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Endless punishment

Thomas Jefferson
Sawyer

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C. R. Terry
Sept. 25, 1910

Laura T. Terry

ENDLESS PUNISHMENT.

"If all the severest and most barbarous tortures which were ever invented by the tyrants of the earth, who by anxious thought and hellish contrivance improved and refined the art of cruelty and brought it to perfection ; if these, I say, were to be heaped upon the head of one man, and he were to endure them for a hundred years, yet they would not come near the pains of the damned for one day. So fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God. The quickest and sorest punishments which in all ages have been inflicted upon thieves, parricides, and other malefactors, are seldom known to have lasted above three or four days, or a week at farthest ; but the torments of those who lie wailing under the vengeance of a power armed with omnipotence, are not for a year or an age, but for an interminable duration : God will always punish them, and he can never torment them enough, though their torments will endure to all eternity." — DREXELIUS.

"That the punishment will be endless is certain, but whether it will be progressive I will not venture to assert. But the thing being once admitted, consequences result enough to shake the world. *Then* the time will come when the smallest soul in hell will contain more misery than Satan now does ; — time will come when the smallest soul in hell will endure more *in one hour* than has been endured on earth by all nations since the creation. And further still — it is too awful to proceed. Oh, what a God is that which lives from eternity to eternity ! " — DR. GRIFFIN.

ENDLESS PUNISHMENT:

*IN THE VERY WORDS OF ITS
ADVOCATES.*

BY

THOMAS J. SAWYER, S.T.D.

**Nec tormentis aut modus aut terminus.
MINUCIUS FELIX.**

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ENDLESS PUNISHMENT

IN THE

VERY WORDS OF ITS ADVOCATES.

INTRODUCTION.

IN the following pages I wish to call the attention of the reader to some facts and considerations, which, though only preliminary in their nature, seem to me important, and, if duly weighed, must in some measure prepare the earnest inquirer for an intelligent and, I trust, candid study of the controversy now going on in Protestant Christendom, — and affecting in some degree even the Roman Church, — upon the question of universal salvation and endless punishment. In every aspect the subject is a momentous one, in which no man who believes in God and immortality can fail to take a profound interest, but to which a faith in the Christian religion adds a fresh importance by lifting us out of a narrow egoism, in which we are apt to indulge, and inspiring us with a broader and purer love for our fellow-men, and so making the welfare of every individual of our race dear to us, and an object of affectionate and earnest desire.

But the question reaches much farther than the mere

happiness or misery of a few individuals, or even the great majority of mankind. If any — be the number large or small — are finally to be lost, whether by the suffering of annihilation or of an eternity of woe, this awful event, let us reflect, must occur in the universe of God and under his moral government, and hence cannot fail to affect directly and most disastrously, one would naturally suppose, the character of both that government and its divine Author. Did he call these unhappy beings into existence for this fearful destiny, or is it to happen as something unforeseen, to meet him as a surprise, and afflict him as a fatal disappointment?

Fortunately the time has now arrived when these grave questions can be discussed with a degree of calmness and under an absence of prejudice and passion which hitherto it has been difficult, if not impossible, to command. The larger hope, nay, the assured belief, of the final victory of good over evil, is no longer so utterly heretical as to throw its possessor beyond the pale of common-sense and Christian charity. The most zealous advocate of endless punishment is obliged to confess that there is something to be said in favor of a doctrine for which all good men pray, and which, if true, would not only fill the moral universe with joy, but must also redound to the infinite glory of God.

Nor should the fact be wholly overlooked that, notwithstanding their differences, the two parties in this contro-

versy — the Universalists on one side, and the Orthodox, so called, on the other — still hold much, and much that is fundamental, in common, and I trust with equal sincerity and affection. We agree, for instance, in believing in the one living and true God, the Creator of all worlds and the moral Governor of all intelligent beings ; in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, the great Teacher and Savior of men ; and in the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament and the New, as containing a revelation of the divine character and will, and of man's relations, duty, and destiny.

Yet, cordially agreeing as we do on these great fundamental truths, the fact need not be disguised, and indeed cannot be, that we still differ, and differ widely. When we come to consider God's ways, and to interpret his word, we often find ourselves on divergent and, as it sometimes seems, opposite paths. The points of view we occupy, the principles of exegesis we adopt, or the prejudices of education and habits of thought under which we act, must obviously be very different to explain the different results to which we come, and account for the distinct and, in some respects, conflicting systems which we form. We constitute two clearly distinguished schools of theology, and perhaps I may say the only two which Christendom actually exhibits. The differences that separate the various orthodox sects and parties — and I use the word "orthodox" here in a comprehensive sense, including

all who accept the doctrine of endless punishment or annihilation — are rather superficial than fundamental. They relate largely to the mere externals of religion, its rites and ceremonies, its order of worship and form of government, and the like, or at most to the varying phases of doctrine or their mode of statement, without affecting the general scheme to which they belong, or the final result to which they tend. Even the dispute about foreordination and free-will, which has been so often raised between the necessitarian and his opponents, loses all its significance the moment we pass the barriers of the grave, where, according to both parties, the sinful soul can no longer repent, or repentance is utterly unavailing, and hence becomes as fixed in good or evil, as if it had never possessed a moral nature, or exercised moral power. Nor does the most rigid Unitarianism lose its orthodox character, unless, as it is now perhaps more and more doing in this country, it associates itself with Universalism. It makes little difference to us or our theology, whether God exists in Unity or Trinity, if the divine attributes and the principles of the divine government remain the same, and the final issues of it are unaffected. Damnation, whether it consists in annihilation or endless punishment, will be neither better nor worse for being ordained by God the Father, or by what is called the Triune God, combining the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

It should be regarded as matter for thankfulness, how-

ever, that, antagonistic as some of the opinions of Universalists and their orthodox neighbors still are, we are certainly, though perhaps slowly, approaching each other, and if we do not yet "see eye to eye," as watchmen on the walls of Zion should do, the experience of the past fifty years is sufficient to encourage the confident hope that ultimately we shall attain, by manly discussion and intelligent conviction, that essential "unity of faith," which the Roman Church has for centuries been striving in vain to reach by ecclesiastical authority, the suppression of all proper freedom of thought and all private opinion.

After saying this, I hardly need add that the point of greatest difference between the Universalist and the orthodox world about him relates to the extent of the salvation by Jesus Christ. Is that salvation to be partial or universal? Is the Redeemer ultimately to gather into his kingdom of purity and love the whole human race, or only a part of it? Are all souls finally to render homage to Christ, and acknowledge him Lord, to the glory of God the Father; or are some made reprobate by the eternal decree of God, as some teach; or will they, as others affirm, resist forever all the attractive forces of the cross and continue in ceaseless rebellion against the divine grace and love? In a word, is the universe which, under the divine hand, began in unity, to end, as Augustine, Calvin, and so many others have taught, and so many

still believe, in a hateful dualism, as dishonorable to God as it must be unhappy to his creatures?

Could we all agree in answering these questions, touching, as they do, the final issues of the divine government, and by necessary implication its very nature, our other differences, important as they now seem, would gradually be resolved, and a substantial harmony be at last attained.

But unfortunately there is no immediate prospect of this desirable result. The orthodox world still clings, though I believe with an ever-lessening tenacity, to the doctrine of endless punishment for a part, larger or smaller, of the human family; while Universalists, with ever-increasing numbers and steadfast confidence, rejoice in the faith of Christ's final and complete victory, and the consequent salvation of all human souls. And thus the controversy which has been going on, this side of the Atlantic, for the past century, must continue, though, for the larger faith, under more and more favorable conditions. A hundred years ago Universalists here were very few; they were generally poor, unlearned, and despised. They had but a single house of worship in the whole country, and that was on the sparsely settled shore of New Jersey; they had neither schools nor other resources of influence and power. The whole wealth, learning, social position, and prestige of the land was arrayed against them. Under the blessing of God their condition to-day is vastly changed. They now constitute a Church,

respectable for numbers, wealth, learning, character, and influence, with more than seven hundred ministers, with two theological schools, three colleges, and several academies. They have between nine hundred and a thousand parishes, owning nearly eight hundred convenient — some elegant — church edifices, with Sunday-schools and all the appliances for church life and Christian work ; while their faith, though not generally accepted by the other churches about them, still finds many friends within their bosom, and has ceased to be an object of bitter hatred and abuse, and is gradually winning its place in the fellowship and affections of those who formerly spurned it as the basest and most dangerous of heresies. Though no longer young, I expect to live to see the day when Universalism will be recognized as Evangelical. At all events, that day is approaching, and in the not very distant future it will, among all intelligent Christians, be recognized as it is, “the faith once delivered to the saints.”

CHAPTER I.

UNIVERSALISM.

THE doctrine of Universalism appears to me very simple, consistent, and beautiful. It regards this world as God's, and the whole human family as his children. It accepts without distrust the fundamental fact of the gospel, that God, out of his great love to mankind, now alienated from him by sin, sent his only begotten Son to seek and to save that which was lost, and by redeeming men from sin, to restore them to their right relations with God, and thus fit them to glorify and enjoy Him forever. It teaches that whatever mystery or difficulty there may be in the work of redeeming and saving souls, it is precisely the same in one and all. The truth, the grace, the love, the spiritual power, that can seize and transform one sinful soul, yours or mine, a Peter's or a Paul's, is able to seize and transform all souls; for it can accommodate itself to all possible diversities of character and all conditions of life. It is in virtue of this comprehensive power and fitness for the work it has in hand, that the gospel of Christ is qualified to be, and is to become

in fact, a universal religion. If there is one human soul in the universe that Christ cannot subdue and bring into willing subjection to his law, he is not "the Savior of the world," as inspiration proclaims him, and not the Savior the world needs. Yet this redemptive work, let me add, is always carried on in perfect accordance with man's moral nature. Transcendent and divine as the power is, it operates in harmony with all human powers, so that, while Christ subdues our hearts to his will and brings them in subjection to his holy law, there is no violence done to our personality or our own will. We never act more freely than when we recognize the divine love, and sweetly yield our wills, ourselves, to its all-conquering power. It was his prophecy and promise, as he stood in the immediate presence of the cross, that if he were lifted up from the earth, thus signifying by what death he was to die, he would draw all men unto himself (John xii. 32). And this word "draw" expresses admirably the attractive forces of the Christian religion and Christ's method of accomplishing his work. Men are not driven to goodness and heaven, but are drawn thither. And we cannot properly consider the power of the divine love, as exhibited in the mission of Christ, without feeling convinced that it is sufficient to do all that Christ undertook. Prophecy assures us that he will not fail nor be discouraged in his work, but bring it at last to a glorious consummation. As there is one God, who will have all men to

be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, so there is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time (1 Tim. ii. 3-6). And that Christian seems to me weak in the faith who does not see in his Lord and Master a will, a love, a patience, a persistence, equal to the great work he came to do.

Nor do the various punishments which necessarily befall the sinner, whether here or hereafter, in any manner interfere with Christ's redeeming purpose, or interrupt the processes of his grace. On the contrary, they may always be, as we know they often are, the means of breaking the stubborn will, and so preparing the heart for the readier reception of the divine love and law. And as Christ in his history has experienced all the states of human existence, having sojourned and suffered in this world, descended into Hades, and ascended into heaven, that, as the Apostle says, "he might fill all things," so he embraces in the arms of his redeeming power and love the whole human family in all their possible states of being, whether alive upon earth, or whether they lived before the flood, or are to live in the ages to come. He tasted death for every man, and is therefore to be the Savior of the world. In the language of the Apostle we say, "Wherefore, God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and

things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 9-11). And it needs no argument to show that universal homage to Christ and this confession of him as Lord can be nothing else than a personal and individual act. No man can make this confession for his neighbor; and the Apostle elsewhere assures us that these acts of homage and allegiance can be performed in no other temper than that of profound sincerity. "No man speaking by the spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed; and no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. xii. 3.) In the realm of the spiritual, forms and ceremonies count little, and unmeaning or forced confessions, in which the heart does not utter its own feelings and convictions, count nothing at all. The Apostle, in declaring that every knee is to bow in the name of Christ, and every tongue to confess him Lord to the glory of God the Father, was surely not speaking of any mere outward service or any hypocritical homage, and quite as little of that confession which orthodoxy madly dreams will be extorted from the damned in hell. The salvation of the whole human race is what God proposed in the creation; it is what Christ came into the world to effect, and for the accomplishment of which he was given all needed power in heaven and earth. To this end he died the death of the cross, and thus tasted death for every man; and I submit that such self-

sacrificing love cannot suddenly cool, nor readily give over to endless torment souls for which it thus willingly suffered. I should be ashamed of myself if, believing in God and in Christ, I still feared their ultimate failure in this great work of redemption, whose history fills the Bible. God never fails; I cannot associate failure with him even in thought. It is for Him who inhabits eternity, and who is at once omniscient and omnipotent, to say, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isa. xlv. 10). And I beg those of the contrary part to reflect that the final issue of the divine government, whether it be in harmony with our theology or theirs, must be what God saw it from the beginning, and what, in his infinite wisdom and goodness, he himself proposed.

CHAPTER II.

ORTHODOXY.

