

## ARTICLE IV.

## THE SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE STATE.

BY PROF. E. P. BARROWS, ANDOVER.

WE cannot but attach a high significance to the fact, that of all the writers who have denied the doctrine of eternal punishment, in the proper sense of the words, not one, so far as our knowledge extends, has begun with the direct scriptural argument. Not one appears to have been led by the simple declarations of the Bible concerning the future state of the wicked to the conclusion either that they will all be finally made blessed, or that they will all be annihilated. So far as our observation goes, they have always begun with the proposition, that the received doctrine of the eternal punishment of the wicked cannot be consistent with God's goodness, and therefore cannot be true; and, after laboring at great length to fortify this position, they have *then* come to the work of bringing the declarations of Scripture into harmony with it. A striking illustration of this method of procedure we have in a volume now before us, entitled: *The Doctrine of a Future Life*,<sup>1</sup> in which the author labors to establish the position that the everlasting punishment of the wicked will consist in their annihilation after the final judgment. The body of the work consists of 468 pages. Of these only 67 are devoted to the "scriptural argument," and of these sixty-seven pages, the last eleven are occupied with the consideration of the "indirect scriptural argument," drawn from the supposed opinions of the Jews on the subject of the future state in our Lord's day. In the 169 pages that precede this scriptural argument, the author labors to show that, upon none of the philosophical grounds upon which the doctrine of eternal punishment has been maintained, can it possibly

<sup>1</sup> Debt and Grace, as related to the Doctrine of a Future-Life. By C. F. Hudson. Boston: Published by John P. Jewett and Company. Cleveland, Ohio: H. P. B. Jewett. 1857. pp. viii and 472. 12mo.

be defended. He is fully in earnest to show that the eternal persistence of moral evil is and must be in irreconcilable contradiction with the true idea of God. The following extracts, taken, one from the portion preceding, the other from that following, the Biblical Argument, are samples of the manner in which he discourses on this solemn and awful theme. Speaking of the argument for the necessity of endless penalty as a means to maintain confidence in the divine government he says :

“ Must the eternal peace and happiness of all beings depend on the co-eternal anguish of those who have begun to sin ? Are the delights of Paradise and the ‘fulness of joy’ not sufficient to restrain the world from plunging into the abyss of annihilation ? So far as human beings have lost confidence in God or creature, is it not more restored by the renewal of a single heart in the image of Christ, than by the supposed exposure of millions to eternal woe ? How do earthly rulers restore the lost confidence of their subjects ? Which is the stronger government—that in which the most dreadful punishments are inflicted, or that in which the mere loss of place or favor is so dire that infliction is not needed ? And must God forever afflict the guilty, that the innocent may learn to trust in him ? ” pp. 84, 85.

Here he *assumes* that, in a moral government rightly constructed and administered, “the mere loss of place or favor,” without any positive infliction of penal evil, should be a sufficient protection against sin and its consequences ; an assumption which he can never establish, and which would be as conclusive against the actual government of God in the present world, as against the doctrine which he is combating. Again he says :

“ If man is created absolutely immortal, subject to the alternative of eternal happiness or eternal misery, he seems to have hardly a fair trial here ; we should suppose that instead of being exposed to any dangerous temptations, the heavenly Father would have furnished every motive to virtue, and would have allowed no motive to sin ; and we need not wonder if such fair trial for so fearful an alternative is sought in some preëxistent state.” p. 240.

Here he *assumes*, again, that a moral government administered by law over free beings may be so constructed as to exclude all “ dangerous temptations,” and furnish “ every

motive to virtue," while it allows "no motive to sin." Whoever discourses in this manner concerning God's moral government is certainly talking quite at random, understanding not what he says, nor whereof he affirms.

With such foregone conclusions he comes to the examination of the scriptural argument. Now to deny the success of this or that particular attempt to defend the doctrine of eternal punishment upon the ground of human reason and philosophy, is one thing; but to affirm explicitly, or assume implicitly, that it is absolutely irreconcilable with the divine attributes, and therefore cannot be true, is quite another thing. We are very ready to admit that many unsatisfactory theories of reconciliation have been proposed. If one chooses to maintain that no adequate solution of the difficulty has yet been found, we shall not contend with him. But we shall remind him that this argument, drawn from the limitation of human faculties, is a two-edged sword cutting both ways. If, as he affirms, no one has yet shown, on the ground of human reason and philosophy, *how* the doctrine in question is consistent with the divine attributes, it is equally true that no one has ever shown or can show, on the same ground, that it *is not* consistent with them. The ultimate appeal, then, must be to the declarations of holy writ. Here alone our faith can find a firm resting-place. Inasmuch, however, as the main body of the work now under review is devoted to *extra-scriptural* arguments and considerations, it seems proper, before proceeding to the question of the biblical doctrine, to examine a few of his leading positions which belong to

#### THE PHILOSOPHICAL ARGUMENT.

1. *Dualism.* True dualism is the doctrine of two opposite eternal principles, each self-existent, and therefore each independent of the other in its being and attributes. From the conflict between these arises to each a perpetual restraint and hindrance. Neither has power to do what it would, because of the opposing power of the other. It is

not necessary to insist upon the obvious fact that this theory denies the very idea of a self-sufficient omnipotent God. The god of the dualist does simply as well as he can in contending forever against a coördinate nature wholly external to himself, of which he is not the author, and which, therefore, he can only resist without the ability to destroy or control. Such a necessity, imposed upon God from without in spite of his own free will, would be dualism. But a so-called "*moral necessity*," arising not from the defect of the divine attributes, but from their infinite fulness, however absolute it may be, is not dualism. This necessity the Scriptures boldly ascribe to God. It is "impossible," say they, "for God to lie." The necessity of speaking the truth rests upon God absolutely and eternally. But it is the necessity of his infinite perfection. It is self-imposed, and therefore altogether free. Now precisely the same necessity rests upon God in respect to holiness and sin. In spite of our theories the latter exists under his moral government, as well as the former. It is "impossible" that he should not love and reward holiness. It is equally impossible that he should not hate and punish sin — and, for anything that our finite reason can determine, punish it eternally. There is no limitation to the divine power in the one case, any more than in the other. It is no eternal conflict with an unconquerable self-persistent power, but simply the treatment of sin as the infinite reason of God sees it right and good to treat it. God's power to annihilate the wicked no sane man will deny. But this does not teach us what he will do. What he might have done, had he seen best, to prevent sin, or to bring sinners to repentance, we are not called upon to affirm. He *has* done that which his infinite perfections dictated. If the above plain distinction between a *moral necessity*, which has its ground in the very fulness of the divine perfections, and which leaves God free in the fullest sense of the term; and a *natural necessity* imposed upon him either from within by the limitation of his own attributes, or from without by a coördinate self-existent power (which implies, however, as has been shown, an inward limitation also) — if this plain

distinction be made, then the whole argument of the author from the supposed dualism involved in the doctrine of eternal punishment falls to the ground, at least so far as we have any concern with it.

2. *Quantity and quality.* A fallacy which runs through the present treatise is the substitution of the *quantitative* argument, where sound logic absolutely demanded the *qualitative*. For example, in answer to the argument that "JUSTICE is certainly good and salutary; and if the justice of eternal suffering can be made out, it should not be accounted an evil," he says :

"Is punished sin an evil? It is made up of three things — guilt, pain, and the justice which connects them. Now the guilt is certainly an evil in itself, and so is the pain; the justice is doubtless good, else it would not be just. But what is it good for? Punitive justice denotes simply this, — that guilt and pain are good *for each other*. The example of punishment may happen also to be good for other beings; but this is an added consideration, extrinsic, and can never create the justice itself. Rather the *need* of exemplary punishment, whether to restrain the vicious, or to encourage the virtuous, indicates just so much imperfection and evil." p. 27.

Now, waiving other errors (as they seem to us) in this statement, why say "*exemplary* punishment?" Is not the need of *any* punishment "just so much imperfection and evil," as really as the need of "*exemplary* punishment?" But this does not prevent *some* punishment from existing. How can he show that it will prevent "*exemplary* punishment?" He says again :

"Can sin and pain be an eternal fact without an eternal necessity? If not necessary, then why actual? If it be said that man, absolutely immortal, shall sin forever, maugre God's efforts to change his sinful purpose, then he imposes an immortal necessity upon God; and this becomes an *eternal* necessity, in the eternal reason for such immortality." p. 28.

