sin—to *Life Eternal*. Shall any of us be guilty of such folly and madness? Come to the LIFE-GIVER,—lay hold on ETERNAL LIFE.

CHRIST THE LIFE-GIVER:

OR, THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL.

BY GEO. STORRS.

"Earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the Saints.—JUDE, 3."

THE Syriac version reads, "Maintain a conflict for the faith," &c. It will be my object first to determine what is *the faith* spoken of; and then note the importance of the apostolical exhortation, earnestly contend for it. "*The faith*," I apprehend, is expressed in the previous part of the verse, under the appellation of the "*common salvation*." It is "the faith" of salvation by or through our Lord Jesus Christ. But what is the distinctive feature of that salvation?

In answering the question, I wish to avoid the looseness which seems to pervade most men's minds when they speak of salvation, or being saved. The terms saved, and salvation, have a great latitude of meaning; and hence the sense of these terms will accord with the fancy, prejudice, or judgment of different individuals, according to their preconceived notions, unless we can show that they have a *definite sense*, when used in relation to man as the object of God's favor. Such a sense I believe the New Testament writers have in the use of those terms. To assist in determining that sense, I shall bring to our aid the

Syriac New Testament, as translated by Prof. Murdock, late of the Theological Institution of Andover, Mass.

Of the "Peshito Syriac Version of the New Testament," Prof. Murdock says—It "is very generally admitted to be the *oldest version* that has come down to us, of the New Testament *in any language*. It is called by the Syrians the *Peshito* version on account of its style or character. The Syriac verb signifies to *unfold* or *spread out* that which was folded up, so that it can be seen in its true form, dimensions and character. Hence the participle signifies *spread out, not involved or folded up, simplex* and *not duplex;* or as applied to a translation, *explicit, free from ambiguities, direct, simple, and easy to be understood.* And precisely such is, in fact, the character of this venerable version."—P. 489.

Among the principles which Prof. Murdock adopted in his translation of this version, the "5th" is, "In general, to avoid using technical theological terms, when good substitutes could be found, in order to call away attention from the *word* to the *thing*." In his illustration of this principle, he says—"*Savtour* is rendered *Vivifier*, as being more literal, for the verb properly signifies *to make alive, to vivify;* and its derivatives properly signify *life, life-giver*, or *vivifier*. These are the usual terms of the Syriac version, denoting that salvation which Christ bestows on fallen men." Preface, p. 7.

In accordance with the principle here laid down, the Professor gives us "*life, Life-Giver*," or "vivify and Vivifier," throughout his translation, where it is *save, Saviour*, &c., in the common English version. In following his translation, I shall use the term *Life*, and

Life-Giver, where he, in some instances, has inserted vivify and Vivifier, &c.; as these last terms have a Latin cast, and do not as clearly express to the mere English reader the sense of the text.

With the light shed on the Scriptures by this venerable Syriac version, I shall be able to satisfy my own mind, at least, as to what "the faith" is, of which Jude speaks. In the first part of the verse from which my text is taken, Jude says—"My beloved, while I take all pains to write to you of our *common life*;"—Syriac. The great theme of Jude and all the apostles was, that of Life—*Eternal Life*, through Jesus the "Life-Giver." This was the faith, the doctrine, the great matter *to be believed*, the truth to be preached, the faith for which they were "earnestly to contend."

In further presenting this subject, I shall pass over, for the present, the multitude of texts in the common English version which express the same great and glorious truth, and call attention directly to the Syriac version, where life, Life-Giver, &c., occur in place of *save*, *saved*, *salvation*, and *Saviour* in our version. I begin the examination with Matthew 19: 25; where, after our Lord had spoken of the difficulty of a rich man entering into the "kingdom of God," the disciples wondered greatly, and said: Who then can attain to *life?*" Here, attaining to *life* is the *salvation* looked for. Our version reads—"Who then can be saved?" *What* the salvation is, might be a matter for dispute, as that term is more or less indefinite: but *life* is a definite term, and brings us at once to the nature of the salvation. It is salvation from death, into life.

Again, Math. 27: 42; when Jesus hung upon the cross, our translation reads—"He *saved* others, himself he cannot save." The Syriac has it—"He gave,

life to others; his *own life* he cannot *preserve.*" This version is truly *open*, and easy to be understood. He gave *life* to several during his ministry; and that which determined the Scribes and Pharisees to put him to death, at all hazards, was the fact that he gave life to Lazarus, who had been dead four days: see John 11: 48–53. He was a Life-Giver.