OUR orthodox friends walk with us in our theology only a part of the way. They believe as we do, that God is the Creator of all souls, and that Christ is the Savior of men,—but not of all men. As to the extent of his salvation, they differ widely among themselves. Some, as we shall see, make it very narrow, while others make it relatively very broad. Some believe that Christ came to seek and to save only a part, and many but a small part, of the human family, while others teach that his object was to save all. But they all agree that finally a portion of mankind, either through the foreordination of God, or through their own fault, will be excluded from the benefits of his grace, and either be annihilated at last, as a few believe, or suffer the torments of hell during the endless ages of eternity, which is the doctrine commonly maintained and preached. I call both these opinions orthodox, because they both rest on the same principles and move in the same circle of thought. They both involve the same unaccountable purpose in God to create human

beings whom he could not govern, and whom he knew from the beginning he must finally in some way destroy. They differ only in the kind of destruction he chooses to employ. As yet, however, the doctrine of annihilation, which has nothing to recommend it except that it is not so bad, not so horrible, as endless punishment, has few advocates, and hardly deserves more than a passing notice. I shall, therefore, devote my attention wholly, or almost wholly, to that form of orthodoxy which has been prevalent in the Church for nearly fifteen centuries, and under some modifications, which are assumed to be improvements, is prevalent still.

I hope it will be observed that I use the word "orthodox" in no invidious manner, but merely as a convenient term to designate that form of religious faith, or system of theology, which, in the point of view now under consideration, is directly opposed to Universalism. And I trust my friends of that school will not think it an offence that I designate them, and the scheme of religion they hold, by a name that has always been held honorable, and for the exclusive title to which they and their predecessors of like faith have contended for many, many ages. If the doctrine which I am about to exhibit is orthodox, I willingly forego the honor it would confer, and as willingly wear the opprobrious name of heretic.

Familiar as the doctrine of endless punishment is, much as it has been preached, and widely as it is still professed,

there is great reason to think that few give it, in any adequate degree, the consideration which a doctrine of this frightful and amazing character ought to command. It seems to enter but very little into the real thought and convictions of those who professedly believe it, and affects them far less, both mentally and morally, than such a doctrine should naturally be expected to do. It is a very just remark of Dr. Emmons, that "hearers must feel what they hear, or what they hear will be like sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. That discourse which fails of penetrating the mind immediately vanishes without producing any desirable or permanent fruit."

No one, I am sure, can seriously reflect upon the doctrine of endless punishment, even as the remotest possibility, without being appalled by it. The mere thought of such a state of existence as that in which the damned are said to be placed, impresses both the mind and heart with a sense of its strange and awful character. Formerly, and not unfrequently even at the present day, we find it represented as embracing everything most painful and most terrible in the whole range of human thought, or indeed possible to the omnipotence of God. Preachers and poets have vied with each other in their endeavors to describe its multiplied torments. The scene of its unspeakable sufferings is HELL, generally represented as an ocean of literal fire and brimstone, into which sinners are cast, soul and body, and where, alive and endowed with

the keenest sensibility, often described as rendered supernaturally acute by miraculous power, and maintained unimpaired, they are to endure all the tortures such a condition would necessarily imply, not for a moment, an hour, or a day, not for a year, an age, or a century, not for a thousand years, a million, or ten thousand millions, but absolutely through all eternity. The thought is simply overwhelming !

That we may understand and know what the doctrine of endless punishment, as it has been preached and believed in the Christian world, really is, that we may be enabled, nay, forced, to form some faint and imperfect conception of its various and unspeakable horrors, I propose to offer here some extracts from accredited authors, both Catholic and Protestant, at home and abroad, in past ages and of the present day, — authors who have believed the doctrine, and appeared as its promulgators and advocates. There are opinions, it is said, whose honest statement is their best refutation ; and at the head of these, I think, must stand the doctrine under consideration. The task I have assumed is not a grateful one. It is more agreeable to a Christian temper to proclaim wholesome truth than to expose noxious errors ; but I believe such an exposition as I here propose is needed, and will prove useful to both my Universalist and my orthodox friends. To the former it will be a confirmation of their severest judgment of the doctrine in question,

while to many of the latter I am sure it will be a revelation of torments which, for variety, ingenuity, cruelty, and uselessness, have never been urged upon their attention, and of which they have hitherto never really dreamed. Preachers and writers who feel it their duty to advocate this doctrine will be obliged to me, I am certain, for bringing to their notice, and placing in their hands, some of the finest and most impressive things ever uttered upon it. It shall be my constant care to make my quotations accurate, and the reader may rely on having here *ipsissima verba* (the very words) of the authors whose names are given. In the great majority of cases I copy directly from their published works. In a very few instances, and those of little importance, I quote second-hand. I will only add, that the library of the Universalist Historical Society has furnished most of the authorities here employed ; and I might, had it seemed advisable, have referred to a much greater number of writers upon many of the points here presented to view. If it should seem to some that I have made too frequent use of the works of President Edwards, my apology must be that he was really one of the great thinkers and preachers of this country, and that he dominated the religious thought of New England especially, for a whole century ; and his mighty influence is still powerfully felt in all the Calvinistic churches on this side of the Atlantic.

CHAPTER III.

GENERAL DESCRIPTIONS OF HELL.

AS I have said before, the place of the punishments of the wicked in the world to come is familiarly known by the name of HELL. Professor Stuart calls it "the world of woe." Poetically, it has been spoken of as "a universe of death." Minucius Felix declares that "to its torments there is neither measure nor end ;" and Cyprian tells us that "an ever-blazing Gehenna shall burn the damned, and a punishment that shall swallow them up in living flames ; nor shall there be any means whence they can ever obtain relief or an end to their torments. Their souls shall, with their bodies, be kept in infinite torments." Cyril describes hell as "the land of death, wherein is no life ; the realm of darkness, wherein is no light ; the gulf of sorrow, wherein is no joy ; where the reprobates sigh forever, and still find no ear that is moved by pity to hear." "Woe to those who shall have their mansions with the devil, because the smoke of their torment shall ascend up forever and ever ; whose worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be

quenched. Among whom there shall be no noise but groans, no rest but fire, no refreshment but flames, and never any light but darkness." Augustine contrasts the miseries of hell with the happiness of heaven. As the blessedness of heaven transcends all expression and thought, so "no one can speak or think of the miseries of hell as they are, since they are very far worse than can be conceived." As heaven is full of light and joy, so "the abyss of hell is full of darkness, discord, and hatred, of burning and thirst and hunger, inextinguishable fire, sadness, perpetual vengeance, and all unspeakable evil, which can neither be expressed nor conceived. As good abounds in heaven, with no evil, so in the prison of the devil all evil abounds, with no good." Anselm finds fourteen sources of torment in hell, seven of which pertain to the body and seven to the soul. Hugo Victorinus assures us that in hell "there is misery, there is darkness, there is no order, there is eternal horror, there is no hope of good, no expectation of shunning all evil." Cardinal Hugo says: "Hell is a boundless and bottomless lake, full of incomparable heat, an intolerable stench, and innumerable pains; there is misery; there is darkness; there is eternal horror; there is no hope, no avoiding evil." "Hell," says Erasmus Franciscus, "is the abyss of torment; the scene of racks, and pains of eternal, penal justice; the pit of everlasting death; the hall of mourning; the house of ceaseless lamentation of heaven-lost

souls ; the glowing cage of spiritual lions and bears, to wit, of devilish-minded men ; the burning furnace of burning tares. Hell is an eternal prison, and at the same time a place of eternal execution to the prisoners ; a sty of goats and swine ; a carrion pit for all those who go thither like brutes, without repentance ; it is a place wherein scorpions, snakes, and dragons, to wit, spirits, creep around and look continually on the damned fire-brands of hell ! It is a wilderness full of fiery serpents, but in which there is no brazen serpent to be lifted up for the healing of those that are bitten."

Among the Protestants these representations were not at all softened down, but, on the contrary, one might almost say that they were made more frightful. Calvin says : "As no description can equal the severity of the divine vengeance on the reprobates, their anguish and torment are figuratively represented to us under corporeal images, as darkness and gnashing of teeth, inextinguishable fire, a worm incessantly gnawing the heart. For there can be no doubt that by such modes of expression the Holy Ghost intended to confound all our faculties with horror." The venerable Christian Stock says that "hell is a place where the damned will be racked and tormented forever." Watson, in his *Body of Divinity*, declares hell to be "the very accent and emphasis of misery. There," he adds, "is judgment without mercy. Oh, what flames of wrath, what seas of vengeance, what rivers of brimstone,

are poured out there upon the heads of the damned !” “The evils of hell are truly evils,” says Jeremy Taylor, “and so purely such that they have no mixture of good in them ; in that place of unhappiness all is eternal sorrow and complaint ; there is no room for comfort, there shall not be the least good which may give ease ; nor shall there want a concourse of all evils which may add affliction : no good is to be found there, where all goods are wanting ; neither can there be want of any evil, where all evils whatsoever are to be found ; and by the want of all good and the collection of all evils, every evil is augmented.” “Oh, could we turn aside the veil of the invisible world, and hold the bottomless pit open before you,” says Dr. Watts, “what bitter groans of ghosts would you hear, not only oppressed and agonizing under the wrath of a righteous God, but also under the insults of cruel devils ! As there is joy among the angels of heaven when a sinner repents, or when a soul arrives safely at those blessed mansions, so, when a rebellious and obstinate criminal is sent down to hell, you would hear the triumphs of those malicious spirits over him, with the voice of insulting pride and hellish joy.” “The torments of the damned, they are two,” says the Rev. Christopher Love, — “that faithful servant of Jesus Christ, minister of Laurence-Jury, London,” whose work was printed in that city just two hundred years ago, 1679, — “either privative or positive, either punishments of loss or punishments of

sense (as the schoolmen call it) ; and under these two heads, if a man had the tongues of men and angels, he is not able to unfold the extreme misery of a tormented soul. That I may break out, as the philosopher did, in speaking of hell : If all the land were paper, and all the water in the sea were ink, as many pens as grass upon the ground, and as many writers as sands upon the sea-shore, all would be too little to set forth the torments of hell."

These general conceptions have been incorporated in Confessions and Catechisms, and made an important part in the inculcations of the pulpit, and preached with more or less earnestness and fervor for many centuries. It can hardly be said, however, that the results have equalled the expectations of the advocates of the doctrine in question. It has not deterred so many from sin, nor encouraged so many in the practice of virtue, as was confidently hoped. In fact, the ages that have been distinguished for this kind of teaching have generally been equally distinguished for vice and crime. Perhaps the fault may be found in its not having been preached as faithfully as it ought ; and possibly it may yet be discovered that the fear of hell is not the highest motive to virtuous living, and will, with difficulty, serve as a substitute for the love of God and our fellow-men in producing piety and good works, since it has no visible or conceivable tendency in that direction.

CHAPTER IV.

SOME ACCOUNT OF HELL-FIRE AND ITS TORMENTS.

IT is unnecessary to say, what all have so frequently heard, that hell is a lake of literal fire and brimstone ; or, if it is not that, then something of which that is only a figure, and, of course, still worse. In modern times, as we shall see, it is by some doubted, and by others denied, that the fire of hell is material, or such as that with which we are acquainted in this world. But it is the constant faith of the Catholic Church, which is the great patron and support of the doctrine of endless punishment, that the fire of hell is real, and not metaphorical. Vicar-General Preston, of New York, in the *North American Review* of March-April, 1868, says : " Although there is no solemn definition of the Church determining the fire of hell to be real and material, nevertheless such is the common opinion, from which no Catholic can safely depart. Thus Suarez says : The certain and Catholic opinion is that the fire of hell, which is prepared for the devil and his angels, is a true and proper corporeal

fire. And Estius uses these words : It is sufficiently evident that the doctrine which teaches that the fire is corporeal, by which the demons and the damned, either before the judgment without their bodies, or afterward with them, are punished, is so common and universal in the Church that it cannot be denied without temerity. That the fire of hell, says Petavius, is corporeal and material, all theologians, yea, all Christians believe, though this be not as yet defined by any decree of the Church." That "the fire of hell is real and not metaphorical," is earnestly maintained in a treatise now before me, by the learned Jesuit, Rev. Carolus Passaglia, Professor in the Roman College of Theology.

But this is no less the doctrine of the Protestant churches than it is of the Catholic. Whatever may be the opinion of some of our orthodox divines of the present day, it cannot be denied that the great mass of Protestants have hitherto believed, and do still believe, that the fire of hell is real, as Passaglia says, and not metaphorical. The Presbyterian Church, as learned as any in the country, in its catechism, says expressly : "The punishments of sin, in the world to come, are everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God, and most grievous torments in soul and body, without intermission, in hell-fire, forever." If it be said that "hell-fire" is a term we have in our English New Testament, and that therefore the Presbyterian Church only affirms what the New Testament

teaches without attempting to define it, it may be replied that those who framed that catechism very well knew, and the church now enjoining it as well knows, how that term is in fact generally understood, and hence would neither use nor recommend its use if it wholly misrepresented the church's belief. But it is not the Presbyterian Church alone that teaches thus. It is the common faith of the orthodox world to-day as it has been in the past, as will appear in what follows.

“Amongst all the torments which human justice hath invented for the punishment of crimes,” says Jeremy Taylor, “there is none held more rigorous than that of fire, by reason of the great activity of that element. What shall the heat of that fire be, which shall be the executioner of the justice of the God of vengeance ! whose zeal shall be inflamed against the wicked, and shall kindle the fire which shall eternally burn to the extremities of hell.” “We can conceive little of the matter,” says President Edwards ; “but, to help your conception, imagine yourself to be cast into a fiery oven, or a great furnace, where your pain would be as much greater than that occasioned by accidentally touching a coal of fire, as the heat is greater. Imagine, also, that your body were to lie there for a quarter of an hour, full of fire, and all the while full of quick sense. What horror would you feel at the entrance of such a furnace ! how long would that quarter of an hour seem to you ! and after you had

endured it for one minute, how overbearing would it be to you to think that you had to endure it the other fourteen ! But what would be the effect on your soul if you knew that you must lie there enduring that torment to the full of twenty-four hours ! And how much greater would be the effect if you knew that you must endure it for a whole year ; and how vastly greater still, if you knew that you must endure it for a thousand years ! But your torment in hell will be immensely greater than this illustration represents. How, then, will the heart of a poor sinner sink under it ! How utterly inexpressible and inconceivable must the sinking of the heart be in such a case." Again he says : "The misery of the damned in hell can be better represented by nothing than by a deluge of fire, a mighty deluge of wrath, which will be ten thousand times worse than a deluge of waters, for it will be a deluge of liquid fire, as in the Scriptures it is called a lake of fire and brimstone. After the resurrection the wicked shall be swallowed up by a vast deluge of fire, which shall be great as Noah's deluge. After that the wicked will have mighty billows of fire and brimstone eternally rolling over their poor souls and their miserable, tormented bodies. These billows may be called vast mountains of fire and brimstone. And when one billow has gone over their heads, another will follow without intermission, giving them no rest day nor night to all eternity."