Waiving, again, other objections which we might make to this statement, if it be intended to represent the received views of the orthodox, we simply ask: How come sin and pain to exist at all? "If not necessary why actual?" But they *are* actual. And if they can be actual without impos-

ing upon God any necessity in the author's dualistic sense, then who shall undertake to say *in what measure* they may be actual? We might fill pages with quotations of passages where the same fallacy of quantity for quality prevails. He quotes from Whately the following passage :

“The main difficulty is not the *amount* of evil that exists, but the existence of any at all. Any, even the smallest portion of evil, is quite unaccountable, supposing the same amount of good can be obtained without that evil; and why it is not so attainable, is more than we are able to explain. And if there be some reason why we cannot understand, why a small amount of evil is unavoidable, there may be, for aught we know, the same reason for a greater amount. I will undertake to explain to any one the final condemnation of the wicked, if he will explain to me the existence of the wicked; — if he will explain why God does not cause all those to die in the cradle, of whom He foresees that when they grow up they will lead a sinful life. The thing *cannot* be explained; and it is better to rest satisfied with knowing as much as God has thought fit to teach us, than to try our strength against mysteries which will but deride our weakness.” p.147.<sup>1</sup>

As this is a point of vital importance, we looked with no little interest for the author's answer. This extends over about five pages. Omitting that part of it which is occupied with reciting the opinions of others, the following is his train of argument. He first lays down the true principle that “the distinction of evil as much or little, lasting or fleeting, will be almost worthless if it can be derived from no principle. Evil is essentially that which ought not to be. How, then, can its actual temporary existence be wrong, and its eternal existence forbidden? This brings us to the question whether God permits evil? If so, how, or why?”<sup>2</sup> He comes to the conclusion that sin exists “by a permission that does not compromise the divine integrity; a permission not moral, and denoting God's complacence or sanction, but physical. God freely grants the power to perform what he earnestly deprecates, and absolutely forbids.”<sup>3</sup> So far well. But after expanding at some length this idea of the divine permission of sin, he comes to the following extraordinary conclusion :

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Scripture Revelations on a Future State, Lecture VIII.

<sup>2</sup> p. 148.

<sup>3</sup> pp. 149, 150.

“The reader will at once perceive that our doctrine of the permission of sin looks to the denial of its eternity resulting from an event in time. If it could begin only at the hazard of an eternal continuance, its admission must involve the eternal counsels. It could not then exist merely by divine sufferance. It would then be established and permanent.” p. 151.

This is strange logic. How can sin exist *temporarily* any more than *eternally*, without involving the divine counsels? Why cannot sin exist eternally as well as temporarily *by divine sufferance*? If he means, as we suppose he does, that sin is not properly a part of God’s plan, but simply incident to it through the wrong action which he permits but does not sanction, this may be as true of eternal as of temporary evil. He says afterwards that if moral evil be “limited and temporary,”

“We may then truly say of it that it inheres in no principle, and finds no sanction. It is neither God’s choice nor his necessity. It is only an incident of his majestic forbearance. It lingers between life and death, being and not-being. It is transient because transitional, and pertaining to no system. It is not of the Creator, but of the creature; not of the Infinite, but of the finite; not of the Eternal, — how then can it attain to eternity?” p. 152.

How “inheres in no principle,” and is “pertaining to no system,” if it is limited and temporary? According to the author’s own showing the elements of sin, as an *actual phenomenon* in God’s moral government, are, *first*, the free moral nature of finite beings; *secondly*, God’s sufferance, but not sanction, of the abuse of this free nature in wrong doing. Does not this gift of such a nature inhere in a general principle, and pertain to a general system? And does not God’s sufferance of its self-perversion inhere alike also in a general principle, and pertain alike to a general system of moral government, whether the evil suffered be temporary or eternal? As to sin’s lingering “between life and death, being and not-being,” that is assuming the very point at issue. But sin, he says, “is not of the eternal, how can it attain to eternity?” We ask in turn: if sin is not of the eternal, how can it attain to any being at all? But it *has* a being, and if he choose that its authors should live forever, why may not sin also endure forever?

The above is the substance of all that he has to urge against Whately's reasoning, and it is wholly inconclusive. The fallacy of a quantitative argument, where sound logic demanded a qualitative, remains.

3. *Infinite guilt.* We have never been willing to rest the doctrine of eternal punishment on any other foundation than the declarations of God's word. We think, nevertheless, that they who seek a philosophical explanation of it in the infinite demerit of sin, have the best of the argument, and have never yet been refuted. Our author's objection to the doctrine of infinite guilt is for substance this: that since man is a finite being, everything that pertains to his character must be finite also; that he can have neither infinite merit nor demerit, because he can neither love nor hate God infinitely. Here it is essential to the argument that we distinguish between the *absolutely* infinite, which admits neither increase nor decrease, and the *relatively* infinite, namely, what surpasses every finite limit. The absolutely infinite belongs to God alone, and admits of no comparison. Not so the relatively infinite. As in mathematics two quantities may be each infinite, in the sense of being unlimited, and yet the one may be twice as great as the other, so also may the demerit of all sin be infinite in the same sense, and yet the guilt of one man be twice as great as that of another, or as his own guilt at some past time. That the demerit of a finite being can be absolutely infinite, admitting of neither increase nor comparison, is of course absurd. But it may exceed every finite measure. This, which is all for which we contend, we understand the author himself to admit. He says :

"Duty is imperative. Its language is not that of mere counsel and advice, but of command. Man is not told simply that it is for his *interest* to do right, but he *ought* to do right. His obligation is not to himself alone; if he has any right to forego his own pleasure or interest, he has no right to omit a single duty; and no amount of enjoyment to be secured, or of pain to be avoided, can give him such right. No possible consideration of expediency can make wrong right. No compromise is possible between duty and the neglect of it. Moral law holds no parley, makes no bargain, forms

no treaty stipulations, with him who refuses to obey. It sets no price on transgression. Obedience is better than sacrifice, however great. Though one should offer thousands of rams, or ten thousands of rivers of oil, or ten thousand worlds, — of wealth or suffering, — the claim of duty would not be done away. No finite measure of penance can abrogate it. Above all bartering calculation of reward and penalty, conscience sits infinitely supreme, as the voice of God himself, telling us we have no right to lose the one, or to incur the other. Still less have we right to complain, if an undutiful curiosity respecting the measure of penalty has not been gratified, and we find it, at the last, greater than we can bear? What if it should be infinite?" p. 91.

Very well said! This, he tells us, was for a time his "own theodocy." We wish he might return to it. But he has abandoned it, and that on the ground that "penalty is not satisfaction *in kind*; and it cannot be made so by being increased in degree, even infinitely. Penalty is sanction. Measured suffering is the mulct or fine which law imposes, which may also be warning and admonition; but it is not of the nature of payment, so that it should be any better infinite than finite."<sup>1</sup> And on the same page he says: "If man could be made into an infinite being, so that he could endure an infinite penalty in a moment of time, that would not restore him to innocence, or meet the demand of law. Infinite penalty is no more a satisfaction than finite penalty."

Now that penalty is a satisfaction *in kind*, no sane man holds. The law demands obedience; and nothing but obedience is obedience. But what does this truism prove? If the author held, with some, that all penalty is of the nature of *discipline*, having for its sole end the reformation of the offender, he might avail himself of this argument. But admitting, as he does, the doctrine of proper penalty, which does not *reform* but *destroys*, he can make no legitimate use of it. It is conceded on all hands that penalty does not satisfy the *requirement* of the divine law, which is obedience; then, according to his reasoning, why inflict *any* penalty, aside from reformatory discipline? The answer is obvious. Penalty does and must satisfy the *divine justice*. By it God

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<sup>1</sup> p. 92.

vindicates his own holy character and the sanctity of his law ; thus putting, not the *sinner*, but *himself and his everlasting government* right in the eyes of his intelligent creatures. Now it is a dictate of reason that the penalty should bear a just proportion to the offence. If the latter cannot be measured by any finite amount of penal suffering (which the author admits to be true), our reason cannot see why such suffering may not be unlimited ; that is (since it must be at each successive moment finite in degree) without end. He brings forward, indeed, a distinction between the *absolute* and the *infinite*. Duty, he affirms, is absolute, but not infinite.<sup>1</sup> This, if we understand him aright, is no other than the distinction which we have already made between the absolutely and the relatively infinite. If duty is absolute, then, compared with any finite measure, it is infinite. Though we cannot comprehend or feel infinite guilt in the absolute sense of the term, we can know ourselves to be guilty beyond measure, and therefore deserving of penalty beyond measure.

