X. Sin and the Divine Remedy—Eternal Issues and Theodicy.

Unchecked in its development, sin could only issue in complete moral and spiritual ruin—in final separation from God and blessedness. Its end is death: not spiritual and temporal only, but eternal.[1]

It has been seen, however, that sin is never in this world left to work itself out in full degree to its fatal results. From the commencement another strain is discernible in human history, working for the counteracting and overcoming of sin's evil: that of Divine Redeeming Mercy. Butler, in his chapter on "Mediation" in the *Analogy*, justly adduces nature itself as a witness to this beneficent side of the divine administration.[2] We speak of the "inexorableness" of nature; but in nature's benignant operations [3] and stored resources how much there is of an opposite character—kindly, remedial; powers that fight against disease, assuage pain, repair waste, heal injury! Nature speaks here with the same voice as grace. But grace, in the active sense, is never absent. The severest theologians have always recognised the presence of powerful restraining influences of God's providence and Spirit in the hearts and lives even of the wickedest of men.[4] Else earth would already have

[1] Matt. vii. 13; x. 28; xxv. 46; Rom. ii. 8, 9; Phil. iii. 19; 1 Thess. v. 3, 9, etc.

[2] *Op. cit.* Pt. ii., ch. v.

[3] Ps. xxxiii. 5; Matt. v. 45.

[4] Cf. Calvin, *Instit.*, ii. 2, 15, 16; iii. 14, 2; Edwards, *Original Sin*, Pt. i., ch. i. (Works, i. pp. 146–7).

become a hell! It is needful, therefore, before proceeding to speak of the last issues of sin, to look briefly at the remedial provision made for it.

1. This mercy of God to our sinful world is, in Christianity, connected with *the Person* and *mediatorial work* of Jesus Christ. In that "eternal purpose" of God, "which He purposed in Christ Jesus,"[1] is to be sought the presupposition of God's whole dealings with sin from the very first—some would say even of the permission of sin;[2] of His long patience with sin's woeful developments and infinite provocations;[3] of all forgiveness and blessing bestowed upon the penitent. This truth, if admitted, has already important implications. Conceive of Redeemer and redemption as one may, if the necessity of a divine interposition for the saving of men is conceded in any form, it is implied that, apart from such interposition, the world is "perishing,"[4]—that, if the grace it brings is rejected, nothing stands between the sinner and utter spiritual ruin. There is need of clearness here, for, even among those who admit that, in some sense, Christ has come for salvation, it is not uncommon to find the idea entertained that, although He had not come, or, having come, should be disregarded, things would not turn out so ill after all. This is not the teaching of either Christ or His Apostles. Christ's claim to be Saviour is absolute. He is not a *help* simply to a world in trouble, but the world's only, though all-sufficing, hope.[5]

Is Christianity, however, upheld in this assertion of *the necessity of mediation*? On many grounds it is declared that it is not. (1) On general grounds, from the divine character, for if God is merciful, as His works and our own hearts pro-

[1] Eph. iii. 11.
[2] Dorner takes this view. Cf. *Syst. of Doct.*, iii. p. 58 (E.T.), etc.
[3] Acts xvii. 30; Rom. iii. 25.
[4] John iii. 16.
[5] Acts iv. 12.

claim Him to be, why should not repentance be sufficient? Is Fatherly love not ready, without anything further, to receive the returning prodigal? Will God, if repentance is genuine, not forgive? (2) On metaphysical grounds, for sin, it is thought, as a stage in a dialectic process, holds in itself the principle of its own cure. (3) On scientific grounds, for evolution, it is believed by some, infallibly works through its own laws for the overcoming of evil, and the perfecting of good.

(1) In the *first* form of objection two things are overlooked. One is that repentance is not something that springs up spontaneously in the sinful breast: God Himself must take the initiative. If He does, and the sinner still does not repent, what then? But, next, is the case so entirely simple even as regards the divine initiative? This is assumed, but is certainly neither proved nor reasonable. Herrmann, in his *Communion with God*, while criticising the Church doctrine, warns against the idea that forgiveness, on God's part, is a mere matter of course. "The fact is rather that to every one who really experiences it, forgiveness comes as an astounding revelation of love." [1] Sin has broken the bond of fellowship between the soul and God: compelled the withdrawal of God's favour; entailed guilt and condemnation. Does all this count for nothing? Are there no interests to be conserved in God's re-entering into gracious relations with the sinner? Christianity at least does not look on the matter in this light. Guilt as an awful reality is there, and has to be dealt with *somehow* even in the counsels of forgiveness.

(2) The *metaphysical* objection turns on the idea that sin, as the negative stage in a necessary movement of spirit, carries in it the principle of its own remedy in the positive impulse to a return to goodness—the "negation of the nega-

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 194.

tion." The idea is stated with a touch of picturesqueness in a sentence already quoted from Dr. E. Caird: "The turpidity of the waters only proves that the angel has come down to trouble them, and the important thing is that, when so troubled, they have a healing virtue." [1] How little, however, any innate dialectic of spirit can effect to remove the consciousness of guilt, break the power of sin, and restore to holiness and peace, is illustrated for all time in the classical experience of St. Paul ("O wretched man," etc.[2]), which multitudes of seekers after righteousness since have endorsed as their own.