But our orthodox poets have perhaps excelled our preachers in their descriptions of hell-fire. Milton says :

A dungeon horrible on all sides round,
As one great furnace flamed.

Pollock describes it thus : —

Wide was the place,
And deep as wide, and ruinous as deep.
Beneath I saw a lake of burning fire
With tempest tossed perpetually, and still
The waves of fiery darkness 'gainst the rocks
Of dark damnation broke.

But of all descriptions, the following from Rev. Dr. Trapp, at once preacher and poet, may perhaps be thought the best : —

Fire, too, must make the sensible of hell.
With everlasting burnings who can dwell ?
Tormenting Tophet is ordained long since,
Ev'n for the king, the potentate, and prince,
It is prepared ; 't is roomy, large, and wide,
With store of fuel plenteously supplied ;
The breath of God makes the full furnace boil,
And, like a stream of brimstone, fires the pile.
Doomed to live death, and never to expire,
In floods, and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,
The damned shall groan : fire of all kinds and forms
In rain and hail, in hurricanes and storms,
Liquid and solid, livid, red, and pale ;
A flaming mountain here, and there a flaming vale.
The liquid fire makes seas ; the solid shores ;
Arched o'er with flames the horrid concave roars.
All hell is fire — above, beside, below,
Fires or in hard metallic substance glow
Or spout in cataracts or in rivers flow,
In bubbling eddies rolls the fiery tide,
And sulphurous surges on each other ride.

The hollow winding vaults, and dens and caves,
Bellow like furnaces with flaming waves.
Pillars of flame in spiral volumes rise
Like fiery snakes, and lick the infernal skies.
Sulphur, the eternal fuel, unconsumed,
Vomits rebounding smoke, thick, unillumed.

CHAPTER V.

SOME PECULIAR PROPERTIES OF HELL-FIRE.

THE preceding descriptions, full and astonishing as they are, give after all a very imperfect conception of the fire of hell. It is further represented as possessing several very remarkable characteristics. In the first place it emits no light. The pious Matthew Henry, as he is always called, when speaking of hell, says, "There is fire but no light : it is *utter* darkness : darkness in extremity ; the highest degree of darkness without any remainder, or mixture, or hope of light, nor the least gleam of it." So Prosper speaks of seeing "no light in that fire, but to feel that it burneth." Milton naturally seizes upon a fact so singular, and employs it thus : —

Yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow.

Dr. Trapp, with Milton obviously in mind, has attempted to improve upon him, thus : —

For all that mass of fire projects no light,
But darkness visible, and glaring night ;
Which to the eye serves only to reveal
Sad scenes of woe, and add affright to hell.

St. Theresa, who had often been in hell, also says :
“ There was not the least light there, but only the thickest,
blackest darkness.”

But what deserves more special notice is the inconceivable intensity and power of the fire of hell. All orthodox writers speak of this. President Edwards always speaks of it as fierce and terrible, and, as we have seen, represents it as inconceivably more penetrating and causing vastly greater pain than we should experience if cast into a great blazing furnace. “ The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in a storm of fire and brimstone,” he says, “ was but a shadow of the destruction of ungodly men in hell, and is no more to it than a shadow or picture is to the reality, or than painted fire is to real fire.” Jeremy Taylor speaks in the same way or to the same purpose. “ Such are the torments and miseries of hell,” he says, “ that if all the trees in the world were put in one heap, and set on fire, I would rather burn there till the day of judgment, than suffer only for the space of one hour that fire of hell.” This doctrine of the intense burning quality of the fire of hell is old. The Catholic Church has enjoyed and inculcated it for ages. She practised burning heretics to such an extent, and many of them bore the suffering so heroically, that our common fires lost

their power of excessively frightening people. But the fire of hell was a very different sort of thing. Many of the Catholic saints enjoyed the privilege of going to hell and seeing it and making themselves acquainted with its torments. Among these, as I have said above, was St. Theresa, who tells us, as the result of her own observation, that the fire of earth is but a picture of the fire in hell. I am glad that I am able to give her own words on this subject. "All I have read or heard about hell," she says, "is as different from the real pains of hell as a picture is different from the thing painted. To be burnt in the fire of this world is a mere nothing, a trifle, compared with being burnt in hell. It is now six years since I saw hell. Yet even now I cannot write about it without feeling my blood frozen with horror. When I think about the pains of hell, all the pains of this world seem to me not worth thinking about."

Painted fire may have an imposing look, but it does not burn. I have before me a very interesting little book by Rev. Michael Müller, published, with the approbation of the Bishop, by Patrick Donahoe, Boston, 1872, which throws great light upon this point. The work is entitled "Charity to Souls in Purgatory." In this book Rev. Mr. Müller says: "The souls in Purgatory are *poor* souls, because they suffer the greatest pain of the senses, which is that of *fire*. Who can be in a poorer or more pitiful condition than those who are buried in fire? Now this is the condition

of these poor souls. They are buried under waves of fire. It is from the smallest spark of this purgatorial fire that they suffer more intense pains than all the fires in the world put together could produce. In this fire they suffer more than all the pains of distempers and the most violent diseases ; they suffer more than all the most cruel torments undergone by malefactors or invented by the most barbarous tyrants ; they suffer more than all the tortures of the martyrs summed up together. Could these poor souls leave the fire of Purgatory for the most frightful earthly fire, they would, as it were, take it for a pleasure-garden ; they would find a fifty years' stay in the hottest earthly fire more endurable than an hour's stay in the fire of Purgatory. Our terrestrial fire was not created by God to torment men, but rather to benefit them ; but the fire in Purgatory was created for no other purpose than to be the instrument of God's justice, and for this reason it is possessed of a burning quality so intense and penetrating that it is impossible for us to conceive of it even the faintest idea !”

And this, the reader will observe, is only the fire of Purgatory, which is the place in which God's saints expiate, by suffering, such sins as chance to cling to them at the moment of death. What, then, should we reasonably suppose the fire of hell itself to be,—hell, where God vindicates his infinite justice against rebels and enemies? What but something “inexpressible and

inconceivable," as President Edwards would say? I am so fortunate as to have in our Historical Library a little Catholic tract, prepared by Father Furniss, of Ireland, for the instruction of *children*, and published *permissu superiorum* (by permission of his superiors) and consequently with their approbation. It bears the rather startling title of "Sight of Hell," with the imprint of both Dublin and London. And I beg to say that, after reading a great many orthodox tracts and books on the subject of hell and its torments, some of which seemed bad enough, I can conscientiously aver that this is the worst, and for thorough-going devilishness, in conception and execution, surpasses anything I could imagine. For grossness of representation, it would do honor to a Modoc Indian. Besides, it is a tissue of lies from beginning to end, and lies so enormous, so transcendent, and withal so abominable, that it is amazing that any man, and least of all a professed minister of the gospel, could write them out; and more amazing still that any church could publish them, or permit them to be published, for the education of children.

In this little tract Father Furniss, to show the terrible intensity of the fire of hell, says: "Take a spark out of the kitchen fire, throw it into the sea, and it will go out. Take a little spark out of hell, less than a pin-head, throw it into the sea, and it will not go out. In one moment it would dry up the waters of the ocean, and set the whole world on a blaze."

Such amazing intensity in the fire of hell naturally suggests some difficulties. If a spark of it, less than a pin-head, would thus dry up the ocean in a moment and set the whole world on a blaze, as Father Furniss affirms, and as Jeremy Taylor leaves us to infer, how is a human body to withstand its fury for a single hour, to say nothing of eternity? To solve this mystery, two dissimilar theories have been adopted. The first and the oldest attempts to explain the difficulty by assuming that hell-fire possesses the remarkable property of burning without destroying, or rather of repairing as fast as it burns.

This is an old doctrine of the Church ; and it would be interesting to trace it back through the ages, and see whence it came and how it has been employed. There was a notion among the ancients, we know, that there are two distinct kinds of fire, — one, that we are familiar with, and the other, of which we see the effects, but know little or nothing of its nature. Thus it was supposed that volcanic fire differed from common fire, because, as they said, volcanic mountains were always burning, and yet were never consumed. So lightning was supposed to possess some singular properties, as Tertullian informs us : “As the philosophers know the difference between the secret fire and common fire, so that fire is of one kind which we make use of, and that of another that serveth the judgment of God, whether it pierce or strike through the clouds of heaven in thunder, or break out of the earth

through the tops of the mountains. For this doth not consume what it burneth, but repaireth what it preys upon ; so that the mountains which always burn remain, and he that is struck with fire from heaven is not to be reduced to ashes by any other fire. And this may be a testimony of the eternal fire ; this one example of that fire which continually nourisheth and preserveth those that are punished by it. The mountains burn and endure, and why not the guilty and enemies of God ? ”

Minucius Felix entertained the same opinion, then thought to be wise, but now known to be false and foolish. He calls the fire of hell *sapiens ignis*, a wise or discriminating fire, and tells us that “ it burns and yet restores, gnaws away and still sustains.” Lactantius in like manner assures us, that “ the same divine fire by one and the same force and potency both burns the wicked and re-creates them, and as much as it consumes of their bodies so much it restores, and supplies the eternal food for itself : which the poets transferred to the vulture of Tityus ; thus it only burns, without any loss to the bodies always growing again, and affects with a sense of pain.” And our eminently orthodox poet, Robert Pollock, seems to have adopted the same opinion : —

Through all that dungeon of unfading fire
I saw most miserable beings walk,
Burning continually, yet unconsumed ;
Forever wasting, yet enduring still ;
Dying perpetually, yet never dead.

Lactantius proceeds to tell us how this "knowing fire," while it torments the wicked, has no power to touch the righteous. "So great is the efficacy of innocence," he says, "that fire flies harmless from it." It not only distinguishes, as he and many others teach, between the good and the evil, but it is also able to adjust its severity to the peculiar moral status of every individual. Those who are remarkable for the greatness or the number of their sins are in a corresponding degree touched and burned by this discriminating fire. This is still the doctrine of the Catholic Church. Vicar-General Preston, quoted above, speaks of power being given it "to burn and not consume."

The other method of preserving bodies in this intense fire through all eternity is not less remarkable. In one case God gives a most wonderful power to fire; in the other, as we shall see, he confers quite as wonderful a nature upon human bodies. Augustine discussed this subject in his *De Civitate Dei*, and came to this conclusion: "I have before disputed," he says, "that animals may live in fire, burning without being consumed, in pain without dissolution, by the miraculous appointment of our almighty Creator. And he who denieth that this is possible with him knoweth not who it is that doeth everything that is wonderful in all natures."

The learned Jesuit, Drexelius, who had evidently been reading Augustine, caught his idea, and applied it in a

similar way. He first referred to asbestos, which, he says, "being once set on fire, burneth continually;" and there is no difficulty in God's converting the bodies of the damned into asbestos, or something analogous to it. But he found an illustration more apposite to his purpose in the salamander, to which Augustine had directed his attention. "This creature," says the good-natured Jesuit, "is generated of showers, and consequently of a very cold nature; the sun or drought immediately kills it. According to Pliny, it lives in the fire like ice. Of its skin can be made lights for perpetual lamps, which are always burning. The good God who created the salamander out of earth and clay, from the very same matter gave being unto man, but he endowed him with a nobler nature. But man, by his wickedness, has made himself such a *salamander*, who must always live and always die in flames eternal."

Our Protestant friend, Rev. John Whittaker, in his work on "the four last things," Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell, tells us that when the damned are cast into hell, "they find their bodies now fitted for the first time to resist all the consuming powers of fire, but are as much alive as ever to all the painful violences of it. Their bodies are now, as our Savior declared they should be, 'all salted with fire;' all so tempered and prepared as to burn the more fiercely, and yet never consume." The pious Dr. Goodwin assures us that "in hell their bodies

shall be nealed [annealed], as we speak of glass, that they may endure this fire."

In one or the other of these ways, then, either by miraculously fitting the bodies of the damned so as to render them indestructible, or by miraculously fitting the fire so that it shall restore as fast as it consumes, orthodoxy considerately prepares for an endless existence and endless tortures in hell-fire.

CHAPTER VI.

FIRE AND FROST.

BUT fire, in the opinion of some, is only a part of the punishment which the damned in hell suffer. And one of the refinements of cruelty which orthodoxy has invented to increase the torments of the wretches, lying forever under the curse of God, is their frequent and sudden transition from excessive heat to equally excessive cold. We can easily conceive something, though very imperfectly no doubt, what a painful effect this would produce. "The sense of touching," says Jeremy Taylor, "as it is the most extended sense of all the rest, so it shall be the most tormented in that burning fire : all the torments, which the Scripture doth exhibit to us as prepared for the reprobate, seem to fall upon this only sense : 'They shall pass,' saith Job, 'from extremity of cold to intolerable heats ;' whole floods of fire and brimstone, which shall shower down upon these unfortunate wretches. All this belongs unto the sense of touching." The passage here quoted from the book of Job is not found in our English Bibles, but occurs in the Latin Vulgate,

(chap. xxiv. 19), whence Jeremy Taylor evidently translated it. In the English version we have nothing like it, but read : "Drought and heat consume the snow waters ; so doth the grave those that have sinned."