Such, as it seems to us, is the argument from human reason and philosophy, although, as already remarked, we make nothing authoritative but the declarations of holy writ.

4. *Natural immortality.* The question of man's "natural immortality" the author discusses under the head of "the scriptural argument." But it is plainly extra-scriptural. There is a philosophy which, by ascribing everything to the immediate efficiency of God, virtually annihilates the distinction between the natural and the supernatural. By making everything supernatural, it makes everything natural. But the commonly received philosophy recognizes a true distinction between the two. Natural immortality we suppose to be that which can be destroyed by none of the powers which God has put into nature, but only by the same divine power which gave it being. Now whatever be true of the soul in this respect, it is a matter which lies outside of the

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<sup>1</sup> p. 92.

revelations of Scripture. Snow and frost and ice come by the powers of nature, yet the Psalmist ascribes them immediately to God. "He giveth snow like wool; he scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes; he casteth forth his ice like morsels."<sup>1</sup> We can expect to find in the Bible only simple declarations concerning man's *destiny*, as coming from the will of God, and these we do find. Why the Scriptures insist so abundantly on the divine self-existence and immortality is manifest. God's being is the ground of all other being, and the belief of it underlies all religion. But man's destiny, as it respects the future world, though the knowledge of it is highly desirable, does not constitute the foundation of religion, and we know, as a matter of history, that, before the advent of our Lord, the inspired writers maintained a remarkable reserve respecting it. It is very surprising, therefore, that our author should put the doctrines of the divine existence and that of man's "natural immortality" (supposing it to be a truth) on an exact level, and say:

"If now these two are the cardinal truths of religion, we should expect them to receive similar treatment, in the Revelation of the divine character and of human destiny. If one of these doctrines is stated explicitly and categorically, we should expect the same of the other. If one of them is not directly stated, but is explicitly assumed, with frequent mention or allusion, we should expect the same of the other," etc. p. 162.

Upon this head we will only add that all believers in revelation admit, that, as a matter of fact, the death of the body does not destroy the soul. From this consideration, as well as from others of a philosophical nature which we omit, the natural immortality of the soul, in the sense above explained, is inferred with a high degree of probability. But on this point we wish to lay no stress. It is enough for us if we can ascertain the doctrine of Scripture as to the final destiny of the righteous and the wicked. We come next, therefore, to consider

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 147: 16.

## THE SCRIPTURAL, ARGUMENT.

Under this division we propose to state succinctly the scriptural doctrine, referring, as we proceed, to the erroneous positions and statements of the author.

I. *On the usage of certain terms.*

Various terms employed by the writers of the Old Testament in a lower and mostly physical sense, are, as is well known, transferred by the writers of the New Testament to a higher sense. Of these, such words as *Paradise*, *Zion*, *Gehenna*, are familiar examples. Even in the Old Testament, the term *Zion* is elevated by the prophets from its original geographical use to a high spiritual meaning; while, in the New Testament, *Mount Zion* becomes a symbol for the church universal. In all such cases to insist upon the original lower meaning against the obvious higher application, would be absurd. Because, for example, the original *Zion* was nothing but a hill in Jerusalem, this does not prove that the *Mount Zion* of the New Testament is a hill in any sense. It must be what the attributes ascribed to it make it. By the aid of this simple principle let us examine a few of these terms.

1. *Gehenna*.<sup>1</sup> This is the Hebrew גֵּי הַיְּזוּם, *valley of Hinnom*, or more fully, גֵּי בֶן הַיְּזוּם, *valley of the son of Hinnom*, lying south of Jerusalem, and infamous for the human sacrifices there offered to Moloch. Josiah defiled this place, probably with human bones; and, according to the common view, it became thenceforward the receptacle of all manner of filth, in which worms revelled, and to consume which a fire was kept constantly burning. Thus it is supposed that it came to be used as an image of the place of future punishment. This representation is not altogether certain. To

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<sup>1</sup> In the Greek γέεννα, always rendered in our version *hell*, and thus confounded with ἄδης, which is (with a single exception, 1 Cor. 15: 55) rendered by the same word. The ἄδης of the New Testament answers to the גֵּי הַיְּזוּם of the Old.

us it seems more probable that, as Vitringa suggests,<sup>1</sup> this usage comes from two passages in Isaiah (30: 33. 66: 24), both of which the Jewish interpreters referred to the punishment of the wicked in the world to come, and which must plainly be taken in a higher than the literal sense. In the former of these : "For Tophet" (תּוֹפֶת, which they rightly understand to be the same as עֵינַם in the valley of Hinnom) "is prepared of old ;<sup>2</sup> also for the king is it made ready ; he hath made it deep and broad ; its pile is fire and wood in abundance ; the breath of Jehovah, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it," they understood the prophet as representing, in the words of Jarchi, "Gehenna, into which every one who deceives himself by his lust falls."<sup>3</sup> In the latter passage : "And they shall go forth," that is, the men who have come to Jerusalem to worship (ver. 23), "and look upon the carcasses of the men who have transgressed against me ; for their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched ; and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh," they understand, in like manner, the fire and the worm as representing the punishment of the wicked in the world to come. For the very reason that the fire and the worm are symbolic, not literal, both can exist together ; and, for the same reason, both can prey upon their victims without end. It would be the merest trifling to say that because, in the case of a literal carcass, fire and worms do not *torment*, but *destroy*, therefore the symbolical fire and worm of hell are instruments, not of pain, but of annihilation.<sup>4</sup> Rather must we reverently inquire what God has revealed on this awful subject.

As to the Jewish doctors, they do not all hold the same

<sup>1</sup> Com. on Isa. 66: 24.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, *from yesterday* (מֵעַתָּה used here, as elsewhere, of past time indefinitely). Hence the Rabbinic conceit that the fire of Gehenna was created on the *second* day of creation, which had only a *yesterday* before it. This is a fair sample of the unspeakable puerility of their interpretations of Scripture.

<sup>3</sup> נִיחָם שֶׁל הַתּוֹפֶת נִיחָר וְכֹל שֶׁ

<sup>4</sup> The Rabbinic idea is altogether different. "R. Isaac said : The worm is as painful to the dead man as a needle to live flesh." Quoted by Wetstein on Mark 9: 44, 46, 48.

opinion concerning the punishment of the wicked in Gehenna. Some teach that the punishment of hell is inflicted upon the *souls* of the wicked in their separate state,<sup>1</sup> and such seem to restrict the resurrection of the body to the righteous.<sup>2</sup> With this agree the statements of Josephus respecting the doctrine of the Pharisees: "They also believe that souls have an immortal vigor; and that beneath the ground there are rewards and punishments to those who have practised virtue or wickedness in life; and that to those of one class an eternal prison is appointed, but to those of the other class the privilege<sup>3</sup> of living again."<sup>4</sup> And again: "that every soul indeed is incorruptible, but that the soul of the good alone passes into another body, while that of the wicked is punished with eternal penalty."<sup>5</sup>

Another opinion is that the resurrection will include all men.<sup>6</sup> These are divided, at the day of judgment, into three companies (כחות) — *the wholly righteous* (צדיקים גמורים), *the wholly wicked* (רשעים גמורים), and *the middle* (בינוניים). "The wholly righteous are enrolled and sealed immediately for eternal life. The wholly wicked are enrolled and sealed immediately for Gehenna, according to that declaration: 'Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.'<sup>7</sup> But the middle class shall descend into Gehenna wailing, and shall ascend [thence], as it is said: 'And I will bring the third part of them through the

<sup>1</sup> See in Meier's Annotations to the Seder Olam the statement of Abarbanel. pp. 1108, 1109.