(3) The *evolutionist*, while not, indeed, necessarily an optimist,[3] still, in his faith in invincible laws of progress, raising nature and humanity to ever higher levels, *ought* to be, and in his hopes for the future of the race generally *is*, one. The typical prophet of evolutionary optimism is Mr. Herbert Spencer, who, in his chapter on "The Evanescence of Evil" in his *Social Statics*,[4] seeks to bring his proof of a coming perfection to the exactitude of a mathematical demonstration. One or two sentences may suffice to show the line of his argument. "All evil results from non-adaptation to conditions. In virtue of an essential principle of life, this non-adaptation of an organism to its conditions is ever being rectified." [5] "Finally all unfitness disappears." [6] "Thus the ultimate development of the ideal man is logically certain—as certain as any conclusion in which we place the most implicit faith; for instance, that all men will die." [7] Was

[1] *Evol. of Rel.*, i. p. 231.

[2] Rom. vii. 24.

[3] Huxley, e.g., is often profoundly pessimistic. Cf. his art. "Agnosticism," in *Nineteenth Cent.*, February 1889, pp. 191–2 (*Works*, v. p. 256).

[4] *Op. cit.* ch. ii. pp. 73 ff.

[5] P. 74. [6] P. 79.

[7] *Ibid.* History, it is admitted, cannot prove this thesis. "But when it is shown that this advance is due to the working of a universal law; and that in virtue of that law it must continue until the state we call perfection

any human soul ever persuaded or helped to goodness by such abstract formulizing on the automatic action of laws into which no spark of ethical motive enters? What, one asks, are "fitness" and "unfitness" in this connexion? Is the "fitness" which survives, and the "unfitness" which perishes, necessarily that of moral character? More deeply, what produces the moral "fitness" assumed to be preserved? Have human will and obedience to higher law no share in it? Who that reads history with impartial mind can fail to see that the moral victories of the world have been gained, not by the automatic working of laws such as Mr. Spencer describes, but by voluntary endeavour, inspired by lofty purpose,—by blood, by tears, by sacrifice, by fidelity to high ideals at cost of every earthly advantage?—in brief, by the way of the *Cross*; the very opposite of the road, as Mr. Huxley has trenchantly shown,[1] by which cosmic evolution travels.

2. An essential characteristic of Christianity, as providing a divine remedy for human sin, is that its salvation is not due to man's own efforts or devisings, but springs, in a *truly supernatural* way, from God's *free love and grace*.[2] It is a "gift,"[3] a "heavenly" thing, as Jesus called it to Nicodemus,[4] in contrast with the "earthly" fact of sin, for

is reached, then the advent of such a state is removed out of the region of probability to that of certainty" (p. 78).

[1] Cf. his *Evolution and Ethics* (*Works*, vol. ix.).

[2] Neander says in the opening of his *History of the Church*: "Now we look upon Christianity not as a power that has sprung up out of the hidden depths of man's nature, but as one that descended from above, when heaven opened itself anew to man's long alienated race; a power which, as both in its origin and its essence it is exalted above all that human nature can create out of its own resources, was designed to impart to that nature a new life, and to change it in its inmost principles" (i. p. 2, Bohn's trans.).

Cf. Dr. P. T. Forsyth in his *Person and Place of Jesus Christ*: "Jesus was for the Apostles and their Churches not the consummation of a God-consciousness, labouring up through creation, but the invasive source of forgiveness, new creation and eternal life" (p. 58).

[3] Rom. v. 15 ff.; vi. 23. [4] John iii. 12.

which it is the remedy. In its nature, a salvation which is to go to the root of the world's evil must obviously fulfil certain conditions. It must be *historical*, that is, attest itself as real, and be actual and apprehensible, as entering into man's life in time. It must embrace a perfect *revelation* of the character and will of God, restoring the knowledge which man's sin-darkened mind has lost,[1] and adding new disclosures of God's grace. It must embrace *reparation* for the wrong done to the divine Holiness through sin—a dealing with the world's accumulated *guilt*. This carries with it a demand for repentance and confession of sin on the side of man. It must embrace *spiritual powers* adequate for emancipation from the *dominion* of sin, and the imparting of a new capacity for holy and loving service. It will reveal God, set man right with God before His holy law, restore to holiness. These are old-fashioned thoughts, but they are the essence of what Christianity claims to be and to do as a religion of redemption. Doctrinally, they are summed up in the words, Incarnation, Atonement, Renewal by the Holy Spirit. These, however, are not presented to the mind in Christianity as mere doctrinal abstractions. The living centre of everything in Christ's religion is Jesus Christ Himself, Son of God and Son of Man, in whom the revelation of God is made, reconciliation is effected, new life is bestowed.