Whether the notion of increasing the miseries of the damned by these alternations from cold to heat and from heat to cold was suggested by the Latin version of Job, as Jeremy Taylor seems to have thought ; or whether it may have been derived from the expression of our Savior, "weeping and gnashing of teeth," or *chattering* of teeth, as Dr. Adam Clarke seems to think ; or, finally, whether it was derived from some other source, it is now impossible to say. "The words" (of our Savior), says Dr. Clarke, "convey the idea, not only of extreme anguish, but of extreme cold. Some have imagined that the punishment of the damned consists in sudden transitions from extreme heat to extreme cold ; the extremes of both I have found to produce exactly the same sensation." Father Müller, in his book on Purgatory, before quoted, tells us soberly that a very honest Englishman, by the name of Drathelmus, having died, was permitted, by special grace, to return to the world again, "for the conversion of many," and reported that that place of divine justice was provided with fire on one side, and snow and ice on the other ; so that the inmates of Purgatory could be conveniently translated from one to the other. "And I saw," said Drathelmus, "a great number of souls horribly tor-

mented, being tossed from the fires to the snows, and from the snows to the fires, thus passing from the most extreme cold to the most extreme heat, without a moment of rest." Father Müller finds this account in the works of the venerable Beda, and, as he was an Englishman as well as Drathelmus, who witnessed this whole transaction, what reason have we for doubting its truth? Besides, Milton, whose authority here is equal to that of Beda or Drathelmus himself, in his description of hell, says : —

Beyond this flood a frozen continent
Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms
Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm land
Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin seems
Of ancient pile; all else deep snow and ice
Of gulf profound.

The parching air
Burns froze, and cold performs the effect of fire.
Thither by harpy-footed furies haled,
At certain revolutions all the damned
Are brought; and feel by turns the bitter change
Of fierce extremes — extremes by change more fierce —
From beds of raging fire, to starve in ice
Their soft ethereal warmth, and then to pine
Immovable infixed, and frozen round,
Periods of time, thence hurried back to fire.

It seems, however, that Christians are not the only people who enjoy the faith of this ingenious torment. The Hindoos, according to Dr. Adam Clarke, have it in their theology, as well as our religious neighbors in theirs; and it is by no means certain that we are not, after all, indebted to them for its invention, as we undoubtedly are

for other things, as the grand institution of monks and nuns, and some very interesting features of our fashionable philosophy. In the Institutes of Menu occurs the following passage, which I quote from Dr. Clarke : "The wicked shall have a sensation of agony in Tamisra, or *utter darkness*, and in other seats of horror ; in Asipatri-vana, or the *sword-leaved forest*, and different places of binding fast and rending, multifarious tortures await them ; they shall be mangled by ravens and owls ; and shall swallow cakes boiling hot, and shall walk over inflamed sands, and shall feel the pangs of being baked like the vessels of a potter. They shall assume the forms of beasts continually miserable, and suffer afflictions from extremities of cold and heat, surrounded with terrors of various kinds. They shall have old age without resource ; diseases attended with anguish ; pangs of innumerable sorts ; and, lastly, unconquerable death." Dr. Clarke also quotes an expression from the Persian Zend-Avesta, in which hell is represented as "the places of darkness, the germs of the thickest darkness ;" and he then asks with intense interest : "And is this, or anything as *bad* as this, Hell?" To this question he returns the emphatic answer : "Yes ; and *worse* than the *worst* of all that has been already mentioned. Hear Christ himself : *Their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched*. Great God, save the reader from this damnation !" Fortunately, like our other orthodox friends, Dr. Clarke himself was safe.

Thus, on the most orthodox grounds, we are forced to the conclusion that, bad as any pagan hell may be, that of the Christian is unspeakably worse. Let heathen philosophers and poets exert their highest powers in picturing a place of misery and describing its most horrible torments, and the simplest Christian, with the New Testament in his hand, can infinitely surpass them all ! If the gospel reveals a grace, a goodness, a love, that have been the admiration of the best men the world ever saw ; if it discloses a moral government vastly superior to that of all other religions, — it also makes known a hell for a part of mankind that, in the severity of its torments and in its multiplied and aggravated horrors, far transcends everything the heathen world was ever able to invent, or seems to have entered the realm of their wildest thought. Of this we shall have frequent illustrations !

CHAPTER VII.

OTHER MEANS OF TORTURE.

WITHOUT for a moment forgetting the power of fire to inflict the most intense pain upon sensitive natures, the advocates of endless punishment find many other sources of exquisite torment, and sources fitted to every sense, and indeed every faculty, of our being. "Who," exclaims Jeremy Taylor, "can express the number and greatness of their torments, since all their powers and senses, soul and body, shall suffer in the most violent manner! Besides this, every sense, from its particular object, shall receive a particular punishment." Rev. Christopher Love goes still further, and assures us that, as to the variety of these torments, "there is not one way, but a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand ways to torment you. Indeed, were you sick here, it may be you should have but one kind of disease upon you at once; it may be stone, it may be plague, or some other disease, but you have not variety. But in hell there is not one kind, but variety to torment you; there is unquenchable fire to burn you, a lake of

brimstone to choke you, eternal chains to tie you, utter darkness to affright you, and a worm of conscience to gnaw you : variety of torments hath the Lord made to meet upon one man ; and this makes the torments of hell to be dismal indeed. There is not only variety, but universality of torments, not only many kinds, but these torments shall universally afflict both body and soul, all the parts of the body, and all the powers of the soul ; and this makes the torments of hell more dreadful."

Under this head Jeremy Taylor is particularly full and explicit. He describes the various tortures fitted to affect our several senses of sight, hearing, tasting, and smelling, and generally illustrates his subject by examples drawn from history, in which tyrants, and human monsters, the most revengeful and cruel of our race, have exhibited their ingenuity and their barbarities and injustice by devising and inflicting the most horrible torments on their fellow-creatures ; and what is most amazing, he does not hesitate to compare these torments with those God is about to inflict in hell, and in every case to show that God will infinitely outdo them all !

Thus the eye is not only tormented with the heat and smoke of hell, but vision is made a means of special anguish and torture. "Many," says he, "are affrighted very much, passing through a churchyard, only for fear of seeing a phantasm ; in what a fright will be a miserable damned soul, which shall see so many, and of so

many horrid shapes ! Their sight shall also be tormented with beholding the punishment of their friends and kindred. Hegesippus writes that Alexander, the son of Hyrcanus, resolving to punish certain persons with exemplary rigor, caused eight hundred to be crucified, and, whilst they were yet alive, caused their wives and children to be murdered before their eyes, that so they might die not once, but many deaths. This rigor shall not be wanting in hell, where fathers shall see their sons, and brothers their brothers, tormented. The torment of the eyes shall be also very great, in regard that those which have given others scandal, and made others fall into sin, shall see themselves and those others in that abyss of torments. To the sight of those dreadful apparitions shall be added the horrors and fearful darkness of the place. The darkness of Egypt was said to be horrible, because there the Egyptians beheld fearful figures and phantasms, which terrified them. In the like manner, in that infernal darkness the eyes shall be tormented with the monstrous figures of the wicked spirits, which shall appear much more dreadful by reason of the obscurity of that eternal night." "The eye," says Rev. Christopher Love, "it shall be tormented with the sight of devils." St. Theresa, to whom I have before appealed in respect to these matters, tells us that while in hell all is the thickest and blackest darkness, "yet somehow or other, I know not how, you see there whatever is dreadful

and terrible. God did not allow me to see more of hell at that time, but afterwards he let me see other much more frightful torments for particular sins. I could not understand in what manner these things were seen by me."

Neither Jeremy Taylor, nor any one of our Protestant authors, gives us any description of the devils. That they are of very horrid and frightful shapes, appears certain, but beyond this they do not assume to go. Our Catholic neighbors are better informed, as members of the true Church have a right to be, and are also more communicative. Father Furniss gratifies our curiosity to some extent. After giving some very definite information about hell, its location, fire, and other circumstances, he takes his children, for whom he wrote, to see the Devil! "Our journey," he says, "lies across that great sea of fire. We must go on till we come to the middle of hell. There we shall see the most horrible sight that ever was or will be — the great devil, chained down in the middle of hell. We will set off on our journey. Now we are coming near the dwelling-place of Satan! The darkness gets thicker. You see a great number of devils moving about in the thick darkness. They come to get the orders of their great chief. Already you hear the rattling of the tremendous chains of the great monster! See! there he is — the most horrid and abominable of all monsters, the devil. His size is immense. St. Francis saw him. He

was sitting on a long beam which passed through the middle of hell. His feet went down into the lowest depths of hell. They rested on the floor of hell. They were fastened with great, heavy iron chains. These chains were fixed to an immense ring in the floor, and his hands were chained up to the roof. One of his hands was turned up against heaven, to blaspheme God, and the saints who dwell there. His other hand was stretched out, pointing to the lowest hell. His tremendous and horrible head was raised up on high, and touched the roof. From his head came two immense horns. From each horn smaller horns, without number, branched out, which, like chimneys, sent out fire and smoke. His enormous mouth was wide open. Out of it there was running a river of fire, which gave no light, but a most abominable smell. Round his neck was a collar of red-hot iron. A burning chain tied him about the middle. The ugliness of his face was such that no man or devil could bear it. It was the most deformed, horrible, frightful thing that ever was or will be. His great, fierce eyes were filled with pride, and anger, and rage, and spite, and blood, and fire, and savage cruelty. There was something else in those eyes for which there is no name, but it made those on whom the devil's eyes were fixed tremble and shake as if they were dying. One of the saints who saw the devil said she would rather be burnt for a thousand years than look at the devil for one moment."

For the education of Christian children, toward the close of the nineteenth century of grace, this I think not a little remarkable. For a church boasting itself to be the ground and pillar of the truth, inspired, and blessed with an infallible Head, it is profoundly amazing and profoundly humiliating. What interest of truth and righteousness, of piety or virtue, is to be subserved by such ineffable folly and falsehood, it is impossible to imagine. It is a disgrace to our common Christianity and the age.

But our poets on this point are quite as strong and clear as the divines themselves. Milton calls the darkness of hell "darkness visible," and represents it as fit only

To discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell.

In matters of orthodox theology Rev. Dr. Trapp is more in his proper element than even Milton, as will appear in the following lines : —

For all that mass of fire projects no light,
But darkness visible, and glaring night ;
Which to the eye serves only to reveal
Sad scenes of woe, and add affright to hell.
Pale phantoms, hideous spectres, shapes which scare
The damned themselves, and terrify despair ;
" Gorgons and Harpys, and Chimeras dire,"
And swarms of twisted serpents hissing fire.

The ear in like manner, says Jeremy Taylor, " shall not only be afflicted by an intolerable pain caused by that

ever burning and penetrating fire, but also with the fearful and amazing noises of thunders, howlings, clamors, groans, curses, and blasphemies. Sylla, being dictator, caused six thousand persons to be enclosed in the circus, and then appointing the senate to meet in a temple close by, where he intended to speak unto them about his own affairs, and make them know he was their master, he gave order that so soon as he began his oration, the soldiers should kill this multitude of people, which was effected; upon which were heard such lamentations, outcries, groans, clashing of armor, and blows of those merciless homicides, that the senate could not hear a word, but stood amazed with terror of so horrid a fact. What shall be the harmony of hell, where the ears shall be deafened with the cries and complaints of the damned! What confusion and horror shall it breed, to hear all lament, all complain, all curse, all blaspheme through the bitterness of the torments which they suffer! But the damned shall principally be affrighted, and shall quake to hear the thunder-clap of the wrath of God, which shall continually resound in their ears." So Christopher Love says: "The ear shall be tormented with the yellings, and hideous outcries of the damned in flames." In like manner Dr. Trapp hears nothing in hell but

Clattering of iron, and the clank of chains,
The clang of lashing whips, shrill shrieks and groans,
Loud ceaseless howlings, cries and piercing moans.

In like manner Dr. Young makes the damned in hell speak of it as a place

Where shrieks, the roaring flame, the rattling chain,
And all the dreadful eloquence of pain
Our only good.

“You have heard, perhaps, a horrible scream in the dead of night,” says Father Furniss, “but listen now, — listen to the tremendous, the horrible uproar of millions and millions and millions of tormented creatures mad with the fury of hell. Oh, the screams of fear, the groanings of horror, the yells of rage, the cries of pain, the shouts of agony, the shrieks of despair, from millions on millions. There you hear them roaring like lions, hissing like serpents, howling like dogs, and wailing like dragons. There you hear the gnashing of teeth, and the fearful blasphemies of the devils. Above all you hear the roaring of the thunders of God’s anger, which shakes hell to its foundations.”