<sup>2</sup> But here also there are conflicting statements. See below.

<sup>3</sup> βασιλείαν, which may be also rendered *relief*.

<sup>4</sup> Antiq. B. XVIII. Chap. 1. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Jewish War, B. II. Chap. 8. 14. The doctrine of the Essenes also was, according to Josephus, that souls, being immortal, endure forever, though they connected it with false Gnostic ideas. Jewish War, as above, Chap. 8. 11. The authority of Josephus on the main question, that of the immortality of souls and eternal rewards and punishments as held by the Pharisees, is unimpeachable. Our author has been able to allege nothing valid against it.

<sup>6</sup> Found in the Talmud, *Rosh hashshana*. In the *Sedar Olam*, Chap. III., is a similar account.

<sup>7</sup> Dan. 12: 2.

fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my name, and I will hear them.'"<sup>1</sup> Other quotations are added, which it is not necessary to repeat here. Returning to *the wholly wicked*, the account distributes them again, not formally but really, into two classes. The former, containing "the transgressors of Israel," and "the transgressors of the Gentiles," descend into Gehenna, and are punished in it twelve months; but "after twelve months their body perishes (כִּוְלֵהָ), and their soul is burned (נִשְׂרָפָה),<sup>2</sup> and the wind scatters them under the soles of the feet of the righteous, as it is said: 'And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet.'"<sup>3</sup> The remaining class of sinners, of whom an enumeration is given including heretics, traitors, Epicureans, deniers of the law, etc., and ending with "Jeroboam the son of Nebat and his companions," "descend into Gehenna and are punished in it forever and ever,<sup>4</sup> as it is said: 'And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched; and they shall be an abhorrence unto all flesh.'"<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Zech. 13: 9. This the Gemara tells us is the doctrine of the school of Sham-mai respecting the *middle class*. But the school of Hillel teaches that God, who always inclines to mercy, releases them from the penalty of descending into Gehenna.

<sup>2</sup> In the Seder Olam occurs this variation: "After twelve months, as to the transgressors of Israel who have transgressed the law and the commandments, their soul shall decay (בִּלְהָ), and their body shall perish (בִּלְהָ), and they shall be reduced to ashes. And Gehenna shall cast them out, and the wind shall scatter them," etc.

<sup>3</sup> Mal. 4: 3. Their purification seems to last twelve months. See below.

<sup>4</sup> In the Seder Olam: "Gehenna shall be shut up before them, and they shall be punished in the midst of it forever and ever," etc.

<sup>5</sup> There is, however, still another view, viz. that at the resurrection "the wicked, after they have appeared in shame and abomination and contempt before all the living" (in allusion to Dan. 12: 2), "shall return to death" (that is, as it respects their bodies), "but their spirit and soul shall return to Gehenna, in which it was before." Abarbauel on the opinions of the Jewish Rabbies, as quoted by Meier, Annotations to the Seder Olam, p. 1108. This he gives as the opinion of Maimonides, but he adds: "Or their opinion may have been that the wicked will not rise in the judgment, nor return to life, but will always remain in Gehenna in the future time also."

The fiction of a twelve months' punishment the Jews derive from a fanciful interpretation of Isa. 66: 23, on which they have long disquisitions. They did not, however, rest it wholly on *exegetical* grounds, as will be manifest from the following extract, which we copy from Meier's Annotations to the Seder Olam, referring apparently to the purification of the *middle class*: "This punishment, whether it pertain to the body alone, or to the soul with the body, or to the soul alone, differs according to each one's state and condition. For it cannot be that he in whom are partly good qualities and partly evil, should be eternally tortured with those extreme torments which have been mentioned; for, after the lapse of a certain time, that punishment will cease; namely, when that habit of sinning shall have been *wholly* wiped away and abolished *by a perpetual oblivion*, which according to our doctors of blessed memory, will be the time of twelve months."<sup>1</sup> We beg the reader to notice here, *first*, that the writer bases his argument on the assumed unreasonableness of endless punishment for any but the worst sinners. "*It cannot be*," etc.; *secondly*, that he and all the other Jewish writers understand by *eternal punishment*, not *annihilation*, but *eternal misery*. Of those who, according to the above figment, are reduced to ashes at the end of twelve months and scattered by the wind, it is expressly said they are "punished twelve months." It may be well to remember this, since the author under review, who frequently quotes the opinions of the Jewish doctors, endeavors to maintain that by eternal punishment we may understand the eternal loss of life by annihilation. In this the Jewish usage is as directly against him, as are the principles of sound exegesis.<sup>2</sup>

Our readers are, we trust, convinced by this time, that on this momentous subject the Jewish schools have each its

<sup>1</sup> Annotations, p. 290.

<sup>2</sup> In the Talmud (Sanhedrim, Chap. 11) is an enumeration of those *who have no portion in the world to come* (שאין להם חלק לעולם הבא). These are plainly all who are excluded from the Paradise of the righteous, whatever may be their particular destiny, a point on which, as we have seen, the Jewish doctors are not agreed.

dream and its interpretation.<sup>1</sup> The writers of the New Testament, retaining the main ideas of Gehenna as a place of positive punishment, and of fire as a symbol of torment, reject the confusions and contradictions and false distinctions of the Rabbis, and unfold to us the truth, so far as it is necessary that we should know it.

2. *Life and death.* In the primitive constitution of God's moral government over man, *life* was announced as the reward of obedience, and *death* as the penalty of transgression. Whatever else may have been comprehended under this latter term, it certainly included the death of the body. This was that great public act by which God visibly laid upon man the penalty of sin. But that the penalty would have ended here, we have not the least warrant for affirming. Death does not now, under an economy of grace, close the history of man, and we have no right to say that without such an economy it would have closed it. That it would have had for its proper sequel an eternity of misery, such as that of the fallen angels, we have no ground for denying. It is further to be noticed that death began in a true sense with the transgression. Not only did man fall under its penalty outwardly, as a condemned culprit, in the day when he sinned, but inwardly also. Death began to work in both his body and his soul; steadily conducting the former to the dust out of which it was taken, and making the latter continually more and more a "vessel of wrath fitted to destruction."

In accordance with this comprehensive idea, the words *life* and *death* are abundantly used in the New Testament. Men are represented as *now* dead — dead in sin, dead to God and righteousness — and, as such, under his wrath and curse. And this present death has for its sequel the second death. Both are, to those who remain out of Christ, indivisible parts of one terrible whole. In like manner the converted sinner's *life* begins *in this world* the very day when he

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<sup>1</sup> As Maimonides says: "They have greatly confused themselves, so that you can hardly find one man who has explained the matter well" (Commentary on Sanhedrim, Chap. 11). This he says of the whole Rabbinic doctrine of rewards and penalties.

is, through repentance and faith, united to Christ; and it is completed at the resurrection. He has *now* in his soul the dawn of eternal life; and the dawn not only ushers in the day, but is itself a part of it. To illustrate this, let us consider a few passages of the New Testament.

We will first direct the reader's attention to the following words, which occur in our Lord's discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum :

"Then said Jesus unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead; he that eateth of this bread shall live forever." John 6: 53—58.

The words: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you," have for their converse: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life." It is a life that begins *in the believer's soul*, the moment he begins to feed on Christ, the living bread, as is more fully expressed in the fifty-fifth verse: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him." Whoever enjoys this blessed union with Christ *has life in him* — has it as a present possession. It is the beginning of eternal life, and will be completed at the resurrection. Hence our Saviour adds to the declaration that he "hath eternal life;" "and I will raise him up at the last day." Eternal life does not *begin* at the resurrection, but then it has its *consummation*. The last clause of the above passage: "Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live forever," is explained by another remarkable declaration of our Lord, uttered when he was on the way to the grave of Lazarus, and which beautifully connects the believer's present life in Christ with its final consummation in the resurrection of his body.

"Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto

him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus saith unto her, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he die, shall live.<sup>1</sup> And every one that liveth, and believeth on me, shall not die forever." John 11: 23—26.