In this, its aspect of a *supernatural economy* of redemption, Christianity comes already into direct collision with that "modern" view of the world, the fundamental principle of which, as formerly seen, is that nothing can be admitted into history which does not proceed on purely natural lines. The collision, as was to be expected, is experienced, first, in regard to the *Person* of the Redeemer. It seems plain that, if salvation, in the comprehensive sense above described, is to be achieved for an entire race,—if God is to be per-

[1] i. 21 ff.

fectly revealed, guilt with its attendant condemnation cancelled, complete fellowship with God restored, the Person by whom this work is to be done can be no ordinary son of man. Doctrinal discussion aside, He who is to undertake this work must stand in a unique relation to God the Father; must be Himself without sin; must, while man, achieving His victory by moral means, possess powers and sustain functions nothing less than divine. This, too, impartial exegesis hardly any longer disputes, is the representation of Jesus given in the Evangelic records, and in the Epistles and remaining writings of the New Testament. The Christ even of the Synoptic Gospels is, Bousset freely grants, as truly a supernatural Being as the Christ of St. Paul or St. John.[1] He is the Christ of apostolic faith. Only, by this school, the historic truth of the picture cannot be conceded. Christ must, at all costs, be reduced within the limits of simple humanity. Supernatural claims and attributes must, by the various devices known to criticism, be ruthlessly stripped off.[2]

It was pointed out in the opening paper that one direction in which this "modern" spirit more recently manifests itself is in the growing tendency to deny even the *moral perfection*—the "sinlessness"—of Jesus. Nature has never in human experience produced a sinless Personality. On the other hand, if a sinless Being, such as Jesus is claimed to be, has really appeared in history, He is a mira-

[1] "Even the oldest Gospel," Bousset says, "is written from the standpoint of faith: already for Mark, Jesus is not only the Messiah of the Jewish people, but the miraculous eternal Son of God, whose glory shone in the world" (*Was wissen wir von Jesus?* pp. 54, 57).

[2] This is the attitude of the whole new "historical-critical" school to the history of Jesus in the Gospels. Bousset, Weinel, Wernle, Wrede, Schmiedel, are examples. With much that is reverential in the spirit of these writers, one cannot go the length of Dr. Sanday in seeing in their teaching a "reduced" form of Christianity (*Ancient and Modern Christologies*). It seems rather like the removing of the corner-stone from the Christianity of the New Testament.

cle, a marvel, only to be explained by a creative act of God.[1] No wonder, therefore, the modern spirit stumbles at such a palpable contradiction of its first principle. It is not enough to deny the Virgin Birth; in consistency the Virgin Life must follow it.[2] This step, accordingly, as before shown, is now very generally being taken. But the attempt to class Jesus with the sinful world which He came to save—to accord to Him less than complete moral perfection—cannot succeed. The facts are too mighty for it. If there is one thing that stands out clear in the Gospel narratives, it is the perfect unity of thought and will of Jesus with the Father—what Ritschl calls His "solidarity" with God in will and purpose.[3] Jesus betrays no consciousness of sin; does no act which gives occasion to any one—even to the Prince of Evil[4]—to charge Him with it. He distinguishes Himself as Saviour from the world of sinners He came to save. The impression which His life produced on those who knew Him best—the same which the picture in the Gospels produces on us still—was that of perfect holiness. "He did no sin."[5] He was the undimmed image of the perfection of the Father.[6]

Here then, in Jesus of Nazareth, is the appearance of a *Sinless One* for the first time in history. The fact is of unspeakable significance for redemption. It is not simply that sinlessness *qualified* Jesus for His work as Saviour. What is of greater moment is that here, in the New Head of the race, is already realised the reversal of that "law of sin and death"

[1] The writer has sought to establish this connexion in his work on the *Virgin Birth of Christ.*

[2] This is a remark of Prof. A. B. Bruce: "With belief in the Virgin Birth is apt to go belief in the Virgin Life, as not less than the other a part of that veil that must be taken away that the true Jesus may be seen as He was—a morally defective man, better than most, but not perfectly good" (*Apologetics*, p. 410).

[3] *Unterricht*, p. 20. [4] John xiv. 30.

[5] 1 Pet. ii. 22; 1 John iii. 5; cf. 2 Cor. v. 21. [6] John xiv. 9.

that reigns elsewhere universally in humanity. A new order of being has begun. The pledge of a Kingdom of God is given. Herrmann justly dwells on the immediate certitude of God's Holiness and grace produced in us by the fact that one like Jesus belongs to this world of ours.[1] It guarantees everything else that is needful for salvation.

3. In reconciling men to God, introducing them, through forgiveness, to a life of sonship, and renewing them to holiness, Christ's aim was, and is, to bring in that *Kingdom of God*, or realisation of God's will in a perfected moral fellowship of humanity,[2] which, it was before seen, is God's own last end in the creation and government of the world. For this end Christ lived, died, rose again, and now exercises a universal sovereignty in providence and grace.[3] Most who accept the Christian standpoint will agree that such statements correctly describe the work which Christ came to do; the point where difficulty arises for many, both within and without the Church, is with regard to that aspect of Christ's reconciling work commonly spoken of as the *Atonement*.[4] By not a few the idea of atonement is repudiated altogether; more frequently the term is retained, but in a sense which deprives it of its older connotation of an act by

[1] Through Jesus, he holds, we have the irrefragable certainty that God is present to us, and communes with us—"A God so holy that He at once strikes down the sinner, and yet also forgives him, and reconciles him to Himself by His own act" (*Com. with God*, E.T., p. 26; cf. pp. 79, 80). There are, however, elements in this reconciling work which Herrmann leaves out of account.

[2] "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth" (Matt. vi. 10).

[3] Matt. xxviii. 18; Eph. i. 20–3; Heb. ii. 9, 10.