In a similar way the sense of taste is to be offended and tormented. “What shall I say of the tongue,” asks Jeremy Taylor, “which is the instrument of so many ways of sinning, flattery, lying, murmuring, calumniating, gluttony, and drunkenness? Who can express the bitterness which the damned shall suffer, greater than that of aloes and wormwood? The Scripture tells us the gall of dragons shall be their wine; and they shall taste the poison of asps for all eternity, unto which shall be joined an intolerable

thirst and a dog-like hunger. Famine is the most pressing of all necessities, and most deformed of all evils ; plagues and war are happiness to it. If hunger be so terrible a mischief in this life, how will it afflict the damned in the other ! Without all doubt the damned would rather tear themselves in pieces than suffer it ; all the most horrible famines that Scripture histories propose unto us are but weak pictures to that which the damned suffer in this unfortunate residence of eternal miseries ; neither shall thirst torment them less." Drexelius thus describes the change in the condition of the rich man : "How strangely is his condition altered ! Instead of a lofty bed of down, on which he was wont to repose himself, he now lies frying in the flames ; his sparkling wine and delicious dainties are taken from him ; he is burnt up with thirst, and has nothing for his food but smoke and sulphur !" "The beggar," says St. Augustine, "purchased blessedness by his poverty, the rich man bought punishment with his wealth. The former was raised by angels to Abraham's bosom, the latter was taken to the depths of hell. The whole body of the rich man was burned in the flames of hell, but his tongue alone beyond doubt was more especially tormented ; because by this he had spoken proudly and contemned the beggar. For that tongue, which had been unwilling to command that alms should be given to the beggar, is now severely tortured in the flames of Gehenna. O Dives, with what face canst thou

ask for a drop of water, who wert unwilling to give a crumb? If thou hadst given, justly mightest thou require."

Finally, we come to the sense of smell. "The nostrils," says Christopher Love, "shall be smothered with brimstone to choke you." The sense of smell, says Jeremy Taylor, "shall be tormented with the most pestilential stink. Horrible was that torment used by Mezentius, to tie a living body to a dead and then to leave them until the infection and putrid exhalations of the dead killed the living! What can be more abominable than for a living man to have his mouth laid close to that of a dead one, full of grubs and worms, where the living must receive all those pestilential vapors breathed forth from a corrupt carcass, and suffer such loathsomeness and abominable stink? But what is this in respect to hell, where each body of the damned is more loathsome and unsavory than a million of dead dogs, and all these pressed and crowded together in so strait a compass? Bonaventure goes so far as to say that if only one of the damned were brought into this world, it were sufficient to infect the whole earth! Neither do the devils send forth a better smell. Hell is the world's sink, and the receptacle of all the filth in this great frame, and withal a deep dungeon, where the air hath no access. How great must the stink and infection needs be of so many corruptions heaped one upon another! and oh, how insufferable the smell of that infernal brim-

stone mixed with so many corrupted matters ! O gulf of horrors ! O infernal grave ! without vent or breathing-place !” Milton, it may be remembered, also speaks of the stench and smoke of hell. St. Theresa, who often had the opportunity of going personally to hell, tells us that “the entrance to hell seemed like a long narrow passage, or a low dark oven. The floor was very filthy, and the smell which came from it was abominable.” “What is the smell of death in hell?” asks Father Furniss. “St. Bonaventure says that if one single body was taken out of hell, and laid on the earth, in that same moment every living creature on the earth would sicken and die. Such is the smell of death from one body in hell. What then will be the smell of death from countless millions and millions of bodies laid in hell as sheep ! How will the horrible smell of all these bodies be, after it has been getting worse and worse for ten thousand years?”

CHAPTER VIII.

SOME ACCESSORY TORMENTS.

BESIDES the torments already mentioned there are others which may properly be considered as accessory, and of course more or less aggravate the miseries of the damned. As it has been the constant object of the advocates of endless punishment to make its torments as frightful as possible, so their ingenuity has been employed in inventing whatever could in any way add to the wretchedness of "the finally impenitent." To those on the left hand the Savior said, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

From this it has been inferred, perhaps somewhat hastily, that the damned of the human race are to be associated in punishment with the devil and his angels; that they are to occupy the same hell, and suffer the same miseries. This circumstance, I need not say, has led to many speculations and conceits about this society, and the relations the devils will hold to the wicked in hell, and the offices they may have to perform. Although the wicked

are called children of the devil, the common opinion is that the devil is an unnatural father, and that he finds his only delight in seducing mortals into sin here, and in the world to come will gratify his malignant nature by tormenting those whom he has first ruined. This being assumed, it is naturally inferred that the wicked are not only to suffer the pains of everlasting fire with the devil and his angels, but will be left to suffer many, and perhaps inconceivable, torments inflicted directly by the presence and enmity of the devils themselves. On this point most writers speak, and some dwell, with more or less earnestness and effect. Rev. Christopher Love says: "The society with whom you are tormented, that makes hell-torments to be most grievous and dreadful. But all the company you have in hell are only devils and damned spirits. The consideration of the cruelty of those whom God hath ordained to be your tormentors in hell will make hell-torments to be grievous. And who are they? Why, the devils are called your tormentors: they torment wicked men; the devils are the greater tormentors of souls." "If the damned had no other punishment," says Jeremy Taylor, "than to see themselves banished amongst devils, into a place not far from heaven, sad as night, without the sight or comfort of sun or moon, for all eternity, it were a torment insufferable. The tyrants of Japonica invented a strange torment for those who confessed Christ: they hung them with their heads downwards, half their bodies

into a hole digged in the earth, which they filled with snakes, lizards, and other poisonous vermin ; but even those were better companions than those infernal dragons of the pit of hell, whereunto not half but the whole body of the miserable sinner shall be plunged. The Romans, when they punished any parricide, to express the heinousness of the fact, shut him up in a sack with a serpent, an ape, and a cock ; what a horror shall it be in hell when a damned person shall be shut up with so many millions of devils." " Evil angels, wicked and unclean spirits," says Dr. Watts, " with all their furious dispositions and active powers, will increase the misery of the damned. They paved the way to hell for man by the first temptation of our parents in Paradise, and they have been ever since busy in tempting the children of men to sin, and they will be hereafter busy in giving them torment."

Father Furniss, in his little tract on " The Sight of Hell," tells us, on the authority of St. Theresa, that there are two kinds of devils,—one the striking devils, and the other the mocking devils. The striking devils torment their victims by cruel beatings and continual whippings, as Jeremy Taylor says. Father Furniss says : " The devil gave Job one stroke, and it was so terrible that his whole body was instantly covered with sores and ulcers. Little child," he adds, " if you go to hell, there will be a devil at your side to strike you. He will go on striking you every mo-

ment forever and ever, without ever stopping. The first stroke will make your body as bad as the body of Job, covered from head to foot with sores and ulcers. The second stroke will make your body twice as bad as the body of Job. The third stroke will make your body three times as bad as the body of Job. The fourth stroke will make your body four times as bad as the body of Job. How, then, will your body be after the devil has been striking it every moment for a hundred million of years without stopping?" The mocking devil, on the other side, simply amused himself and comforted his friend, as many good people do here in this world, by perpetually saying, *I told you so*. "Remember where you are, and where you will be forever; how short the sin was, how long the punishment. It is your own fault."

Our theological poets have not failed to avail themselves of a fact so important as this. Dr. Trapp exhibits it in the following vivid manner: —

Meanwhile, as if but light were all these pains,
Legions of devils, bound themselves in chains,
Tormented and tormentors, o'er them shake
Thongs, and forked iron, in the burning lake,
Belching infernal flames, and wreathed with spires
Of curling serpents rouse the brimstone fires;
With whips of fiery scorpions scourge their slaves,
And in their faces dash the livid waves.

Another aggravation in the torments of the damned, upon which many insist, is the rigid confinement to which

they are subjected. The Apostle speaks of the angels that kept not their station as being bound in chains of darkness. It is a common circumstance with all the guilty awaiting trial or punishment, to be bound or in some form restrained of their liberty. But the damned are represented as suffering intolerable pains from this confinement. Jeremy Taylor says : "The bodies of the damned, after the judgment past, shall be so straitened and crowded together in that infernal dungeon that the Holy Scripture compares them to grapes in a wine-press, which press one another till they burst." And so says President Edwards : "They shall be cast into the wine-press of the wrath of God, where they shall be pressed down with wrath as grapes are pressed in a wine-press. God will then make appear in their misery how terrible his wrath is, that men and angels may know how much more dreadful the wrath of God is than the wrath of kings or any other creatures. They shall know what God can do towards his enemies, and how fearful a thing it is to provoke him to anger." The Rev. Isaac Ambrose, who was a famous preacher in his day, has a sermon, as I remember, on the words of our Savior respecting the tares, "Bind them in bundles to burn them," which he made very instructive. In the first place they were to be bound "in bundles," each class of sinners by itself. As Matthew Henry says : "Sinners of the same sort will be bundled together in the great day ; a bundle of atheists, a bundle of epicures, and a great bundle

of hypocrites. Those who have been associated in sin will be associated in shame and sorrow, and it will be an aggravation of their misery." This is an old doctrine, and can be traced back many ages. Jeremy Taylor always finds an illustration of some barbarous character, and unfortunately always concludes that the torments of hell must be vastly worse than the most cruel of mortals ever conceived or had the power to execute. "Most barbarous," he says, "was that torment inflicted upon some unfortunate persons : they put certain rings of iron, stuck full of sharp points of needles, about their arms and feet, in such manner as they could not move without pricking and wounding themselves : then they compassed them about with fire, to the end that standing still they might be burnt alive ; and if they stirred, the sharp points pierced their flesh with more intolerable pains than fire. What then shall be the torment of the damned, when they shall lie eternally without dying and without possibility of removing from the place designed them?" Rev. Mr. Ambrose imagined they would be so closely bound that they could not move a limb, nor a muscle, not even of the eyelid ; and that they would not only be bound in bundles, but packed together like bricks in a kiln ; and while in this helpless and immovable position the breath of God should blow the fires of hell through and through them, as the fire penetrates every part of the kiln and finally every particle matter in it. It is not easy for us to conceive the horror

of such a situation. "If an angel," says Jeremy Taylor, "should promise thee to be made an emperor, so you would lie in your bed one night in the same posture, looking upwards towards heaven, how comes it to pass that thou canst not rest one single night ; it being such a torture to be still, without turning thyself? What would it be if thou wert to remain in one position three or four nights? Thou hast little patience, since a thing so small doth grieve thee. Far greater evils than these are prepared for thee in hell, whither thou postest by running into so many sins. Consider what a couch is prepared for thee in that abyss of misery ; what feather-bed ; what Holland sheets ! Thou shalt be cast upon burning coals, flames and sulphur shall be thy coverlets. Mark well, whether this bed be for one night only. Yea, nights, days, months, and years, for ages and eternities, thou art to remain on that side thou fallest on, without having the least relief to turn thyself to the other."

The learned Jesuit, Cornelius à Lapide, entertains the same opinion and has expressed it in his commentary very clearly. "The wicked," he says, "*compingentur sicut halices et pisces in vase* (are packed like pickles and fish in a cask)." And this seems to have suggested to this learned writer to inquire into the magnitude of hell, which he fortunately found means of determining in the Revelation of St. John, xiv. 20, and soberly informs us that it is a cube in form and just two hundred Italian miles on a side ; and

hence concludes with reason, that, packed as he supposes, it has capacity sufficient to hold "*multa milena millia millionum damnatorum* (many thousand thousands of millions of the damned) !" And there is evident need of such dimensions in the world of woe, for if the teachings of orthodoxy prove true, it is to be the final abode of far the larger part of the human family.

It hardly need be observed that since the torments of hell are of so many kinds, we should not expect any great uniformity of representation, or indeed any strict consistency of statement. One author takes one view of the subject, and another another. To one mind this particular form of punishment commends itself as most proper or most effective, and to another that ; and not unfrequently does the same person at different times, or perhaps under different moods of feeling, use terms that are quite inconsistent with each other. While one writer, for instance, represents the damned as bound hand and foot, another speaks of them as being relatively free within the limits of hell. Thus Pollock says, —

Some wandered lonely in the desert flames,
And some in fierce encounter fiercely met.

Father Furniss, following St. Theresa, has hell filled with narrow cells where many of the damned suffer some special torment alone. One girl is standing barefooted forever upon a red-hot floor : a little child is in a red-hot

oven : a boy's blood in his veins, his brain, and the very marrow of his bones, is boiling and hissing like a boiling teakettle : the rich man of the Parable is smothering in a close coffin of solid fire, while others are tortured in various other ways. Father Furniss possesses an active and vigorous imagination which seems admirably fitted for his work, and if the horrors of hell have any moral virtue all Ireland should presently be redeemed and regenerated.

It cannot be necessary to pursue this branch of our subject further. I have spoken only of what might be called the physical sufferings of hell, and have only glanced at some of the more prominent of these, and have necessarily omitted much said in ancient and modern times that would aid in filling out the terrible picture ; but, lest the description become tedious, I will only add, in the words of President Edwards, that "every part of the body shall be filled with fire. After the resurrection the body shall be cast into that great furnace, which shall be so great as to burn up the whole world. These lower heavens, this air and this earth, shall become one great furnace ; a furnace that shall burn the earth, even to its very centre. In this furnace shall the bodies of the wicked lie to all eternity, and yet live, and have their sense of pain and torment not at all diminished. Oh, how full will the heart, the vitals, the brain, the eyes, the tongue, the hands, the feet, be of fire ; of this fire of such inconceivable fierceness !

How full will every member and every vein and every sinew be of this fire !” In the realm of the physical, I do not see how one can go beyond this. Father Furniss may be more specific ; but for comprehensiveness and a great sweeping horror, let me commend our able American metaphysician and theologian.

CHAPTER IX.

QUITE ANOTHER CLASS OF SUFFERINGS.

THUS far, as the reader will remark, I have exhibited only those torments which may be said to belong to our sensitive and animal nature, and most of which could be suffered by a brute as well as a man. Fire will burn, and sights and sounds of horror will frighten an ox or a horse as really, though perhaps not in precisely the same way or to the same extent, as they would a human being. These animals can see and feel, taste and smell and hear, and hence could suffer in hell or elsewhere somewhat as we should.