Our Saviour here, as elsewhere, designedly employs the words *life* and *death* in a two-fold sense, the lower and the higher;<sup>2</sup> as much as to say: Though he die in respect to his body, he shall yet live. Death to him shall be no death; it shall not interrupt the life of his soul in Christ, and at the resurrection it shall be abolished in every sense. Many similar declarations of our Lord will readily recur to the reader; as, for example, the following: "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into condemnation; but has passed from death unto life."<sup>3</sup> The transition from death to life has already taken place in his soul; and life in Christ brings with itself justification also through Christ; as it is written: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *κἄν ἀποθάνῃ, ζήσεται.* We prefer this simple literal rendering to the other: *though he were dead, he shall live*, which would more properly be: *κἄν νεκρός ᾖ* (compare Luke 15: 24). As it respects the main point, however, this is unessential.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Matt. 10: 39: "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" ("keep it unto life eternal," John 12: 25). In Maimonides's commentary on the Mishna (Sanhedrim, Cap. 11) is a passage which exhibits a striking agreement with the above words of our Saviour, in respect to the two-fold use of the words *life* and *death*. After affirming that the resurrection belongs to the righteous alone, he adds: "But how shall the wicked live again, since even when among the living they are dead; as [our Rabbies] have said: "The wicked, even when among the living, are called dead; the righteous, even when among the dead, are called living."

<sup>3</sup> John 5: 24. On the Perfect, *μεταβέβηκεν*, see for a refutation of the false position of Bretschneider the excellent remarks of De Wette: "By the very act of believing *he has passed*. This Perfect is here, as in 3: 18; 1 John 3: 14; to be retained in its proper sense (als solehes)." He explains *ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου*, "from spiritual death," with references to John 8: 51; Rom. 7: 10; 8: 6; and adds: "As this certainly has for its condition not only bodily death and all the misery of sin, but also the so-called second death, or damnation; so also there necessarily lies in the words *μεταβέβηκεν*, κ. τ. λ. the root and hope of the resurrection, in the sense of v. 29 [the literal resurrection at the last day]. But we do not satisfy the idea, when we restrict it to this. Com. in loco.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. 8: 1.

The apostle Paul, in his own peculiar way, describes a two-fold present death, each with its appropriate sequel. There is first a *death in sin*, which, if it continue, must, at the resurrection of the unjust, end in death in its fullest and most awful sense. Then there is a *death to sin*, which has for its necessary counterpart a *resurrection to God and holiness*, with the glorious issue of eternal life at the resurrection of the just. It is true, as the work before us maintains, that, in both of these senses, respect is always had to the *final issues* of the judgment. But it is equally true that in a multitude of passages it is not possible to restrict the words *life* and *death*, by a mere prolepsis, to the events of the resurrection. This would involve us in contradictions and absurdities without end. We might refer to Eph. 2: 1—6, and the whole of the sixth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, where the apostle's language is too explicit to be misunderstood. But we will restrict ourselves to some passages in the epistle to the Colossians. In exhibiting the glorious nature and results of our union with Christ, he says :

“ In whom also ye are circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ : buried with him in baptism, in whom also ye have been raised up along with him (*ἐν ᾧ καὶ συνηγήρθητε*) through the faith of the operation of God who hath raised him from the dead. And you being dead<sup>1</sup> in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he hath made alive together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.” ch. 2: 11—13.

It is manifest that the “circumcision not made with hands,” and the resurrection in and with Christ, are co-*eval* in time. They have both taken place, and they both imply a previous state of *death in sin*, and a *resurrection from that death*, through Christ, to God and holiness.<sup>2</sup> Accord-

<sup>1</sup> νεκρός, which is used in a spiritual sense as well as ἀποθνήσκω, the former denoting a *state*, the latter an *act* or *process*. See Rom. 6: 11, 13; Eph. 2: 1. 5; and Matt. 8: 22: “Let the dead bury their dead,” which cannot be explained as simply meaning those doomed to die.

<sup>2</sup> This spiritual resurrection, which has for its sequel the resurrection of the body and the full glory of heaven at the last day, is always represented as taking place *with* Christ (*συνηγήρθητε, συνεζωοποίησε*), where the preposition denotes

ingly he says a little further on : “ If ye have died (*ἀπεθάνατε*) with Christ from the elements of the world, why as if living in the world are ye subject to ordinances ? ”<sup>1</sup> And in the beginning of the next chapter : “ If ye then have been raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God,”<sup>2</sup> and immediately afterwards : “ For ye have died ” (*ἀπεθάνατε*) — died with Christ to this world and sin (ch. 2: 20) — “ and your life is hid with Christ in God,”<sup>3</sup> a passage which our author has wholly misapprehended,<sup>4</sup> from not considering it in its connection with the preceding context.

And precisely because the sacred writers regard this spiritual death to the world and sin, with its accompanying resurrection to God and holiness, as so connected with the literal resurrection at the last day that the two are but parts of one glorious whole, they slide easily and almost insensibly from the one to the other. In the passage last quoted, we have a striking illustration of this. “ For ye are dead ” — he begins with that death to the world and all its vanity which believers have already undergone — “ and your life is hid with Christ in God.” This death to the world and sin has introduced them to a new life with Christ. But of this they have now only the earnest. Its full glory is hid with Christ in God. See how his mind goes, like a flash of lightning, from the present spiritual resurrection of believers to the resurrection of the last day ! Hence he adds : “ when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory.”<sup>5</sup> In the sublime passage, John 5: 21—29, there is the same play of the mind between the two ideas. To the superficial reader it seems like confusion,

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not only *union* with Christ, but *similitude*. Once the point of similitude seems to be the *abolishing of sin*, though in different ways (Rom. 6: 10, 11, compared with Heb. 9: 26). In a more general sense, however, it is not merely the abolishing of sin, but also all that *suffering* to which the conflict with sin, implied in our dying to it and being crucified to the world, exposes us. Compare 2 Tim. 2: 11, 12: “ For if we have died with Christ (*συναπεθάνομεν*) we shall also live with him ; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him.”

<sup>1</sup> v. 20.<sup>2</sup> Col. 3: 1.<sup>3</sup> Col. 3: 3.<sup>4</sup> See his remarks, p. 175.<sup>5</sup> Col. 3: 4.

whereas it is but a blending of the parts which are, in the economy of grace, indivisible.

It is now, we trust, abundantly manifest that the writers of the New Testament employ the words *death* and *life* to denote a *present* spiritual condition of the soul; always, however, with a reference to the final destiny connected with this condition, which destiny is also itself expressed by the same terms. With respect to the sinner, it is now a *living death*, and therefore no argument can be drawn from the term itself to show why it should not be such a death hereafter. Analogy, on the contrary, points wholly to a death of sinfulness and misery, not of annihilation.

3. *The second death.* This expression, borrowed from the usage of the Jewish doctors, occurs four times in the Apocalypse. Since the inspired penman has given, as we shall see, an exact definition of the sense in which he uses it, we need not here pause to consider the various ideas attached to it by the Jewish writers.

## II. *Passages of Scripture examined.*

The way is now fully prepared for the examination of some passages of Scripture. Here we need only to bear in mind the following simple rules:

*First*, the Scriptures employ the language of common life, and are to be interpreted accordingly. Philosophical definitions and metaphysical distinctions are not to be sought in them.

*Secondly*, the first and obvious meaning of Christ and his apostles, as it must have been understood by their hearers or readers, and as they must have known that it would be understood, is, of course, the true meaning; not some interpretation that is afterwards forced upon their language from dogmatic considerations. This true meaning may indeed cover some deep principle which is but feebly apprehended at the time. In other words, the language of inspired men may have a greater fulness of meaning than those to whom it is originally addressed are able to apprehend. Yet this

meaning must be legitimately contained in it, needing only a true development that it may be brought to light.

*Thirdly*, in comparing different passages of Scripture which treat of the same doctrine, the obscure and ambiguous is always to be explained by that which is clear and certain.

*Fourthly*, it is always pertinent to inquire what were the received ideas of the persons addressed, or, at least, ideas with which they were familiar. Yet we cannot suppose that our Saviour and his apostles accommodated their teaching to the false notions of the age. On the contrary, they separated the true from the false, shedding new light upon the former, while they rejected the latter.