In John 3: 17, our translation reads, "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." The Syriac—"That the world *might* live by means of him." Here the nature of the salvation is clearly expressed, and no doubt is left on the mind as to its real character. It is *life*—that's what the world, the *dying* world need; and Christ came that they might live.

Acts 2: 21, reads—"Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be *saved.*" The Syriac—"*Shall live.*" Thus showing that Life is the great proffered blessing to the human race; and the doctrine of life, through Jesus, is "*the faith* delivered to the saints," and which they are to maintain, earnestly contending for it.

Acts 4: 12, reads—"There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." The Syriac—"There is not another name under heaven which is given to men, whereby to *live.*" Here, as in the previous texts, there is a definiteness that forms a firm basis for faith. The salvation is *life.* Who is it that gives this *life?*

Acts 5: 31—"Him [Jesus, who was raised from the dead] hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour." Syriac—"Him hath God established as a head and *Life-Giver.*" Jesus, Messiah, *died*—God raised him from the dead and made him "*head*" of another *life*, even an endless life, and constituted him the *Life-Giver;* he

is to bestow that life of which he is now the fountain. It is not in ourselves, but in him who was dead, but, is alive again, and lives forevermore; who also has "the *keys* of death and hades."

When the angel directed Cornelius to send for Peter, as related Acts 11: 14, he said—"Who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." The Syriac reads—"He will utter to thee discourses by which thou wilt *live*," &c. Here again the nature of the salvation is definite: it is *life*.

And our translation so construes the salvation, verse 18, when those who heard Peter's relation of the matter said—"Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto *life*."

Acts 13: 26, Paul in addressing the "children of the stock of Abraham," &c., saith—"To you is the word of this salvation sent," Syriac—"To you is this word of *life* sent." Again in the same chapter, verse 47, Paul saith—"That thou shouldest be for salvation to the ends of the earth." Syriac —"That thou shouldest be for *life*," &c. In the previous verse, he had said to the blaspheming Jews—"Seeing you judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting *life*, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." The salvation, then, is "everlasting *life*."

In corrupting the Gospel, Acts 15: 1, some said, "Except ye be circumcised, ye cannot be saved." Syriac—"Ye cannot have *life*." And when this matter was under discussion in the council of apostles and elders at Jerusalem, at verse 11, Simon said, as the Syriac reads—"We believe that we, as well as they, are to *have life* by the grace of our Lord Jesus Messiah." The great theme was *life*. Well did Peter answer Jesus, when he asked the twelve, John 6th, "Will ye also go away?" "Lord, to whom shall we

go? thou hast the words of *eternal life.*" That was "*the faith*"–the doctrine "once delivered to the saints."

When the maid possessed of a spirit of divination followed Paul and Silas, Acts 16: 17, she said—These men are servants of the Most High God, and they announce to you the *way of life.*" She understood what they preached; it was about Life. Though this spirit, on this occasion, spoke the truth—"as rapping spirits" sometimes do in these days—yet, "Paul was indignant" [Syriac] and refused to suffer such *liars* to testify, and commanded it to depart. For this act, Paul and Silas were whipped and cast into prison. But happy in the hope *of life*, they praised God in their chains and dungeon. The jailor was convicted, and came trembling before the apostles and said—"What must I do that I may *have life?*"—Syriac. How came his first inquiry to be about *life?* Clearly, because he understood that was the grand theme of the apostles' preaching. They answer him—"Believe on the name of our Lord Jesus Messiah, and thou wilt *have life,*" &c. Here is clearness, beauty, and force. There is no vague and indefinite something, under a general term, but a specific one is used, which brings us at once to the nature of the Gospel salvation. It is, obtaining *life.*

Rom. 1: 16, Paul says—"I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God *unto life*, to all who believe it."—*Syriac.* Again, chap. 10: 1, he saith of Israel—"The desire of my heart, and my intercession with God for them is, that they might *have life*" And in the same chapter, verse 9, he states the conditions of the proffered blessing, thus—"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth our Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead,

thou shalt live." And at the thirteenth verse he saith —"Every one that shall call on the name of the Lord, will have *life.*" In speaking of the stumbling of Israel, chap. 11 : 11, he saith—"By their stumbling, *life* hath come, to the Gentiles."—*Syriac.* In chapter 13 : 11, Paul, exhorting to wakefulness, saith "For now *our life* hath come nearer to us, than when we believed." Eternal life is only actually bestowed at the resurrection unto life, at Christ's return from heaven. Every day brings it nearer ; and that consideration should arouse us from all stupidity, and excite us to diligence. All these expressions, as found in the Syriac, go to show the great idea of *salvation* as it lay in the apostle's mind—it was the "*one idea*" of *Life.*