But man possesses another class of faculties that belong to him alone, — faculties of a higher order, which are connected with his spiritual nature ; such as reason, conscience, religious and social affections, memory, hope, and fear. In these he can be hurt as truly and perhaps as deeply as through his bodily senses. The pain is different of course, but hardly less distressing. Men sometimes experience such calamities — loss of friends, reputation,

wealth — as to occasion so much pain as to rob life of its ordinary satisfactions, make existence here a burden, and death a welcome guest.

Of these various miseries of which our spiritual nature is susceptible, the advocates of endless punishment have not been wholly unmindful, though it must be confessed, I think, that they have been urged with less frequency and power than those of a merely sensuous character. This may be accounted for, no doubt, by two or three rather obvious considerations. In the first place, the terms in which the doctrine of endless punishment is supposed to be inculcated in the Holy Scriptures are uniformly, or almost uniformly, of this outward and sensible kind, such as fire, furnace of fire, Gehenna of fire, lake of fire and brimstone, darkness, chains of darkness, and the like. This would naturally suggest material punishments to the thoughts and speech of men. Then, in the second place, there can be no doubt, I presume, that these outward and material images, suggesting pains and sufferings with which all are more or less familiar, are fitted to make a more immediate and deeper impression upon the masses of men, whether lay or clerical, than those which belong more properly to the higher part of our nature. One who has experienced the pain occasioned by burning the hand or even a finger needs nothing more to aid him in conceiving something of the torment of being cast alive into a furnace filled with raging fire, such as President Edwards

and others have so eloquently enforced. This makes the preaching of these physical pains so easy and sometimes perhaps so effective. Coarse uncultivated men can without difficulty proclaim such punishments, and people of the same class understand them. It is, however, a problem how President Edwards, Jeremy Taylor, and some others that might be named, who were neither coarse nor uncultivated, should have dwelt so much upon these merely physical tortures, and insisted little in comparison, it seems, upon those that belong to man as an intellectual and moral being. Not, indeed, that either of these eminent preachers has wholly overlooked or neglected what addresses itself to the better side of our nature, but that the physical is made, or appears, so much more prominent and striking that it seems almost to overshadow everything else.

If souls may be conceived as entering that "world of woe," bearing with them their reason, their conscience, their memory, and their better affections, of which no one in this world is wholly destitute, — in one word, if they are to enter there as they leave here, — the consciousness that they "have missed the end of their existence," as Rev. Mr. Oxenham expresses it, that all their hopes are blasted, that even reformation is impossible, and that nothing now lies before them but a dreary waste of being, without object or interest or joy, — would not that alone, were there no material fires, no bodily torments, none of hell's

horrors, soon make a hell sufficient to satisfy our loftiest conceptions of the demands of justice, and ere long render existence itself an intolerable burden? But let us glance at some of these more refined and spiritual sources of misery.

CHAPTER X.

SUFFERINGS OF LOSS.

THE schoolmen divide punishments into those of *sense* and those of *loss*, the *pæna sensus* and *pæna damni*. We have already considered to some extent those of the former class. Among the latter are reckoned the loss of God, the loss of heaven, and consequently the loss of happiness and everything desirable. This is a form of misery that has no physical element in it. It stands connected only with our judgments, our conscience, and our emotions. It is the simple recognition of what is, and what "might have been," — of the present painful fact, and the beautiful ideal, whose reality has forever vanished, and the memory of which remains but to torture us with the sense of its loss. Our writers on the punishments of the world to come generally speak first and chiefly of

1. *The Loss of God.*

They describe this as the greatest, the most deeply felt, of all our spiritual pains. "In hell," says Jeremy Taylor,

“there is the pain of loss, and that so rigorous, that in depriving the damned of one only thing, they take from him all good things ; for they deprive him of God, in whom they are all comprised. He who is condemned by human laws to the loss of his goods may, if he live, gain others, at least in another kingdom, if he fly thither ; but he who is deprived of God, where shall he find another God ? and who can fly from hell ? God is the greatest good, and it is therefore the greatest evil to be deprived of him, because evil is the privation of good ; and that is to be esteemed the greatest evil, which is the privation of the greatest good, which is God ; and must certainly, therefore, cause more grief and resentment in the damned than all the punishments and torments of hell besides.” In a similar strain, Rev. Christopher Love says : “The wicked in hell, they have this loss that they are deprived of and banished from the favorable presence of God. And here saith St. Chrysostom, if there were a thousand worlds, the loss of the favor of God is more than a thousand worlds. It is the greatest torment of a damned man that he is without God. The presence of God makes heaven to be heaven. The absence of God makes hell more hell than it is.” Father Müller tells us, in his little book on Purgatory, that the unfortunate souls in that place of torment feel the intensest desire to see God, and that absence from his presence is one of the bitterest ingredients in their cup of sorrow ; and Father Furniss represents the very devils in

hell as crying out, "I would gladly burn here for millions of years, if I could only see God for one minute!"

All our Protestant confessions and catechisms make "separation from the comfortable presence of God" a part of the miseries of the world to come.

But Dr. Watts seems to look upon this doctrine with some distrust; and it must be confessed to involve questions and difficulties not always recognized, perhaps, nor ever easily solved. "When an impenitent sinner is cast into hell," says Dr. Watts, "we have abundant reason to suppose that the evil tempers of his soul, and the vicious principles within him, are not abated, but his natural powers, and the vices which have tainted them and mingle with them, are awakened and enraged into intense activity under the first sensations of his dreadful punishment."

Now, I need not say that the misfortune and the sin of evil men in the present world is that they have little or no perception of the divine character, and find no pleasure in his society or in meditating upon his perfections and government. On the contrary, the wicked are more inclined to say to God, "Depart from us, for we desire not a knowledge of thy ways." The more effectually they can banish him from their thoughts, the happier they fancy they shall be; and the fool, to make his path less hazardous, says, in his heart, "There is no God." As Dr. Watts says: "Here in this life perhaps a profane wretch has imagined that he could live well enough without God,

and is content to have nothing to do with him in the way of worship or dependence."

From this state of stolid indifference or positive enmity towards God, what has awakened the soul of the damned? He is no longer what he has been. He has come to see, not only that there is a God, but that the ground of his own existence is in him, and that he is essential to his happiness. This is a great change, and a change for the better. It is, in fact, the recognition of the deepest need of his soul, — the first movement toward regeneration and a new life. Till the soul feels this want of alliance with God, whether in this world or the next, the need of something great and good and eternal to which it can attach itself and upon which it can unreservedly depend, it will never truly feel after God nor find him. And when the sense of this need comes to the soul, whether in heaven, earth, or hell, I cannot persuade myself that the Father of souls will be deaf to its cry. He whose first and great command to all creatures in the moral universe is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," can never be indifferent to the feeblest motions of the soul towards obedience to that royal law. But, be this as it may, nothing can be more obvious than the fact that if a soul, upon exchanging worlds, comes to see its relations to God, and feel the need of him, it must have undergone a change analogous to what one here experiences in conversion, — a change at least necessarily ante-

cedent to conversion, and closely connected with it, — and therefore furnishes a complete refutation of the common doctrine that there is no change after death.

2. Sufferings from Loss of Heaven.

In the highest and most important sense, the loss of God, or entire separation from his comfortable presence and aid, must be the loss of heaven, whether here or hereafter. The consciousness of God's love, the feeling of union with him, and that childlike confidence and peace which these convictions produce, make all the heaven we have experienced, or can properly conceive. This is the peace of God that passes all understanding. But in the thought of most Christians heaven is not so much a state of purity and filial love and spiritual joy as it is a place of outward beauty and sensible delights. It is difficult to exchange the gates of pearl and the golden streets of our popular heaven for simple righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Men tell us, therefore, what a loss the soul must suffer by its exclusion from heaven, its glory and its felicities. But in order to feel this loss, let us consider that the sinner must first know something what it is, and be in an intellectual and moral condition to appreciate it. To deprive a savage of the conveniences and refinements of civilized life is no deprivation to him, at least none that he is capable of feeling. Till he has undergone an almost total change in his

views and habits, till he has passed through a long course of education, fitting him to use and enjoy these conveniences and refinements which civilization brings in its train, they would prove a burden rather than a blessing to him. It is so also in respect to what belongs to the moral and spiritual world. Were it possible for a hardened sinner, with his grovelling tastes, inordinate passions, and brutal pleasures, to be translated from earth or hell at once to heaven, where love excludes all hatred, where benevolence transcends all selfishness, and where each finds his own happiness in the happiness of others ; where obedience to duty, personal righteousness, purity, and the worship of a God of all moral excellence, of infinite holiness, is at once the law and the life of all souls, can we imagine our sinner at home and happy there ? The society would be very strange to him. Its spirit would be foreign to all he is familiar with, and though surrounded by the blaze of its imagined glories, he would sigh for his old haunts and his coarse and sinful pleasures. Such a sinner must be converted ; he must be renewed in the temper and spirit of his soul, before the loss of heaven can be any loss to him. And our orthodox friends confess as much. Rev. Mr. Swinden says expressly : “ Though the wicked are not sensible in this life what it is to fall short of heaven, yet after death, after the separation of soul and body, the eye of the understanding shall be opened, and they shall then clearly discover what it is to be shut

out of heaven, to be deprived of the beatific vision, and to lose the fruition of all the glory, splendor, and blessedness of it. They shall then to no purpose incessantly cry, 'Lord, Lord, open to us.' "

But here again we mark a wonderful change in the wicked. In this world they did not wish to hear of heaven. They put the very thought of it away from them. In the next, they are represented as having come to understand the subject better, and to feel an intense anxiety to enjoy what so lately they despised. But have they been brought to this appreciation of heaven and its joys only to torment them? And, having been removed so far from what they were, are we to suppose that they are to go no farther? May we not safely infer that they will not only increase in their knowledge of heavenly things, but also grow into a temper that will fit them to receive and enjoy them? One thing seems ethically clear, that men can nowhere greatly desire and mourn the loss of what they hate. Most writers, therefore, reason on the tacit assumption that the wicked in hell really understand what heaven is, and most keenly feel their deprivation of it. "If Tully did so bewail his banishment from Italy," says Christopher Love, "that every time he looked toward Italy he fell a weeping, and if Demosthenes took his banishment from Athens so heavily that every time he looked that way he fell a weeping, how will the thought of this, that you are banished from heaven, grieve you, if

it should ever be your dismal lot to be cast into hell !” To this add what Jeremy Taylòr says : “ What a grief it will be to see themselves deprived of the palaces of heaven, the society of saints, and the happy country of the living, where all is peace, charity, and joy ; where all shine, all pleases, and all parts resound with hallelujahs ! If the damned had no other punishment than to see themselves banished among devils, into a place not far from heaven, sad as night, without the sight or comfort of the sun or moon for all eternity, it were a torment insufferable.”

We can easily understand how the damned would desire to be freed from the dungeon of hell, as it is here represented, and from the uncomfortable society of devils ; and it is equally easy to understand how they would delight in “ the palaces of heaven ;” but they must undergo a great change before they can find any satisfaction in “ the society of the saints,” or enjoy immoderately their “ hallelujahs.” In a word, heaven and its employments and its pleasures must be greatly changed from what all spiritually minded Christians believe them to be, or sinners must be greatly changed in their tempers and tastes, their habits and life, before they can really desire them or suffer the sense of any essential loss in being deprived of them. How can two walk together except they be agreed ? If sinners ever come to know God and heaven, so as to love them and feel their loss, can we doubt that they must be on the way that leads to them ?

CHAPTER XI.

THE PAINS OF MEMORY.

IF the sinner is to be punished in the future world, as orthodoxy teaches, it must be presupposed that his personal identity is maintained, so that he shall consciously be the same being there he is here, and know that the sins for which he suffers are sins which he himself consciously and wilfully committed. To punish a man who after his crime had become a maniac, would be as impossible in fact as it would be cruel in practice. We might make him suffer any amount of pain, but unless he remembered his sin, and linked it with his suffering, how could it, in any proper sense, be punishment?

That we are to be ourselves in the future world, is what every one believes, who has any notion at all of our immortality. If I perish in death, and God is pleased to create another being like me in the immortal world, what is that to me? And whatever difficulties the metaphysician may have in determining in what our identity consists, nothing is more obvious to our common apprehension than that memory is somehow associated with it.

And we have reason to believe that in the future world this faculty may be much more active and efficient than it is here. There are many psychological facts which tend to prove that under some extraordinary circumstances the memory, quickened and aroused, recalls events long forgotten, and, with a rapidity that is simply amazing, gathers up in a moment the scenes that have filled a lifetime. The story is told of a laborer, who, at work on the steeple of a church or other object of great elevation, accidentally fell, and subsequently related that in the two or three seconds of his fall, which he supposed must end in instant death, he passed in review, as it seemed to him, all the actions of his life, and with a vividness and particularity such as he never experienced before. Similar facts are mentioned in the case of persons drowned, who were subsequently resuscitated. It may be no extravagance to suppose that, when entirely freed from the clogs of the body, the soul in all its faculties may act with far greater ease and effect than now, and that the memory may operate in such a manner as to enable them to take in, with a clearness we little experience in the present life, every event as it passed, and every feeling, thought, and purpose of our souls, so that our whole life, with all its coloring of good and evil, will lie before our minds and in our memories as a nicely lined and tinted map.