With the aid of these few plain rules, which are not original with us, we shall be at no loss to determine what the New Testament teaches on the momentous question now under consideration.

*The Rich man and Lazarus.*<sup>1</sup> It may be at once conceded that this is a parable, and not real history. But in the lips of our Lord the whole force of a parable consists in its illustrating a true principle. Whether the parable of the Pharisee and the publican was, or was not based, on a literal historic event, is of no consequence. In either case it teaches the same great doctrine. Just so in the parable now under consideration. And that doctrine is too obvious to be misapprehended. An ingenious fancy might invent fifty modes of explaining it away,<sup>2</sup> but it would still remain perfectly plain that our Lord intended it to apply to the condition of men's souls after death.

It may be conceded, again, that the fire in which this rich man is tormented, with the other drapery of the parable, is symbolical. Since he is a disembodied spirit, it would seem that it must be so understood. But the thing symbolized cannot be less terrible than the symbol itself.

<sup>1</sup> Luke 16: 19—31.

<sup>2</sup> Such, for example, as that the scope of the parable is to represent the calling into the church (Abraham's bosom) of the Gentiles, or of the "publicans and sinners" represented by Lazarus, and the rejection of the scribes and pharisees for whom the rich man stands.

It is conceded, once more, that this man is in *Hades* (ἐν τῷ ᾗδην), not in *Gehenna* (γεέννα). The scene is laid before the final judgment, for his five brethren are yet living on earth. We are not certain, however, that our Lord meant to lay any stress upon this distinction. It is very possible that he intended simply to represent the awful reverse in the condition of wicked men after death, taken as a whole. But if the distinction between *Hades* and *Gehenna* be insisted on, this only makes the representation ten-fold more terrible. For the New Testament teaches, beyond the possibility of doubt, that the happiness of the righteous and the misery of the wicked are consummated, not in the intermediate state, but at the resurrection. It is when Christ comes to be glorified in his saints, that he also takes vengeance on them that know not God. If now this rich man, tormented in the flame of Hades and asking in vain for a drop of water to cool his tongue, is yet waiting with horror for the day of Christ's vengeance, what must be that vengeance! Can it be the everlasting cessation of all suffering by annihilation? To believe such a contradiction is impossible.

The reader is especially requested to notice the fact that in this parable *fire* is employed, in entire accordance with Jewish usage, as the symbol of *torment*, not of destruction: "I am tormented in this flame." No intimation is given that in this torment there is any approach towards annihilation. On the contrary his state of misery is represented as *fixed*: "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence"<sup>1</sup>—and there he is left.

2. *Parable of the tares in the field.*<sup>2</sup> The scene of this parable is expressly placed at the end of the world: "The harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels." Our Saviour proceeds to say:

As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and

<sup>1</sup> v. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 13: 24—30, 36—43.

they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

The "furnace of fire" is here the same as the "Gehenna of fire,"<sup>1</sup> and Gehenna whose "fire is not quenched."<sup>2</sup> In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus we have seen that fire symbolizes the infliction of suffering. Even without an express declaration of our Lord, we might reasonably infer that it must have the same significance here. Why the fact of the resurrection should change the nature of the symbol we cannot see. But the Saviour himself explains what he means. "There," he says, "shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Where? Plainly in the furnace of fire, and as the effect of being cast into it. But wailing and gnashing of teeth represent misery, not annihilation. To argue from the effect of literal fire upon literal tares is wholly irrelevant. We can only take from the symbol the general idea of perdition, leaving its manner to be defined by the declarations of Scripture. The final doom of the wicked is quite as often represented by the figures of *casting away*, as bad fish;<sup>3</sup> *casting out into the outer darkness*;<sup>4</sup> *shutting out of a feast*;<sup>5</sup> and with this very addition: "there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth," or its equivalent: "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth;" in all which passages the idea is manifestly that of *rejection and banishment from God's presence*, with the *misery* that accompanies such a condition, and this is *perdition*, in the most awful sense of the word.

3. *Mark. 9: 43—48.* "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," etc. The passage in *Isaiah*<sup>6</sup> from which the form of words: "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," is borrowed, has already been considered at large.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 5: 22.<sup>2</sup> Mark 9: 43—48.<sup>3</sup> Matt. 13: 47—50.<sup>4</sup> Matt. 22: 13; 25: 30.<sup>5</sup> Luke 13: 25—28.<sup>6</sup> Isa. 66: 24.

The Jews understood it, as we have seen, of the final doom of the wicked in Gehenna; and whatever may have been the primary reference of the words (which can never have been meant to be taken literally of the *carcasses* of the wicked), our Lord here applies them to the final judgment. In *this application* their meaning is too plain to be mistaken. An unquenchable fire (*πῦρ ἄσβεστον*) is nothing else but a fire that cannot be quenched. But the phrase admits of manifold applications, which must be determined each from the nature of the subject. In a city an unquenchable fire is at once understood to be one that must burn *till the city is consumed*. But this addition (which is also a limitation) does not belong to the phrase itself. We supply it from the known office of fire in a burning city. Suppose, now, that the rich man in Hades, instead of petitioning for a drop of water, had asked that some one might be sent to quench the flame in which he was tormented, and Abraham had answered, "It is an unquenchable fire;" this could mean nothing but a fire in which he must suffer without end, because there the office of fire is torment. The man who should argue from the use of the phrase, as applied to a bundle of tares or a burning city, that it must mean a fire which must burn till it had annihilated the rich man, would be thought to be out of his senses. Just so in the passage under consideration, the fire that never can be quenched is the fire that produces "wailing and gnashing of teeth." To be cast into such a fire is to suffer without end. And precisely because it is a *symbolic*, and not a *literal* fire, it is joined with the worm — "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" — that is, where the worm and the fire, both symbols of divine vengeance, prey upon their victim without end. This truth is one of the deepest concern to every man, and well worthy of a solemn three-fold repetition from the lips of our Lord.

4. *Account of the last judgment.*<sup>1</sup> Here we have first the sentence of the wicked: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;"<sup>1</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 25: 31—46

then the explicit definition of this everlasting fire as everlasting punishment: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment."<sup>2</sup> Our author says with reason: "This is the most important of all the passages supposed to affirm the eternal suffering, and to imply the immortality, of the lost."<sup>2</sup> We may add that it is our Lord's solemn announcement of the doom of the wicked at the last day. On a subject of such momentous interest it might have been expected that he would use plain and simple language, and we find that he has actually done so. That meaning which lies upon the face of his words, and must naturally have been apprehended by his hearers, is the meaning which he intended; not some recondite sense ingeniously drawn from learned philological discussions. Now the Jews of our Lord's day were familiar with the idea of Gehenna as a prison of fire prepared for the punishment of the wicked. It has been shown that they understood it to be a place of pain and misery. The very distinctions made by some of their doctors — a purifying process of fire for the middle class, twelve months' punishment for common sinners, and eternal punishment for those guilty of certain great crimes — these distinctions, whether they were, or were not known to our Lord's hearers, show how deep-seated and universal was the idea of hell-fire as an infliction of penal suffering. When, therefore, our Saviour announced to them that at the final judgment the wicked should be sentenced to everlasting fire, and moreover defined this to mean that they should suffer everlasting punishment, what could they understand but that they should undergo eternal punishment in the proper sense of the words in the eternal fire of hell?