[4] The term "atonement" in the one place in which it occurs in the A.V. of the N.T. (Rom. v. 11) is correctly rendered in the R.V. "reconciliation" (καταλλαγή). Theologically it is used, as also in the O.T. (Lev. iv. 20, 26, etc.), for the act by which sin is "covered" (כִּפֶּר) and its guilt put away before God. This, in the N.T., is accomplished by Christ's death, to which a propitiatory, reconciling virtue is ascribed. (Rom. iii. 25; Eph. ii. 13–17; Col. i. 20–2; Heb. ix. 26–8; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19; 1 John ii. 2; iv. 10, etc.).

which the guilt of human sin is vicariously expiated. Detailed theological discussion is not here relevant, but a few words may help to set the subject in its true light.

That Christ has "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself"[1] and through His death has "reconciled" men to God[2]—still, however, under the condition of a spiritual appropriation of His saving act through faith[3]—seems plainly enough taught in the New Testament. Of "theories" purporting to explain the significance of this redeeming act probably not one is without its element of important truth.[4] That atonement, while outward in form, is spiritual in essence; that its virtue lay, not in the mere endurance of suffering, but in the *spirit* in which the sacrifice was offered; that it involved (with Maurice, Erskine, Robertson, etc.) the perfect surrender of a holy will,[5] (with Bushnell) vicarious sympathetic suffering,[6] (with McLeod Campbell, Moberly) intercession and confession of sin—the word "penitence" should be avoided, (with Ritschl) the final proof of fidelity in vocation,[7]—this all may be assumed without argument. The point in which theories of this class separate themselves from the older "satisfaction," "governmental," and "penal suffering" views is in the refusal to recognise that the atonement of Christ has any *judicial* aspect—any relation to *guilt*, or to the *punitive* will of God in His dealing with that guilt. Apart, however, from the fact that, on any fair reading of the New Testament, it is hardly possible to deny that this aspect of Christ's reconciling work is a prominent one—if, indeed, it is not placed in the very forefront,—may it not be contended that, in the nature of the case, if the view previously taken of sin is correct, there is in these judicial theories also an element of truth which ought not to be

[1] Heb. ix. 26. [2] 2 Cor. v. 18–21; Col. i. 20–22, etc.
[3] Rom. iii. 22, 25, etc. [4] Cf. the writer's *Christian View of God*, Lect. viii.
[5] Heb. x. 7–10. [6] Heb. ii. 14–18; iv. 15. [7] Phil. ii. 8.

overlooked? If the world, indeed, lies under a divine condemnation through its sin,—if the "wrath of God" is revealed against its unrighteousness and ungodliness,[1] is not this also an aspect of its condition which any true and complete view of atonement must take account of? In meeting on behalf of humanity the whole attitude of God to sin, as it is presumed Christ did, can the punitive attitude—so real and awful—be ignored?

Should this be deemed strange? Were it requisite it might readily be shown how deeply the aspect of atonement now indicated answers to a need of the human heart which has manifested itself in all ages, and still reveals itself in human experience.[2] How constantly in literature, when a great wrong has been done, do we meet with the *desire to atone*—to make amends—to undo, as far as that is possible, the wrong of the past, and so relieve the burden that rests on conscience.[3] It is felt to be not enough to repent,—even to know oneself to be forgiven,—there is the longing to be at peace with one's own sense of right—to lift off the load of self-

[1] Rom. i. 18.

[2] Neglecting the cruder superstitions of lower religions, the O.T., with its strong sense of sin, might again be appealed to as witness. It is not in the sacrificial law only (whether that is earlier or later does not affect its testimony here; if late, it shows only the more convincingly the craving for atonement generated by the consciousness of sin); but in prophetic writings also (cf. Isaiah's cleansing in his vision, ch. vi. 5–7; the prophecy of the Servant, ch. liii.; Zech xiii. 1).

[3] The note is a deep one in Greek Tragedy. C. Plumptre's *Sophocles*, p. lxxxv.:—

"One soul, working in the strength of love,
Is mightier than ten thousand to atone."

In *Prometheus Bound* (Mrs. Browning's trans.), Hermes says—

"Do not look
For any end moreover to this curse,
Or ere some God appear to accept thy pangs
On his own head vicarious, and descend
With unreluctant step the darks of hell
And gloomy abysses around Tartarus."

Various literary illustrations are given in C. A. Dinsmore's *Atonement in Literature and Life*. Their number might be largely increased.

condemnation, of deserved condemnation by others, that cleaves to the sense of guilt.

This is one side of the matter; another is, the desire, in that strange unity that links human beings together, to atone, as far as possible, for the *sins of one another*, specially of those nearly related to us; to make amends on their behalf. In the absolute sense—in relation to God and His perfectly holy demand—it is obvious that no one can thus atone either for his brother or for himself.[1] Much less can he atone for the sin of a whole race. Only One can be thought of as capable of sustaining such a task—the Holy One Himself, who, uniting in His own Person both Godhead and manhood, perfectly represents both,—who, knowing what the sin of the world is to its inmost depths, yet voluntarily identifies Himself with the whole position of the world under sin,—who, entering fully, as McLeod Campbell would say, into the mind of God about sin, yet, under experience of sin's uttermost evil in death, and with full consciousness of its relation to sin, yet maintains unbroken His unity of spirit with God,—who, acknowledging the righteousness of God's judgment on sin,[2] renders in humanity a tribute to this righteousness so complete, that, to hark back on a thought of Anselm's in his *Cur Deus Homo*, all the guilt of the world cannot countervail against it!