“The memory,” says Jeremy Taylor, “shall be another cruel tormentor of those miserable sinners, converting all

they have done, good or bad, into torments: the good, because they have lost their reward; the bad, because they have deserved their punishment: the delights also which they have enjoyed, and all the happiness of this life, in which they have triumphed, (seeing that by them they fell into this misery,) shall be a sharp sword which shall pierce their hearts; they shall be full of affliction, when they shall compare the shortness of their past pleasures with the eternity of their present torments. What groans, what sighs, will they pour out when they see that these delights lasted hardly an instant, and that the pains they suffer for them shall last for ages and eternities; all that is past appearing but as a dream. Let us tremble at the pleasures and felicity of this life, since they may turn into arsenic or wormwood. The miserable wretch shall with great grief remember, how often he might have gained heaven, and did not, but is now tumbled into hell; and shall say unto himself, 'How many times might I have prayed, but spent my time in play; but now I pay for it. How many times ought I to have fasted, but left it to satisfy my greedy appetite. How many times might I have given alms, and spent it in sin. How many times might I have pardoned my enemies, and chose rather to be revenged. How many times might I have frequented the sacraments, and forsook them, because I would not quit the occasion of sinning. There never wanted means of serving God, but I never made

use of them, and am therefore paid for all. Behold, wretched soul, that entertaining thyself in pleasures, thou hast for toys and fooleries lost heaven. If thou wouldest, thou mightest have been companion of angels; if thou wouldest, thou mightest have been in eternal joy, and thou hast left all for the pleasure of a moment. 'O accursed and miserable creature, thy Redeemer courted thee with heaven, and thou despisedst him for a base trifle. This was thy fault, and now thou sufferest for it; and since thou wouldest not be happy with God, thou shalt now be eternally cursed by him and his angels.' "

At the final judgment, President Edwards says, "shall be brought to light the hidden things of darkness; then shall all the wickedness of their hearts be made known; then shall be declared the actual wickedness they have been guilty of; then shall appear their secret sins that they have kept from the eye of the world; then shall be manifested in their true light those sins that they used to plead for, and to excuse and justify. And then shall all their sins be set forth in all their dreadful aggravations, all their filthiness will be brought to light to their everlasting shame and contempt. Then it shall appear how heinous many of those things were, that they in their lifetime made light of; then will it appear how dreadful their guilt is in thus ill-treating so glorious and blessed a Savior." "How shall we remain amazed," says Jeremy Taylor again, "when we shall see a number of our actions

to be sins, which we never thought to be such ! And which is more, we shall find that to be a fault, which we thought to be a laudable work ; for many actions, which in the eyes of men seem virtuous, will then be found vices in the sight of God : then shall be brought to light the works which we have done, and those which we have left undone ; the evil of that action we have committed, and the good of that which we have omitted." "What bitter and tormenting reflections will they have concerning the folly they have been guilty of in their lives," says President Edwards, "in so neglecting their souls, when they had such opportunity for repentance ; that they went on so foolishly to treasure up wrath against the day of wrath, to add to the record of their sins from day to day, to make their misery yet greater, and greater and greater ; how they have kindled the fires of hell for themselves, and spent their lives in gathering fuel ! They will not be able to help revolving such thoughts in their minds, and how tormenting they will be !"

It is undoubtedly one of the most perplexing facts, that memory is to survive the grave and go with us through eternity. We shall never forget who we are nor what we have done. And I beg those of the contrary part to reflect that this fact does not exclusively affect that class of our race which we call "wicked." The righteous, as we name them, have not been free from sin, and some have in their time been great sinners. If David is to be him-

self in the future world and carry his memory with him, will he not sometimes remember Uriah and his deliberately providing for his being killed in battle? And especially if Uriah should chance, as is very probable, to have died in "a natural condition," as President Edwards expresses it, or with some unrepented sin upon his soul, and now be in hell! Saul of Tarsus was a bitter persecutor of Christians, and not only consented to the death of Stephen, but kept the clothes of them that stoned him; and although he afterward became a Christian himself and consecrated his life to building up what he had before sought to destroy, he never forgot his enmity in persecuting the Church of God. When is he to forget it?

The tenacity of the memory in instances of great wickedness is finely illustrated in the case of Joseph's brethren. Years before they had conspired to take his life. This resolution was finally changed, and he was sold as a slave to some Midianite merchants that chanced to be passing. But in their distress in Egypt, so far away from the scene of their wrong-doing, and with nothing but their trouble to remind them of their guilt, we hear them saying one to another, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us. And Reuben answered them saying, Spake I not unto you saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? Therefore, behold his blood is required."

O Memory, how is the guilty to free himself from thy power? "What is written is written," said the angry Pilate of the superscription upon the cross to which, merely to please his Jewish subjects, he had adjudged an innocent man. But this was as far as he would go in the way of compliance. It was enough that he had prostituted his great office and committed a heinous crime against justice and humanity. "What is written is written," and it shall not be altered! It is so with human actions. What is done is done, and it cannot be undone. Its record is written on high and written in our memory, and neither prayers nor tears can obliterate a single letter. Repentance and reformation do not alter the fact nor do they relieve us of the sin. Divine pardon restores our filial relations with God and gives us a degree of peace, but there stands the ugly fact still, and our own better dispositions and nicer sense of right and wrong only make us the more alive to the feeling of the wrong done and deepen our regret that we so sinned. O Memory, Memory, thou avenging power, how shall we escape thy retributions? Where shall we find the Lethe whose waters we may drink and forget that we have sinned? God may release us from all positive or outward torments, and as a loving father receive us to his arms, but who shall deliver us from the sad memories of our past follies and sins? "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

CHAPTER XII.

PAINS OF AN UPBRAIDING CONSCIENCE.

CLOSELY connected with memory is conscience, that part of our moral nature which distinguishes between right and wrong, which approves or condemns us according as our actions are good or bad, and, without a revelation of the divine will, makes man a law unto himself. Though wicked men here in this world may at times hush the voice of conscience, and silence its upbraidings, we cannot doubt that the time must come in the future when this will be impossible, and all men will be brought to see themselves just as they are. The passions, that now urge them on in the path of wrong-doing, will then be still; reason, calm and clear-sighted, will reassume her throne, and conscience, so long neglected and trampled under foot, will again lift its voice in tones so commanding that they must be heard and heeded. Every unholy passion indulged, every evil thought formed, every wicked deed done, will then stand before us in all their deformity and sin. This revelation of sinners to themselves, implying necessarily a great and most important change in their

intellectual and moral condition, cannot fail to be attended with inexpressible shame and self-condemnation. Whether this change is to be effected suddenly, and as by miracle, or more slowly by the natural process of education, is immaterial in respect to the final result. The dark and hardened sinner, before he can feel the full torment of conscience, must have his moral nature aroused and enlightened ; he must see the beauty of holiness, and feel something of the excellence of virtue and truth. In other words, he must, directly or indirectly, have been lifted out of his depravity, his indifference to the welfare of his fellow-men, and his disregard of God's moral law. President Edwards, in accordance with the teachings of orthodoxy then and now, maintained that "a natural man" — not a hardened sinner, imbruted by a long course of transgression, but a man as he is born — "cannot have a true sight of sin, and of the evil of it. A man cannot truly know the evil of sin against God, except by a discovery of his glory and excellence, and then he will be sensible how great an evil it is to sin against him." To give to conscience its full retributive power, it must be awakened, enlightened, and cultivated, and brought effectually under the highest Christian influences. A besotted, brutish man, ignorant and unfeeling, cannot experience the exquisite pain that conscience is able to inflict. His finer sensibilities are dead or unused, and must be quickened into life and activity.

Now, how much this necessarily implies, our orthodox friends do not seem to reflect. If, as they say, there is no moral change after death, the wicked ought to be as hard and insensible to the claims of truth and righteousness in the future state as they are in the present. But in that case we exclude them from the possibility of some of the keenest sufferings of which moral beings are susceptible. We leave them with consciences benumbed and seared as with a hot iron. They neither see the enormity of their sins nor feel the compunctions that the consciousness of guilt ought to bring. Yet, with an inconsistency which is too obvious to need remark, our orthodox friends constantly insist that the damned are to be tormented by a conscience as clear and sharp as that of the saints in heaven.

“In the midst of hell,” says Rev. Mr. Swinden, “there is another hell. There the wicked shall be exposed to the intolerable anguish of an outraged conscience, the remorse of which shall continually prey upon them for what they have done in their lives-time.” So says Calvin: “Wherefore, miserable consciences find no repose, but are harassed and agitated with a dreadful tempest, feel themselves torn asunder by an angry God, and transfixed and penetrated by mortal stings; are terrified by the thunderbolts of God, and broken by the weight of his hand, so that to sink away into any gulf or abysses would be more tolerable than to stand a moment in such terrors.”

“Besides these miseries and calamities,” says Jeremy Taylor, “in the power of the soul is engendered the worm of conscience, which is so often proposed unto us in Scripture as a most terrible torment, and greater than that of fire. Only in one sermon Christ, our Redeemer, three times menaces us with the worm which gnaws the consciences, and tears in pieces the hearts of the damned : admonishing us often that their worm shall never die, nor their fire be quenched. For as the worm which breeds in dead flesh, or that which breeds in woods, eats and gnaws that substance of which they are engendered, so the worm which is bred from sin is in perpetual enmity with it, gnawing and devouring the heart of the sinner with raging and desperate grief ; still putting him in mind that, by his own fault, he lost that eternal glory, which he might as easily have obtained, and is now fallen into eternal torments, whence there is no redemption.” Speaking of the rich man in hell, “tormented in this flame,” President Edwards says : “Here we are told that when the rich man died, he lift up his eyes, being in torment ; and he tells Abraham that he is tormented in a flame ; and it seems the flame was not only about him, but in him ; he therefore asks for a drop of water to cool his tongue. This doubtless is to represent to us that they are full of the wrath of God, as it were with fire, and they shall there be tormented in the midst of devils and damned spirits ; and they shall have inexpressible torments from their own

consciences. God's wrath is the fire that never shall be quenched, and conscience is the worm that never dies. How much do men suffer from horror of conscience sometimes in this world, but how much more in hell ! " " Who knows how keen and bitter will be the agonies of an awakened conscience," says Dr. Watts, " and the vengeance of a provoked God. This sort of anguish of spirit, with loud and cutting complaints, would destroy itself, and these inward terrors would sting their souls to death, if there could be any such thing as dying there. Such sighs and sobs and bitter agonies would break their hearts and dissolve their being, if the heart could break and the being could be dissolved. But immortality is their dreadful portion, — immortality of sorrows to punish their wicked and wilful abuse of time, and that waste of the means of grace they were guilty of in their mortal state." I need quote no more from our divines, who all speak to the same purpose ; but I cannot omit the testimony of that very orthodox poet, Robert Pollock, who evidently intended to make his description impressive, and succeeded in making it horrid and revolting.

I paused and looked ;
 And saw, where'er I looked upon that mound,
 Sad figures traced in fire ; not motionless,
 But imitating life. One I remarked
 Attentively ; but how shall I describe
 What naught resembles else my eye hath seen ?
 Of worm or serpent kind it something looked,
 But monstrous with a thousand snaky heads

Eyed each with double orbs of glaring wrath ;
And with as many tails, that twisted out
In horrid convolutions, tipped with stings ;
And all its mouths that wide and darkly gaped,
And breathed most poisonous breath, had each a sting,
Forked, and long, and venomous, and sharp.
And in its writhings infinite it grasped,
Malignantly, what seemed a heart, swollen, black,
And quivering with torture most intense.
And still the heart with anguish throbbing high,
Made effort to escape, but could not, for
However It turned, and oft it vainly turned,
Those complicated foldings held it fast.
And still the monstrous beast with sting of head
Or tail transfixed it, bleeding evermore.
What this could image, much I searched to know,
And while I strove, and gazed, and wondered long,
A voice from whence I knew not, for no one
I saw, distinctly whispered in my ear
These words : *This is the worm that never dies !*

CHAPTER XIII.

TORMENTS FROM MALIGNANT PASSIONS.

BESIDES all these torments and miseries, the damned in hell are represented as being the victims of every kind of evil passion, fitted to increase their wretchedness, such as envy, malice, hatred, and indeed whatever can in any way augment the horrors of their situation, or add to their own or each other's vexation. These malignant passions, it is said, "will be exceedingly powerful in the future world," and some represent them as increasing in violence throughout eternity. There will be nothing in hell, it is said, to restrain these passions, but everything to inflame them. "Who," says Jeremy Taylor, "can express the strange and horrible confusion, which shall inhabit the appetite of these wretched creatures? If all the disorders of man's life spring from his passions, what disorder must these miserable souls needs feel in that part, what convulsions, what rage, what fury! Alas, that noble passion, love, the queen of all the rest, the sun of life, that passion which might have made them happy forever, if they had turned it towards God; that amiable object being razed

out of them, the perpetual aversion they have to love shall eternally afflict them ; the passion of hatred shall be outrageous in the damned, whence shall proceed their continual blasphemies against God, and the perpetual curses and imprecations which they shall make against the creatures ; and if they have any desires, they shall be to see all the world partakers of their pains ; their aversion from all good shall be as much tormenting, as it is in itself execrable. Of joy there must no mention be made in that place of dolor ; but contrariwise of incredible sadness, which shall oppress them without any consolation. The heat of anger shall redouble the heat of their pains." In hell, it is said, the damned will be filled with the greatest envy. "The sight of the saint's glory," says Matthew Henry, "will be a great aggravation of the sinner's misery." So Jeremy Taylor says : "The envy also which they bear towards those who have gained heaven by as small matters as they have lost it shall much add to their grief." "What a mass of woe," says Dr. Dwight, "must exist in the pangs of immortal envy !"