Our author explains eternal fire to mean, not a fire which burns forever, but "that which destroys utterly and forever."<sup>3</sup> This interpretation is in itself forced and unnatural, and for this reason to be rejected. We never think of describing the duration of a fire by that of its effects. No man would call a fire *perpetual*, because it had reduced a city to perpetual destruction. The alleged example from Jude: "suf-

<sup>1</sup> v. 41.<sup>2</sup> p. 187.<sup>3</sup> p. 202.

fering the vengeance of eternal fire," is not in point. It is not the material cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, but their guilty inhabitants, that suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, of which the fire that consumed them and their dwellings was an awful symbol.<sup>1</sup> But, aside from its unnaturalness, the interpretation now under consideration is directly contradicted by Scripture. It will not be denied by any believer in revelation (and with unbelievers we are not concerned in the present review), that "the everlasting fire that was prepared for the devil and his angels" is the same as the lake of fire and brimstone mentioned in Rev. 20: 10. But we are expressly told that the devil shall be cast into this lake, "where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever." 'The lake of fire, then, and the torment of the devil and the beast and false prophet, who are in it, endure forever and ever. When, now, our Saviour pronounces the sentence of the wicked: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels," what could his hearers understand, but that they should have their portion with the devil and his angels, and suffer the same punishment with them? If the punishment of the devil and his angels is, to be "tormented day and night forever and ever," what a strange and illogical conclusion to say that they who have their portion with them in the same lake<sup>2</sup> are to be, not tormented, but annihilated.

The author argues that "eternal punishment" may be understood in a wholly *negative* sense to denote, not suffering, but the privation of eternal life by annihilation. To this we answer:

*First*, the idea of punishment is essentially *positive*. It consists in the infliction of penal evil, although the *form* of this evil may be that of privation of good; for, to a sentient being, the loss of good is a positive evil.

<sup>1</sup> The passage Isa. 34: 9, 10 is still less pertinent. For there it is not annihilation but *desolation* that is set forth; and this desolation (figuratively represented as a turning of the whole land into brimstone and burning pitch, whose smoke goes up forever) is a perpetual desolation.

<sup>2</sup> See Rev. 20: 15; 21: 8.

*Secondly*, the punishment endures so long as the infliction of the evil endures, and no longer.

*Thirdly*, the infliction *may* last so long as there is a subject to receive it, and it *must* cease with the cessation of the being of that subject.

The above is only an analysis of the common idea of punishment, to which common usage is always conformed. The man who is deprived of his liberty for a year, as a penal infliction, is punished for a year. The man who is deprived of liberty for life, is punished for life. The punishment of the man who is deprived of life for his crimes, ceases, so far as man is concerned, with the cessation of his earthly being. To say that he is *punished* till the final resurrection would be absurd, although the *effect* of his punishment will last till that time. Eternal death, in the sense of banishment from God and all good with the misery necessarily belonging to such a condition, is an intelligible idea, and that is also eternal punishment. Eternal death as the penalty of sin, in the sense of annihilation, is also an intelligible idea, but that would not be eternal punishment. The death itself (in the sense of non-existence) would be eternal, but the punishment would be its own limitation. It must cease when there was no longer a being to receive it. We can as well conceive of a man as punished a thousand years before he begins to be, as a thousand years after he has ceased to be. These distinctions, which have their foundation in common sense and sound philosophy, are recognized in common usage.<sup>1</sup> Why should one who is contented to take the language of Scripture in its plain and obvious sense, seek to

<sup>1</sup> The author has failed to adduce any pertinent example of the contrary usage. The passage, for example, in Ezek. 32: 24, 25, 30, where the dead are said to have borne their shame (וְהָיוּ לְשִׁמְיָם וְלְשִׁמְיָם, and they have borne their shame) with them that go down to the pit, probably refers to the ignominy that has come upon their name on earth. But, however this may be, these dead are represented here, as in the kindred passage in Isa. 14: 9, 10, as living and conscious spirits. See verses 31, 32, where Pharaoh, who is himself one of them, is represented as seeing them, and being comforted at their arrival in Hades. For the scene is certainly laid in Hades (v. 21), though there is a perpetual blending together of the *graves* where their bodies lie, and *Sheol* where their souls are gathered.

put upon such a plain phrase as *eternal punishment*, a meaning so forced, so unnatural, and so unphilosophical?

We will only add that, if it were proposed to express the received doctrine of eternal punishment in the plainest and most unequivocal form, we can hardly conceive how it could be done more effectually than in the present passage; unless indeed one were to declare of the wicked that they should be tormented in the fire of hell day and night forever and ever. This is affirmed of Satan, whom the author correctly takes to be a proper person, yet he raises the query: "will Satan actually cease from being?" and he thinks that "the prophecies all look that way."<sup>1</sup> It is abundantly manifest that no declaration whatever of Scripture can induce him to receive the doctrine of eternal punishment as true.

5. *The lake of fire*, Rev. 19 : 20; 20 : 10, 14, 15; 21 : 8. We have anticipated in part what was to be said on these passages. The devil is admitted by the author to be a real person. We add that the beast and the false prophet are the *representatives of real persons*. They stand for organizations of wicked men opposed to Christ and his gospel. These organizations are to be destroyed as such upon earth, while the men who composed them must receive their personal judgment from Christ at the last day. Now it is said that the devil, who deceived the wicked, is "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever." Afterwards it is said that "whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."<sup>2</sup> On these passages the author remarks: "This passage cannot be claimed as proving *directly* anything beyond the eternal existence of Satan, the Beast, and the False Prophet. To this it may be answered :

<sup>1</sup> He quotes Gen. 3: 15. "where the true sense," he tells us, "is that the seed of the woman shall *crush* the head of the serpent." His error is in confounding the annihilation of Satan's *kingdom* with that of his *person*.

<sup>2</sup> The sacred writer adds that this "is *the second death*," Rev. 21: 8. The second death is then simply equivalent to suffering eternal punishment in the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. We need inquire no farther respecting it.

*First*, this is enough, since the question is not *how many* shall suffer eternal punishment, but whether any such principle as eternal punishment exists under God's government. If we can show that Satan is the subject of eternal misery, the main argument of the writer, which is directed against eternal punishment, *as such*, is overthrown.

But *secondly*, the devil also includes "*his angels*," a mighty organization of wicked beings, as the scriptures teach us. Will any one venture to affirm that the devil will be tormented day and night forever and ever in the everlasting fire that was prepared for him and his angels, and they be annihilated? Again, the beast and the false prophet (who are represented as leagued together with the devil against Christ) include all their followers. Of every one that worships the beast it is said: "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 forever 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."<sup>1</sup> No one, we think, will be bold enough to affirm that this is the lot of a *particular class only* of those who have their portion in the lake of fire. But if he should, it will not help our author; since the question everywhere discussed by him is whether any such principle as that eternal punishment, in the sense of the eternal infliction of misery upon sentient beings, exists under God's government.

But it is said that Death and Hades are also cast into the lake of fire. "By parity of reasoning," says the author, "Death and Hades, named in v. 13, and appointed to the

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<sup>1</sup> Rev. 14: 9—11. This the author tells us "refers properly to the scenes of time, and not to the final judgment" (p. 211); as if the Apocalypse knew any other lake of eternal fire and brimstone but that into which the wicked shall be cast at the last day! His mistake lies in confounding the time of the *annunciation* of this punishment by the angel with the time of its *infliction*. The former belongs undoubtedly "to the scenes of time," the latter to "the final judgment." This announcement of "*the wrath to come*" upon those who worship the beast is plainly intended to strengthen men in their *present* conflict with him. Hence the sacred writer immediately adds: "Here is the patience of the saints."

same 'lake of fire,' are also immortal. But this is not allowed."<sup>1</sup> That the interpretation of this passage is encumbered with difficulty we frankly admit. So far, however, as the present question is concerned, it does not embarrass us. Without entering into details, we will simply state our opinion, that Death and Hades are here personified as the enemies of man.<sup>2</sup> To complete the representation of Christ's victory over the foes of his church, they also, as well as Satan, must be cast into the lake of fire. This implies, as in the case of Satan, the Beast, and the False Prophet, both their *punishment*, and *the destruction of their power*. But they are not real beings. They are only figurative persons; and therefore both their punishment, and the destruction of their power as persons, are figurative. Is it not absurd to raise such a grave comparison between the immortality of true persons and mere personifications?