We now proceed to his other epistles. 1 Corth. 1 : 18—"Our discourse concerning the cross is to them who *perish* foolishness ; but to us who *live* it is the energy of God." In chap. 10 : 33, speaking of his course as a preacher, he says—"I do not seek what is profitable to me, but what is profitable to many, that they may *live.*" Chap. 15 : 1, 2, he saith—"I make known unto you, my brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, and which you received, and in which ye stand, and *by which ye have life.*" 2 Corth. 1 : 6—"Whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation, and for *your life.*" Chap. 2 : 15—"Through the Messiah, we are unto God a sweet odor, in them that *live,* and in them that perish," &c. Chap. 7 : 10—"For sorrowing on account of God, worketh a conversion of the soul which is not to be reversed, and a turning *unto life :* but the sorrowing of the world worketh death." To the Fphesians, chap. 1 : 13, Paul saith—"In whom [Messiah] ye also have heard the word of truth, which is the gospel of *your life.*" The good

news, or gospel, is that of *life* to dying men. To the Philippians, 1: 28, he saith—"In nothing be ye startled by those who rise up against us; [which is] an indication of their *destruction*, and of *life* for you;" and in chap. 2: 12, he saith—"My beloved, as ye have at all times obeyed, not only when I was near to you, but now when I am far from you, *prosecute the work of your life* more abundantly," &c. The great work we have to do is to work *for life*. In chap. 3, Paul having spoken of the conduct and *end* of the wicked, and said "whose thoughts are on things of earth," adds —"But our concern is with heaven; and *from thence* we expect our *Life-Giver*, our Lord Jesus the Messiah; who will change the body of our abasement, that it may have the likeness of the body of his glory," &c. This is a *life-giving* work: a work which "the Father, who hath *life* in himself," hath entrusted to his Son to accomplish for all that *obey* him.

1 Thes. 2: 16, Paul saith the Jews "forbid us to speak to the Gentiles, that they may *have life*." Chap. 5: 8, 9, he thus speaks—"Let us who are the children of the day be wakeful in mind, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and take the helmet of the *hope of life*: for God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to the acquisition of *life* by our Lord Jesus the Messiah." The *hope* of *life* is that which sustains the Christian in all his conflicts; and is the great gospel motive to labor and suffer for the Messiah's cause: it is *life* God has set us to *acquire*.

2 Thess. 2: 10, Paul saith that the Evil One will by signs and lying wonders deceive them that perish; "because they did not receive the love of *the truth*, by which they might have *life*." He adds—"We are bound to give thanks to God .... brethren .... that

God hath . . . . chosen you unto *life*, through sanctification of the Spirit, and faith in the truth." *Life* is kept prominent as the great gift of God and object of pursuit, as well as that for which the Spirit of God works in us.

Paul opens his first epistle to Timothy with the announcement that God is "*our Life-Giver.*" As he proceeds, verse 15, he says—"Faithful is the declaration, and worthy to be received, that Jesus the Messiah came into the world to *give life* to sinners." He adds, that Messiah displayed on him "all his long-suffering, for an example to them who were to believe on him unto *life eternal.*" In the next chapter, he exhorts to prayer, &c. for all men, "for this is good and acceptable before God our *Life-Giver*, who would have all men to *live*, and be converted to the knowledge of the truth." In chapter 4: 10, he uses this language—"We toil and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the *Life-Giver* of all men, especially of the believers." He directs Timothy, verse 16, "Be attentive to thyself, and to thy teaching, and persevere in them: for," saith he, "in doing this thou wilt *procure life* to thyself and to them who hear thee."

Thus the testimony is uniform in regard to the great end of the gospel; it is to call men to *life*, and bestow it upon them. The language, by this translation of the Syriac, is divested of all vagueness and speaks out to the comprehension of all minds. "We will, however, present a few more places where *Saviour*, *save*, and *salvation*, in the common English version, are in the Syriac *Life-Giver* and *life.*

2 Timothy 1: 10, "The appearing of our *Life-Giver*, Jesus the Messiah, who hath abolished death, and hath made manifest *life* and immortality by the gospel."