There is, it is granted, a mystery in an atonement such as Christ alone could make,—an act which was His, yet which can truly be ascribed to humanity so far as it spiritually identifies itself with it,—which human formulas must always fail to compass, even while the truth they imperfectly convey, viz., a reconciliation in which the imputation of guilt and the condemnation attending it entirely disappear, is

[1] Ps. xlix. 7; cxxx. 3; Mic. vi. 6, 7.

[2] McLeod Campbell speaks of the "Amen" which went up from Christ's humanity to God's judgment on sin in his experience of death (*Nat. of Atonement*, cf. chs. vi., xi., xii.).

felt to be most real. As casting light on the *racial* aspect of this work accomplished for humanity, aid is afforded by that idea of the *organic unity* of the race found to be so important in the discussions connected with heredity. If the fact of organic connexion renders possible the suffering—even the ruin—of many through the sin of one, is it not, as St. Paul argues,[1] the necessary counterbalancing thought that righteousness and life may come through the obedience of One ?

4. The view of Christianity as presenting the divine remedy for sin connects itself, not simply with the truths of Incarnation and Atonement, but with the fact of the *Resurrection*, as the pledge of victory over *death*, and source of a *new life* for all who accept the salvation which Christ brings. The reality of Christ's Resurrection is here assumed.[2] It is the needful completion of what precedes ; the commencement of the new era of exaltation and subjugation of opposing powers ; the prelude to the gift of the Spirit. Without resurrection, if man is to be redeemed in his whole personality—body as well as soul—the remedy would be imperfect, for the "enemy," death,[3] would still retain his hold over both Redeemer and redeemed. Is the "sting" really taken from death[4]—that supreme contradiction of man's nature and destiny, as dissolving the union of spiritual and corporeal which differentiates man's position in creation [5]—if death still retains its unbroken sway, and spirit and body remain eternally apart ? Justly, therefore, in both Old and New

[1] Rom. v. 12–21.

[2] The evidence is discussed, with reference to recent thought, in the writer's work, *The Resurrection of Jesus.*

[3] 1 Cor. xv. 26.

[4] 1 Cor. xv. 55.

[5] It has already been argued that death is unnatural to man—a mutilation, a rupture, a separation of the parts of his compound being, not contemplated in his creation. Cf. the writer's *God's Image in Man*, pp. 251 ff.

Testaments, is death's "destruction" regarded as the goal of God's redemptive action.[1]

Death, with Christ, is for the sake of life. His risen life He shares with His people. Removal of sin's guilt and condemnation—the Pauline δικαίωσις—with its forgiveness of the past, is not the whole. Provision is needed for the *renewal* of man in the core of his personality—for deliverance from sin's *power*. The rule of sin in the soul must be met and broken through the mightier power of "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus."[2] Christianity is a religion, therefore, of Regeneration and Sanctification—of an Indwelling Spirit—acting, indeed, not magically, but through appropriate moral and spiritual agencies.[3]

In this possession of the Spirit, in turn, is embraced the whole hope of the future.[4] As death, commencing in the loss of the soul's true life in God, has its outward concomitant in physical dissolution; so, in the new life imparted through Christ, lies the germ of future resurrection.[5] The immortality (ἀφθαρσία, incorruption) held forth in the Gospel as "brought to light" through Jesus Christ[6] is no mere prospect of ghostly survival in some Sheol-like condition of semi-existence, but a true "life everlasting" in God's own presence in holy perfection of both body and spirit.[7] Of this immortality Christ's Resurrection is the immutable pledge.

5. We are thus brought back, though on a higher plane,

[1] Is. xxv. 8; Hos. xiii. 14; 1 Cor. xv. 26, 54–5; Rev. xx. 14.

[2] Rom. viii. 2; cf. vi. 8, 14, 22.

[3] The Word, the Church, means of grace generally. These are not further considered here.

[4] Eph. i. 13, 14; Col. 1. 27. [5] Rom. viii. 2. [6] 2 Tim. i. 10.

[7] Rom. viii. 23; 1 Cor. xv. 42 ff.; Col. i. 22; Jude 24.

Huxley's words, previously quoted, may be recalled: "If a genuine, not merely subjective, immortality awaits us, I conceive that, without some such change as that depicted in the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, immortality must be eternal misery" (*Life and Letters*, ii. p. 304).

to the point at which the discussion was broken off in the last paper—the question of the *Life Beyond*, and have still to ask, in view of the issues which that question raises, how far any light is cast on the vexed problems of what is called *Theodicy*—the vindication of the ways of God in His permission of sin, and government of the world of mankind under it.

For the Christian, as just seen, the question of *immortality* is solved once for all in Christ. Christ is the Theodicy for him. The problem of sin is solved, in his case, by a redemption. Suffering and death meet with their infinite compensations.[1] Life has its adequate end.

On natural grounds the question of life beyond death is much less easy to deal with. It has already been shown how serious is the break in modern thinking with the belief in immortality.[2] By many the belief is openly and uncompromisingly parted with. To others it is a vague and uncertain hypothesis. Science is alleged to discredit it;[3] others, who cling to the belief, seek a quasi-scientific support for it in spiritualistic phenomena.[4] The reason for disbelief is often to be found in the particular philosophical or scientific theory adopted: Darwinism has peculiar difficulties in this respect.[5] Frequently, again, denial has its root in a low view of human nature, and an inadequate conception of immortality itself. Only as man is regarded as made in the image of God, and life as having a moral end, is

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 17: "Our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory."