6. *Eternal perdition.* 2 Thess. 1: 9 — "Who shall suffer as a penalty everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his might" (οἷτινες δίκην τίσουσιν, ὄλεθρον αἰώνιον, ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ κυρίου, καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς δόξης τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ.) With this passage we may conveniently consider another which occurs in 2 Pet. 3: 7 — But the heavens which now are, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (εἰς ἡμέραν κρίσεως καὶ ἀπώλειας τῶν ἀσεβῶν ἀνθρώπων). The words ὄλεθρος and ἀπώλεια are of general signification. They denote either the *act* of bringing into a lost or ruined state, or that *state itself*. The *form* of the ruin is always to be determined by the nature of the subject. The destruction of a house by fire is one thing; of a land by war, another thing; of a man for his pride ("a man's pride shall bring him low") still another. When now we have the express testimony of Scripture respecting

<sup>1</sup> p. 214.

<sup>2</sup> Compare 1 Cor. 15: 26: "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death;" and Hosea 13: 14: "O death, I will be thy plagues; O Hades (ᾠνάς, *Sheol*, the Hebrew equivalent), I will be thy destruction."

the nature of the perdition that shall overtake the ungodly at the last day," these general terms, and all others of a like character, are to be interpreted accordingly.

7. *Destruction of soul and body in hell.* Matt. 10: 28. Luke 12: 4, 5. The context makes it certain that these two passages are but different accounts of the same discourse. The former of them reads as follows: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." The latter, thus: "And I say unto you my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you fear him." We see at a glance that *casting into hell*, and *destroying both body and soul in hell*, are equivalent expressions. To be cast into hell, is to be cast into the "everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels," "to go away into everlasting punishment." This is the destruction of both soul and body in hell. The Saviour's design is to contrast man's impotence with God's almighty power. Man can only kill the body, without the ability to kill the soul. The writer uses the word *kill* (*ἀποκτείνειν*) because it is in this way that wicked men seek to destroy the righteous. God, on the other hand, can not only do all that man can do — kill the body — but after he has killed can cast into hell, and thus *destroy* (*ἀπολέσαι*,<sup>2</sup> not *ἀποκτείνειν*, which would not be here the appropriate word) both body and soul in hell. The nature of this destruction has been already considered.

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<sup>1</sup> *ἀπολέσαι*, like its cognate nouns *ἀπώλεια* and *δλεθρος*, is a word of general signification. It is applied to the demons whom Jesus casts out: "Art thou come to *destroy* us?" Mark 1: 24. Elsewhere the demons say: "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" Matt. 8: 29. Mark 5: 7. Luke 8: 28; and they beseech him "that he would not command them to go out into the deep (*ἄβυσσον*, the *bottomless pit* of the Apocalypse, 20: 1, 3) Luke 8: 31. Here we have the manner of their destruction. It is by being despoiled of their power over men, and cast down to the abyss, to be there tormented.

There are many more passages of Scripture that might be considered, did our limits permit, but the above examination is abundantly sufficient for our purpose.

8. *Scriptural antitheses to eternal life.* The expression *eternal death* does not occur in the Bible. The following are the scriptural antitheses to the expression *eternal life*.

*Shame and eternal contempt* ; Dan. 12: 2.

*Eternal punishment* ; Matt. 25: 46.

*Perishing* ; John 3: 15, 16. 10: 28.

*Abiding under God's wrath* ; John 3: 36.

*Coming into condemnation* (*κρίσω*) ; John 5: 24.

*Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish* ; Rom. 2: 7, 8, 9.

*Death* ; Rom. 6: 21, 23.

*Destruction* (*φθοράν*) ; Gal. 6: 8.

*Life* in the sense of *eternal life* has the following antitheses :

*Perdition* (*ἀπώλειαν*) Matt. 7: 13, 14.

*Being cast into the fire of hell* (*γεέννα*) ; Matt. 18: 9. Mark 9: 43, 45.

*Condemnation* (*κρίσεως*) ; John 5: 29.

*Death* (generally in the more comprehensive sense including its beginning in this world) ; Rom. 7: 10. 8: 6. 2 Cor. 2: 16. 2 Tim. 1: 10. 1 John 3: 14. 5: 16.

The above contrasts are highly suggestive. They show at once how unfounded is the assertion that, according to the scriptural view, the proper antithesis of *eternal life* is *eternal death* literally taken. Rather is it a state of condemnation and suffering.

### III. *Destiny of Satan.*

The destiny of "the devil and his angels" is a question of awful significance, for it cannot be separated from that of the wicked. The holy Scriptures teach us that Satan existed at the beginning of the world ; that he first seduced the

human race to sin; that he has established a kingdom, consisting of those who yield themselves to his influences, and allow themselves to be led captive by him at his will; that Christ came to destroy this kingdom; that at the end of the world, after having put down the power of this malignant spirit (which is the crushing of the serpent's head spoken of in the original promise, and the bruising of Satan under the feet of believers), he will cast him and the wicked together into that eternal fire that was prepared for him and his angels; and that there he shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. Unless, now, the doom of Satan can be explained away, the first step is not taken towards erasing from the pages of the Bible the doctrine of eternal punishment in the proper sense of the term. But it cannot be explained away. There it stands on the sacred record, like some mighty mountain of granite, rising rugged and awful from the unfathomable depths of the sea, and hiding its head amid dark thunder-clouds. God has placed it there, as a beacon to an apostate world, and man cannot remove it.

#### IV. *Resurrection of the unjust.*

This is another fact of terrible import revealed in the Bible. "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the 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."<sup>1</sup> "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."<sup>2</sup> Why are the unjust raised from the dead? According to the Scriptures, it is that they, as well as the just, may appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."<sup>3</sup> It is that the righteous may be publicly acquitted and received to the kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world, and the wicked publicly condemned, and sen-

<sup>1</sup> John 5: 28, 29.

<sup>2</sup> Acts 24: 25.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. 5: 10.

tenced to everlasting punishment with the devil and his angels. This is an end whose magnitude corresponds with the stupendous miracle of the resurrection. The improbability of the idea that the dead are raised by a miracle to be annihilated, staggers even our author. He may well ask: "If they have no immortality, why are their slumbers disturbed?"<sup>1</sup> He attempts to solve this difficulty by a reference to certain natural processes.

Damaged seeds that are sown, often exhaust their vitality and perish, in germination. And we have noted the fact, that of insects which pass through the chrysalis state to that of the psyche, or butterfly, many, from injuries suffered in their original form, utterly perish in the transition. p. 263.

If the resurrection were a *natural process*, these analogies might be in place. But since it is wholly supernatural, they utterly fail. According to the Scriptures, the resurrection of the wicked is as complete as that of the righteous, that of both being accomplished by the direct power of Christ, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." Although it does not become us to pronounce positively respecting what is, and what is not, becoming to the wisdom of God in the arrangements of the final judgment, there is, according to the commonly received doctrine, a congruity between the resurrection of the unjust and their final destiny, which the author's view fails to make manifest.

#### V. *Degrees of future punishment.*

The Scriptures teach, in the most unequivocal terms, that there will be degrees in the final punishment of the wicked, not less than in the final rewards of the righteous. The general principle laid down by our Lord: "That servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes,"<sup>2</sup> he himself

<sup>1</sup> p. 263.

<sup>2</sup> Luke 12: 47, 48.

applies to the awards of the final judgment: "it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."<sup>1</sup> Now the common doctrine of eternal punishment admits, as we have seen, of degrees innumerable. Though all will be punished without end, the misery of one may be twice as great as that of another. But if the doom of all the wicked is annihilation, and *this* is that "everlasting punishment" spoken of by our Lord, where are the degrees of suffering in non-existence? Beyond doubt it is the vengeance which Christ takes at the day of judgment on them that know not God, that shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom than for Capernaum. But this vengeance is expressly defined to be "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." If now annihilation be what is meant, how can that be more tolerable for Sodom than Capernaum? But if it be the suffering that *precedes* annihilation, then we have "everlasting destruction," which is the vengeance which Christ takes on the wicked, before it begins. How much better to abide by the plain meaning of Scripture, than thus to involve ourselves and God's word in endless contradictions!

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## ARTICLE V.

### CONGREGATIONALISM AND SYMBOLISM.<sup>2</sup>

BY PROF. WILLIAM G. T. SHEDD, ANDOVER.

THE constitution of the Congregational Library Association proclaims that it is the object of this society, to establish a material centre for the denomination, about which it

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 11: 24.

<sup>2</sup> An Address delivered before the Congregational Library Association, Boston, May 25th, 1858.