Chap. 2: 10—"Therefore I endure everything for the elect's sake, that they may *obtain life* in Jesus the Messiah, with eternal glory." *Life* is still the theme; and the glorious object set before us.

Chap. 3: 15—"From thy childhood thou wast taught the holy books, which can make thee wise *unto life*, by faith in Jesus the Messiah."

Chap. 4: 18—"My Lord will rescue me from every evil work; and will give me *life* in his heavenly kingdom." One theme still—one end in view, viz: *life*—*life* in the kingdom of God.

To Titus Paul writes, on opening the epistle, "In hope of eternal life .... grace and peace from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus the Messiah, our *Life-Giver*." Chap. 2: 10, 13,—"For the *life-giving* grace of God is revealed to all men; and it teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live in this world in sobriety, and in uprightness, and in the fear of God, looking for the blessed hope, ["hope of eternal life;" see chap. 1: 2] and the manifestation of the glory of the great God and our *Life-Giver*, Jesus the Messiah."

Chap. 3: 4–6—"When the kindness and compassion of God our *Life-Giver* was revealed .... according to his mercy .... by the renovation of the Holy Spirit, which he shed on us abundantly, by Jesus the Messiah, our *Life-Giver*, that we might .... become heirs in the *hope of eternal life*." Thus the author and *giver of life* is clearly set before our minds; and in a manner that cannot fail to make an impression of our obligation, and of God's great mercy.

Paul, in writing to the Hebrews, speaking of angels, asks, chap. 1: 14—"Are they not all spirits of ministration, who are sent to minister on account of them

who are to *inherit life?*" He asks, chap. 2 : 3—"How shall we escape if we despise the things which are *our life?*" &c. Again, verse 10—"It became him .... [who] bringèth many sons unto glory, to perfect the *Prince of their life* by suffering." How forcible are right words? All the commentaries in the world cannot make plainer the work of Messiah, and the blessing he came to give the perishing.

Chap. 5 : 7–9—"When he [Jesus] was clothed in flesh, he presented supplication and entreaty, with intense invocation and with tears, to him who was able to *resuscitate* him from death; and he was heard. And though he was a son, yet, from the fear and sufferings he endured he learned obedience; and thus he was perfected, and became the cause of *eternal life* to all them who obey him."

Chap. 7 : 25—"He is able to *vivify* [give *life*] forever, them that come to God by him, for he always *liveth*, and sendeth up prayers for them." And chap. 9 : 28, Paul saith Messiah will "a second time . . appear *for the life* of them who expect him." What is Messiah coming a second time for? *For the life* of his followers : to give them the "*crown of life.*"

We now come back to Jude, the point from which we started. He calls this life, which we have been tracing out, "the *common life*" of the "*beloved.*" This is that which so deeply interested them all—which the saints were exhorted to lay hold of; for which they labored and suffered; for which they *hoped, believed,* and *fought;* and in the firm persuasion of possessing it, when called to lay down their lives, met death without terror, knowing that God, who cannot lie, had promised it to all who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for it.

If such, then, is "*the faith*" of the gospel, the *importance* of "*contending earnestly*" for it can hardly be magnified. The *necessity* of such a course is as apparent as that nearly all Christendom have departed from "the faith," and perverted the very *words* in which the Bible presents the subject, to mean "*happiness*" instead of *life;* thus corrupting the testimony of God, and affirming that it is not *life* that man needs, but something else: yea, insisting that all men have endless life in themselves; so that he who would maintain the Bible truth on this subject must *contend earnestly* for it, and is in danger of being denounced as an "*infidel*" for believing that God, Messiah, and the apostles, *mean what they say, and speak what they mean.* Surely, there never was a subject or topic that Christian men needed apostolical authority more to sustain them in their work, than the one we have been contemplating. "Fight the good fight of faith," said Paul to Timothy, "*lay hold on eternal life*, whereunto thou art also called." And he adds—"I give thee charge,in the sight of God .... that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Tim. 6 : 12–14. Can a subject of such importance be magnified above its just claims? I think not. Let us, then "*earnestly contend for*" *it*, as "the *faith once delivered to the saints.*" Let those be admonished who *assume* that man has immortality or endless life in himself, that they are not by such a course, contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, but for a fable imposed upon them by tradition and the corruption of the words of God. May they quickly have they their eyes open to see the truth, and be able to defend it.