[2] See EXPOSITOR, February, 1910.

[3] Prof. James's Ingersoll Lect. on *Immortality* vividly sets out the difficulties from the side of science. Haeckel treats immortality as one of the superstitions science has to destroy.

[4] Sir Oliver Lodge, in his *Man and the Universe*, pp. 189 ff., presents considerations of this sort. He has, however, better reasons, and seeks to do justice to the Christian doctrine of bodily resurrection (p. 160).

[5] See EXPOSITOR, July, pp. 22 ff.

the argument for immortality felt to be cogent.[1] Mere continuance of existence without anything to give that existence content or value can awaken no enthusiasm and inspire no hope.[2]

The arguments on which it is customary to rely in support of belief in a future life need not here be enlarged on. Chief stress is laid on the whole make of man's being as needing for its development and perfecting a larger sphere than the earthly life affords.[3] On this ground Kant includes immortality among his "doctrinal beliefs," intermediate between theoretical proof and mere opinion.[4] J. S. Mill was specially impressed by the fact that only under the influence of this hope do the human faculties find their largest play and scope—life is relieved from "the disastrous feeling of 'not worth while.'"[5] Science may not prove, but, as both Mr. Huxley and Mr. Mill admit, cannot *dis*prove immortality.[6] It is enough to advert to the point which

[1] It was from their sense of fellowship with God that O.T. believers derived their confidence that He would not let them perish (Pss. xlix. 15; lxxiii. 24–26, etc.; cf. Heb. xi. 13–16).

[2] Prof. Huxley, in an interesting letter to Charles Kingsley, takes the ground of neither confirming nor denying the immortality of man. He sees no reason for believing in it, but has no means of disproving it. The idea has no attraction for him. (*Life and Letters*, i. pp. 217 ff.). But see below.

[3] Cf. Tennyson (*In Memoriam*), but specially Browning (*Pauline*, etc.), as poetical exponents of this thought.

[4] "In the wisdom of a supreme Being, and in the shortness of life, so inadequate to the development of the glorious powers of human nature, we may find equally sufficient grounds for a doctrinal belief in the future life of the human soul" (*Krit. of Pure Reason*, p. 501, Bohn's trans.).

[5] Cf. the whole eloquent passage in *Three Essays on Religion*, p. 249. Notwithstanding Mr. Huxley's disparagment of the hope of a future life in his letter to Kingsley, he sometimes expressed himself very differently. Mr. Mallock, in his *Is Life Worth Living?* (pp. 128, 171–2) quotes him as saying: "The lover of moral beauty, struggling through a world of sorrow and sin, is surely as much the stronger for believing that sooner or later a vision of perfect peace and goodness will burst upon him, as the toiler up a mountain for the belief that beyond the crag and snow lie home and rest." And he adds that, could a faith like this be placed on a firm basis, mankind would cling to it as "tenaciously as ever drowning sailor did to a hencoop."

[6] Huxley, as above; Mill, *Three Essays*, p. 201. The staggering diffi-

mainly concerns our present inquiry—the manifest *incompleteness of the earthly life*, regarded as the scene of a *divine moral administration*. Professor Huxley, indeed, in his aggressive mood, will admit no inequality, no injustice, needing redress. Everything is "wholly just."[1] This, however, is a manifest exaggeration. Grant a moral government of the world, moral probation and discipline, a justice that gives every one his due, and on the side neither of goodness nor of evil is it possible to claim that the issues of conduct are exhausted in this life.[2] Immortality becomes a postulate of the moral nature.[3]

It is only in accordance, therefore, with its claim to meet the deepest needs of man's conscience, that Christianity proclaims that life on earth is *not the end* for any. Not for the good—the Christ-like—for they depart to be with their Lord, which is "very far better";[4] not for the bad, for they pass, with their evil, into a world where just recompense of their deeds awaits them. After death, it is testified, "cometh judgment."[5] Theodicy, too, has its place, for with the close of time—at what interval it would be presumptuous to inquire[6]—is associated, in Christian teaching, a yet more public manifestation and vindication of the divine righteousness (*dies irae, dies illa*)[7]—a day when,

culty, of course, which belief in immortality has to encounter is the fact of death itself, which seems a palpable contradiction of such a destiny. The genuine Christian view meets this difficulty with a denial that death is natural to man, and presents a Gospel which proclaims a victory over death.

[1] Letter to Kingsley, above quoted. "The absolute justice of things," he says, "is as clear to me as any scientific fact" (*op. cit.*, i. p. 219).

[2] Cf. Browning, *La Saisiaz*: "There is no reconciling wisdom with a world distraught," etc. (*Works*, xiv. p. 178).

[3] Thus Kant (cf. Abbott's trans., *Kant's Theory of Ethics*, pp. 218 ff.). Carrying out this idea, Kant finds in the Christian doctrine of the Kingdom of God the conception "which alone satisfies the strictest demand of practical reason" (p. 224).

[4] Phil. i. 23. [5] Heb. x. 27. [6] Mark xiii. 32.

[7] Matt. xxv. 31 ff.; John v. 29; Rom. ii. 5–11; Rev. xx. 11–15.

all secrets of men being laid bare,[1] judgment will be passed on each "according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad."[2]

6. When "Theodicy" is spoken of, it must be apparent in *how modified a sense* that great word can be employed of any grasp of the divine purposes attainable by man in time. Has the road we have travelled, then, been utterly without result? That it would be equally unwise to affirm. Numerous as are the perplexities that still crowd upon us, the master-key to their solution, at least, is given when it is discovered that sin is an alien element in the universe, and that it is balanced, in God's grace, by a redemption which means its final overthrow, and the establishment in its room of a Kingdom of God, already begun, growing to triumph, and awaiting its perfection in eternity. Only it is to be acknowledged that our lights on these vast matters are in this life "broken," refracted, partial;[3] that it is but the "outskirts" of God's ways we can discern.[4] Till that higher standpoint is reached where, as just indicated, the light of the Great White Throne beats on the unrolled scroll of God's providence, and the principles of His unerringly wise government are disclosed to the world that has been the subject of it, glimpses to steady our thoughts, and guide our feet amidst the shadows, are the utmost that can be asked or hoped for.

(1) Theodicy has mainly occupied itself with the question of *physical* evil—the apparent recklessness and cruelty of nature, still more the misfortune, pain, sorrow, and misery of human life—that dark region in which Pessimism finds its perennial text. It was pointed out at the beginning how closely connected the problem of physical evil is with that of moral evil—how large a part of the solution of

[1] Rom. ii. 16. [2] 2 Cor. v. 10. [3] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.
[4] Job xxvi. 14.

the one is found in the solution of the other.[1] Not, however, entirely. The world, even physically, is not in the condition we should expect were it *morally* in a state well-pleasing to God.[2] Is there no bond of sympathy between man and his physical environment? Scripture here has its own point of view in the idea of an arrested development —a "vanity" (ματαιότης) or profitlessness—to which even nature is subjected through the sin of man.[3] But it holds out hope also for creation, "groaning and travailing in pain until now," of a share in the coming redemption.[4] This is its theodicy.

(2) The *permission of sin* is, and remains, a dark riddle. It is not an adequate answer to the difficulty to say—Man is free. This is true, but it is not *all* worlds in which freedom would have been abused, and the problem is that, foreseeing the abuse, God created *this* one.[5] The ultimate solution lies, we must believe, where Christianity places it, in the larger results in glory to God and good to man,—the nobler virtue attained through conflict and temptation, the loftier holiness and higher reward of those who "overcome,"[6] the diviner blessedness of sonship in Christ,—that accrue from its permission. Sin has appeared; redemption is God's answer to it, and vindication of His allowance of it.

(3) But does even this, in view of all the facts, furnish

[1] EXPOSITOR, January, p. 57; cf. *Christian View of God*, 194, 217 ff., where the question of physical evil is discussed at length.

[2] Interesting illustration is afforded in a long note in Luthardt's *Saving Truths of Christianity* (pp. 330 ff. E.T.), drawn from various writers.

[3] Rom. viii. 20; cf. Gen. iii. 17, 18.

[4] Vers. 19–22; cf. 2 Pet. iii. 13; Rev. xxi. 1.

[5] It is a daring speculation, but the thought is one which forces itself—Could a universe have been created in which, at some point, in the exercise of freedom, sin would not emerge? If not, divine wisdom has to do, less with the permission, than with the ordering of how, when, where, under what conditions, this entrance of sin shall take place, and how it shall best be overruled for good when it does appear.

[6] Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17, 26; iii. 5, 12, 21.

us with more than the *beginnings* of a theodicy? If there is a Kingdom of God already begun on earth, vast numbers yet to be gathered into it,[1] a perfection beyond imagination to be attained in the future, this is unspeakable gain. But what of the *cost* of this result in the vast multitudes meanwhile left outside—of the countless generations that have never known, or still are in ignorance of, the grace that saves? Do they perish? If they do, where is the theodicy? If not, what is their fate? A problem this, when all has been said that can be said of the wide extension of God's mercy to those who fear Him and work righteousness in every nation,[2] according to the light they possess, —even to far more imperfect seekers, with inferior opportunity, of discrimination in judgment according to degrees of responsibility (light, talent, heredity, environment),[3] —of the justice of the retribution falling on those who choose evil rather than good,[4]—which baffles, with our present knowledge, a complete solution. The elements of a solution are wanting; the calculus fails us for dealing with it.

Some would seek a solution of the problem in the thought of *universal salvation*. Thus Origen of old;[5] thus Schleiermacher;[6] thus modern advocates of the "Larger Hope." These deem it the only solution congruous with the divine love and Fatherhood. Calm reason, however, not to say regard for revelation,[7] forbids us to take refuge in this tempting conclusion. The possibilities of resistance to

[1] Rev. vii. 9, 10. [2] Acts x. 35.

[3] Matt. xi. 20–24; Luke xii. 46–7, etc.

[4] Prof. Huxley's words quoted in EXPOSITOR, Sept., p. 210, may be again referred to.

[5] *De Principiis*, iii. 6. [6] *Der christ. Glaube*, sect. 163.