ADDENDA.

A few texts have been passed in the foregoing sermons, without special notice, which some rely on as proof of the immortality of man and the endless sin and suffering of the wicked. They were passed simply because they involved the State of the Dead, which the author of the Six Sermons thought best to take up in another work of a more general character. The Rich Man and Lazarus is one of the texts passed. A single remark here is all that is necessary on it till the state of the dead is under consideration.

Suppose the rich man to be actually in a conscious state after death, and in torment, it does not prove him immortal, or that his conscious suffering is to be eternal: for, the advocates of the immortality of man admit the state of the rich man, spoken of, was immediately after death and *before* the day of judgment. Hence, whatever his state is now it is not his *proper* punishment—that may be utter annihilation for all there is in the text to prove the contrary: he has not yet passed the judgment; when he has, then comes the real punishment, and the Scriptures elsewhere must determine what it is. We have positive testimony that "*The wages of sin is Death:*" Rom. 6: 23.

The phrase "immortal soul" is not once found in the Old and New Testament Scriptures; either in our translation or the original languages in which they were written; while—among many other terms which

clearly express the idea of deprivation of life—that of *annihilation* is found distinctly in the Hebrew Scriptures as expressive of the doom of the wicked.

Prof. Pick, in his "*Bible Student's Concordance*"—a work of great value to a mere English scholar—gives us two original terms, the *literal* signification of which is, "*to annihilate:*" and these terms are applied to the destiny of wicked men in such connection as to make it certain that the Spirit of God—which inspired "holy men of old"—designed to teach the utter extirpation of the wicked, and not a *preservation* in any living state. These Hebrew terms are *Tsomath* and *Shomad.* In our translation they are sometimes rendered *destroy, destroyed,* and *cut off.* According to Prof. Pick there are about forty different Hebrew words that are translated destroy and destroyed. We will give a few instances where the terms occur, the literal signification of which, he tells us, is "*to annihilate.*" In Psa. 18: 40 *tsomath* occurs. None doubt but that a portion of this Psalm is prophetical of Messiah and what he will do. Thus speaks the word of prophecy—"Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies; that I might *tsomath—annihilate*—them that hate me." Saith Jesus, Luke 19: 27, when the Nobleman shall return he will say—"Those *mine enemies,* which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and *slay* them before me." Thus the prophecy, in Psa. 18, is to have a fulfillment when Messiah, who is to be King on David's throne, shall "return from heaven." So Paul declares, on that return the disobedient "shall be punished with everlasting destruction:" 2 Thes. 1: 9. Thus the Prophet, our Lord, and Paul, witness together, the enemies of Christ are to be *annihilated.*

Again prophecy thus speaks, Psa. 54: 5—"He [God] shall reward evil unto mine enemies: *tsomath—annihilate* them in thy truth." The truth of God is, the wicked shall be *annihilated.*

In Psa. 94: 23, *tsomath* occurs twice; and the verse literally reads thus—"He shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall *annihilate* them in their own wickedness: yea, the LORD our God shall *annihilate* them." Thus the fate of the wicked is clearly stated.

In Psa. 101: 8, *tsomath* occurs twice; and as the language is clearly prophetical of Messiah it speaks in language not to be mistaken. "I will early *annihilate all* the wicked of the land; that I may *annihilate* all wicked doers from the city of the Lord."

Once more, Psa. 143: 12, David personating Messiah, prays—"Of thy mercy *annihilate* mine enemies, and *annihilate all* them that afflict my soul."

Finally, Psa. 145: 20, we read—"The LORD *preserveth* all them that love him: but *all* the wicked will he *shomad—annihilate.*"

These examples are amply sufficient to warrant us in using the term annihilation in relation to the destiny of all the enemies of God. Those who choose to deny it, and affirm that such a disposal of them is *impossible*, we leave to settle their controversy with Him who cannot lie, and whose word abideth forever. We believe that men who reject Christ as the *Life-Giver* will be eternally excluded from life—"be no more"—"be as though they had not been:" Psa. 104: 35: Obadiah 16.—"The wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall consume: into smoke shall they consume away." Psa. 37: 20. Thus do the wicked PERISH UTTERLY AND FOREVER.

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