[7] Cf. *Christian View*, p. 391, 530 ff. The strongest Pauline passages are perhaps 1 Cor. xv. 21–28, and Eph. i. 10, but exegetes like Meyer and Weiss will not allow that they teach universalism. Cf. Meyer, *in loc.*; Weiss, *Bib. Theol.*, ii. pp. 73, 107, 109.

God and goodness in the human will, of which history in this world affords such terrible examples, cannot be made light of.[1] Character tends to fixity, and wills that have resisted God's goodness in this life are not likely to be readily subdued to penitence by His severity in the next.

The alternative theory to which some resort of *annihilation* of the finally impenitent, though not without important advocates,[2] is equally inadmissible as an attempt to solve a moral problem by a *tour de force* which has in it no elements of a real solution. In its more rigorous form, it sweeps into extinction the vast majority of the race ; supplemented, as it is in Dr. E. White, by a doctrine of *second probation*,[3] it extends evangelization into the future on a scale for which no warrant exists either in Scripture or in reason.[4] Every ray of exhortation and appeal in the New Testament is concentrated in the present,[5] and judgment in the future is always represented as proceeding on the basis of the deeds done in the body.[6]

The theory of an *extended probation* commands the sympathy of many as providing for the case of those who have had no opportunity of learning of the Gospel here.[7] With it Dr. Dorner connects the view—in which lies the principle of his theodicy—that every soul must have the opportunity of definitive acceptance or rejection of Christ.[8] As usually presented, the theory goes, as just said, beyond

[1] Farrar, in his *Mercy and Judgment*, grants : "I cannot tell whether some souls may not resist God for ever, and therefore may not be for ever shut out from His presence," etc. (p. 485). But if one soul may be thus finally lost, why should not ten, a thousand, a million ? The principle is here admitted on which the chief difficulty turns.

[2] E.g., Rothe, Ritschl (hypothetically). [3] *Life in Christ*, Ch. xxii.

[4] The "destruction" Scripture speaks of takes place at the *Parousia*, not, as in Dr. White's theory, ages after.

[5] 2 Cor. vi. 2. [6] 2 Cor. vi. 10 ; Rev. xx. 12, etc.

[7] The theory is advocated by theologians like Dorner, Oesterzee, Martensen, Godet, and by many among ourselves.

[8] *Syst. of Christ. Doct.*, iii. pp. 69 ff. ; iv. pp. 408 ff.

the limits of Scriptural evidence, and tends seriously to change the centre of gravity of Gospel presentation.[1] What is true is that, in eternity, all must be brought into the light of Christ; whether for condemnation or for salvation the event will determine. The result may be *revelation* of character—of the will's inmost bent—rather than change of it. Many in that day may be found saying, in the prophet's words, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him," though the "veil" till then had been upon their minds.[2] The problem, too, of unformed characters may find solution then in definite decisions. Yet on all this how little can we know?

Beyond lie *the eternal ages*, the secrets of which, known only to God, it is equally presumptuous and vain for man to attempt to penetrate. The veil, in Scripture, falls on what seems to be a duality, yet not to the exclusion of hints, even more, of a future final unification—a gathering up of all things in Christ as Head—when God is once more "all in all."[3] Such language would seem to imply, at least, a cessation of active opposition to the will of God—an acknowledgment universally of His authority and rule,—a reconcilement, in some form, on the part even of those outside the blessedness of the Kingdom with the order of the universe.[4]

Here, without our presuming further, the subject may be left to rest. It becomes too vast for human thought. An Apostle's words are the fitting close: "O the depth of the

[1] The obscure passage, 1 Pet. iii. 18–20, is a very precarious foundation for it. Cf. the apposite remarks on Geo. MacDonald's "Gospel in Hades" in Selby's *Theol. of Mod. Fiction*, pp. 158 ff.

[2] Is. xxv. 7–9.

[3] Acts iii. 21; 1 Cor. xv. 24–28; Eph. i. 10; Phil. ii. 9–11.

[4] Theologians have often spoken of the last judgment as compelling the acknowledgment of God's righteousness in the minds even of the condemned. In this may lie the germ of the ultimate submission to the divine order which the above passages seem to anticipate.

riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past tracing out! . . . For of Him, and through Him, and unto Him, are all things. To Him be the glory for ever. Amen."[1]

JAMES ORR.

HAS DR. SKINNER VINDICATED THE GRAF-WELLHAUSEN THEORY?

IN the September number of the EXPOSITOR Professor A. R. Gordon makes certain references to my work in the course of an article entitled Skinner's *Genesis*. Those references could not have been made if certain material facts had been known to Dr. Gordon and present to his mind, and accordingly I desire by the courtesy of the Editor to state those facts as briefly as possible. In doing so I shall be careful not to attempt anything like a second review of Dr. Skinner's book or a reply to any of Dr. Gordon's other points, because I have answered Dr. Skinner at considerable length in an article that I have sent to the October number of the *Bibliotheca Sacra* and need not here repeat myself. This article, therefore, is limited simply to my own defence to Dr. Gordon's criticisms.

In January 1909—and I may say at once that the dates are of some importance—I published in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* an article dealing with Astruc's celebrated clue. In addition to other facts I pointed out that the Versions, and notably the Septuagint, did not always agree with the Massoretic text of the Divine appellations in the book of Genesis. Certain features in the discussion were most material to the argument. First, instead of contenting myself with a single text of the Septuagint, I employed the materials given in Field,

[1] Rom. xi. 33, 35.