But it is not envy alone that is to torment the damned ; they will also be filled with the deepest hatred and malice. These malignant passions will become "permanent," as Rev. Joseph Cook would say, and form the controlling spirit in the life of hell. The damned will hate universally ; they will hate God, and hate Christ, and hate the blessed in heaven, and hate the damned in hell, and hence

they will become, as Dr. Dwight says, "the means of extreme suffering to each other. None will have favors to bestow, nor a native amiableness of character to invite esteem and love. Nor will any restraint operate so as to prevent the heart from emptying out all its wickedness in the open day. Contempt, therefore, deceit and hatred, will occupy the whole soul. The rage which here persecutes an enemy to the grave and laments that it cannot follow him into the invisible world, may there pursue him through eternity." "The will," says Jeremy Taylor, "shall be tormented with an eternal abhorring and rage against itself, against all creatures, and against the Creator of all, and shall with an intolerable sadness, anger, grief and disorder of all the affections violently desire things impossible." "There will be found among the damned," says Dr. Watts, "a constant enmity, and malice, and hatred, against the blessed God, which can never satisfy or ease itself by revenge. It seems very strange indeed that a creature should design revenge against his Maker, but thus it is in these dismal regions of hell. Every wicked man is by nature at enmity with God, and in a state of rebellion ; and when this enmity is wrought up to malice, under a sense of his punishing hand, then arises that cursed and detestable desire of revenging itself against its Maker." The damned in hell will be filled, as Matthew Henry says, "with an incurable indignation against God, themselves, and one another." "They will gnash their

teeth," says Christopher Love, "out of indignation against Jesus Christ." In a word, they are not only to indulge all malignant passions, but their mouths will be filled with curses and blasphemies. Says Dr. Trapp : —

They fling
Tartarean rage towards heaven, against heaven's king ;
Against the Highest fiercely they blaspheme.

So also Pollock : —

And as I listened, I heard those beings curse
Almighty God, and curse the Lamb, and curse
The earth, the resurrection morn.

It is a little remarkable (since we have, as our orthodox neighbors insist, one clear instance of a damned soul in hell, — I mean the rich man) that, instead of turning to him for an example of the tempers and conduct of this class of human beings, they uniformly appeal to their imaginations, and follow any fancies that may chance to occur to them. Now this rich man in hell, and tormented, too, in that flame, indulges in no blasphemies, curses neither God nor the Lamb, and exhibits neither envy nor malice towards poor Lazarus, in Abraham's bosom. And so far from having lost all humanity, and being filled with hatred towards all mankind, and desiring nothing so much as to have them all partakers of his misery, this man in hell was full of interest for the welfare of his five brethren, and anxious to have them warned not to fall into the same calamity. Assuming, as the orthodox always do, that this is a veritable account of a

soul in hell, I would earnestly recommend its careful study.

But writers, preachers, and poets are not always in harmony with each other on this subject, and, what is worse, not always self-consistent. They who at one moment represent the damned in hell as little better than devils, hating and tormenting each other, at other times find them loving, and though suffering agonies in their own persons, are made to suffer immeasurably more by witnessing the torments of their families and friends ! Thus, Jeremy Taylor, after relating the horrible cruelty of Hyrcanus, as already mentioned, in crucifying eight hundred persons, and while they were yet alive causing their wives and children to be murdered before their eyes, " so that they might die, not once, but many deaths," says : " This rigor shall not be wanting in hell, where fathers shall see their sons, and brothers their brothers tormented." Now if the damned are as full of hatred and malice as is represented above, this view of the torments of others, though their nearest friends, would be a pleasure rather than a source of pain to them.

At other times, the wicked in the world of woe are represented as engaged in strife and perpetual contentions. " Who knows," asks Dr. Watts, " what the damned in hell will endure from the endless brawls and bitter quarrels among themselves ? What new contentions will arise perpetually in such a country, where it is perhaps the prac-

tice and custom of the place, and the nature of the inhabitants, for the most part to make everyone of their fellows as uneasy and as miserable as they can? Oh, what mad and furious pride, and malice, and every hellish passion will be raging almost in every bosom against all those who are near them, and this in that dark prison, where all are intensely tormented!" And what Dr. Watts suggested, Mr. Pollock clearly saw: —

And some in full encounter fiercely met,
With curses loud and blasphemies that made
The cheek of darkness pale; and as they fought,
And cursed and gnashed their teeth, and wished to die,
Their hollow eyes did utter streams of woe.

CHAPTER XIV.

SUFFERINGS OCCASIONED BY FEAR.

THE damned not only suffer dreadful torments, but are always in fear of still greater. "The imagination," says Jeremy Taylor, "shall afflict those miserable offenders, increasing the pains of the senses by the liveliness of its apprehension. If in this life the imagination is sometimes so vehement that it hurts more than real evils, in the other the torment which it causes shall be excessive. Baptista Fulgosus recounts, as an eye-witness, that being a judge in a duel, one of the competitors made the other fly, but instantly fell down dead himself, without any other cause than his imagination, for he received neither wound nor blow, neither was any found upon his dead body. If in this life the imagination is so powerful in men who are in health as to cause a sense of pain where none hurts, grief where none molests, and death where none kills, what shall it be in hell, where so many devils afflict with torments, preserving only life, that the pain of death may live eternally? And if we see some timorous people with an imaginary fear tremble and re-

main half dead, there is no doubt but the imagination of those miserable persons, joined with the horror of the place where they are, will cause a thousand pains and torments."

Closely connected with this consideration, and making a part of it, is the fact that there are

Two Hells.

One of these is for the disembodied soul, and precedes the resurrection, while the other does not exist till after the resurrection of the body and the consequent union of soul and body, as in the present life. The Presbyterian Catechism teaches that "the souls of the wicked are at their death cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, and their bodies kept in their graves, as in their prisons, until the resurrection and judgment of the great day. . . . At the day of judgment the wicked shall be set on Christ's left hand, and, upon clear evidence and full conviction of their own consciences, shall have the fearful but just sentence of condemnation pronounced against them, and thereupon shall be cast out from the favorable presence of God, and the glorious fellowship with Christ, his saints, and all the holy angels, into hell, to be punished with unspeakable torments, both of body and soul, with the devil and his angels forever." President Edwards has drawn this doctrine out at length in one of his sermons. "When a good man dies," he says, "his

soul is conducted by angels to heaven. So we may well suppose that when a wicked man dies, his soul is seized by wicked angels ; that they are round his bed ready to seize the miserable soul as soon as it is parted from the body. And with what fierceness and fury do those cruel spirits fly upon their prey ; and the soul shall be left in their hands. There shall be no good angels to guard and defend it: God will take no merciful care of it ; there is nothing to help it against those cruel spirits that shall lay hold of it to carry it to hell, there to torment it forever."

President Edwards does not attempt to locate hell, as many do, under the earth, or in its centre, but says : " Departed spirits of wicked men are doubtless carried to some particular place in the universe, which God has prepared to be the receptacle of his wicked, rebellious, and miserable subjects ; a place where God's avenging justice shall be glorified ; a place built to be the prison, where devils and wicked men are reserved till the day of judgment. Here the souls of wicked men shall suffer extreme and amazing misery, in a separate state, until the resurrection. This misery is not indeed their full punishment : nor is the happiness of the saints before the day of judgment their full happiness. It is with the souls of wicked men as it is with devils. Though the devils suffer extreme torment now, yet they do not suffer their complete punishment, and therefore it is said that they are cast down to hell and bound in chains. . . . They are reserved in the state

they are in ; and for what are they reserved but for a greater degree of punishment. . . . But yet they are in extreme and inconceivable misery ; they are deprived of all good ; they have no rest nor comfort, and they are subject to the wrath of God ; God there executes wrath on them without mercy, and they are swallowed up in wrath. . . . Those who go to hell never can escape thence ; there they remain imprisoned till the day of judgment, and their torments remain continually. Those wicked men who died many years ago, their souls went to hell, and there they are still ; those that went to hell in former ages of the world have been in hell ever since, all the while suffering torment. They have nothing else to spend their time in there but to suffer torment ; they are kept in being for no other purpose. The separate souls of the wicked, besides the present misery they suffer, shall be in amazing fear of their more full punishment at the day of judgment. Though their punishment in their separate state be exceedingly dreadful, and far more than they can bear, though it be so great as to sink and crush them, yet this is not all ; they are reserved for a much greater and more dreadful punishment at the day of judgment : their torment will be vastly augmented, and continue in that augmentation. Their punishment will be so much greater there that their misery in this separate state is but as an imprisonment before execution. . . . And if the imprisonment be so dreadful, how dreadful indeed will be the exe-

cution ! When we are under any great pain of body at any time, how do we dread the least addition to it ! its continuance is greatly dreaded, much more its increase. How much more will those separate spirits that suffer the torments of hell dread that augmentation and completing of their torment which there will be at the day of judgment, when what they feel already is vastly more than they can support themselves ; when they shall be, as it were, begging for one drop of water to cool their tongues, when they would give ten thousand worlds for the least abatement of their misery ! How sinking will it be to think that, instead of that, the day is coming when God shall come forth out of heaven to sentence them to a far more dreadful degree of misery, and to continue them under it forever ! What experience they have of the dreadfulness of God's wrath convinces them fully how terrible a thing his wrath is ; they will therefore be exceedingly afraid of that full wrath which he will execute at the day of judgment ; they will have no hope of escaping it ; they will know assuredly that it will come.

“The fear of this makes the devils, those mighty, proud, and stubborn spirits, to tremble : they believe what is threatened, and therefore tremble. If this fear overcomes them, how much more will it overwhelm the souls of wicked men ! All hell trembles at the thoughts of the day of judgment.

“When the day of judgment comes, they shall rise to

the resurrection of damnation. When that day comes, all mankind that have died from off the face of the earth shall arise, not only the righteous but also the wicked. . . . The damned in hell know not the time when the day of judgment will be ; but when the time comes, it will be made known, and it will be the most dreadful news that ever was told in that world of misery. It is always a doleful time in hell ; the world of darkness is always full of shrieks and doleful cries ; but when the news is heard that the day appointed for the judgment is come, hell will be filled with louder shrieks and more doleful cries than ever before. When Christ comes in the clouds of heaven to judgment, the news of it will fill both earth and hell with mourning and bitter crying. We read that all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him, and so shall all the inhabitants of hell, and then must the souls of the wicked come up to be united to their bodies, and stand before the Judge. They shall not come willingly, but they shall be dragged forth as a malefactor is dragged out of his dungeon to execution. They were unwilling when they died to leave the earth to go to hell ; but now they will be much more unwilling to come out of hell to go to the last judgment. It will be no deliverance to them ; it will be only a coming forth to their execution. They will hang back, but must come ; the devils and damned spirits must come up together. The last trumpet will then be heard ; this will be the most terrible sound to wicked men and devils that ever was heard."

President Edwards then gives a very circumstantial account of the last judgment, and of the final sentence pronounced upon the wicked: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." This sentence, he says, "will be pronounced with awful majesty; and there shall be great indignation, and dreadful wrath shall then appear in the Judge and in his voice, with which he shall pronounce the sentence; and what a horror and amazement will these words strike into the hearts of the wicked, on whom they shall be pronounced! Every word and syllable shall be like the most amazing thunder to them, and shall pierce their souls like the fiercest lightning. The Judge shall bid them depart from him; he will drive them from his presence, as exceedingly abominable to him, and he shall give them the epithet *accursed*; they shall be an accursed company; and he will not only bid them depart from his presence, but into everlasting fire, to dwell there as their only fit habitation. And what shows the dreadfulfulness of the fire is, that it is prepared for the devil and his angels; they shall lie forever in the same fire in which the devils, those grand enemies of God, shall be tormented. When this sentence shall be pronounced, there shall be in the vast company at the left hand, tremblings, and mourning, and crying and gnashing of teeth, in a new manner, beyond all that ever was before. . . . Then the sentence shall be executed. . . . Immediately upon the finishing of the judgment

and the pronouncing of the sentence will come the end of the world. The frame of this world shall be dissolved. The pronouncing of that sentence will probably be followed with amazing thunders, that shall rend the heavens and shake the earth out of its place. Then shall the sea roar, the rocks shall be thrown down, and the mountains shall rend asunder, and there shall be one universal wreck of this great world. Then shall the heavens be dissolved, and then the earth shall be set on fire. As God in wrath once destroyed the world by a flood of water, so now shall he cause it to be all drowned in a deluge of fire; and the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and that great company of devils and wicked men must enter into those everlasting burnings to which they are sentenced. In this condition they shall remain throughout the never-ending ages of eternity. Their punishment shall then be complete, and it shall remain in this completion forever. Now shall all that come upon them, which they so long trembled for fear of, while their souls were in a separate state. They will dwell in a fire that never shall be quenched, and here they must wear out eternity."

This doctrine is beautifully set forth by Rev. Mr. Spurgeon, the great Baptist preacher of London: "When thou diest," says he, "thy soul will be tormented alone; but at the day of judgment, thy body will join thy soul; and then thou wilt have twin hells; thy soul sweating

drops of blood, and thy body suffused with agony. In fire exactly like that we have on earth thy body will lie, asbestos-like, forever unconsumed ; all thy veins roads for the feet of pain to travel on ; every nerve a string on which the devil shall forever play his diabolical tune of ‘ Hell’s Unutterable Lament ! ’ ”

CHAPTER XV.

THE DAMNED SUFFER UNFRIENDED AND UNPITIED.

WHAT adds greatly to the miseries of the damned is that they have no friend in the universe, and no one who can sympathize in the least degree with them, or feel the slightest pity for them in their distresses. This seems to me one of the saddest of all the sad features of hell-torments. "It is some comfort in misery," says Christopher Love, "to be pitied by a friend. And it is one of the wonderful things of this world that there is no one so utterly forlorn as to find no pity in circumstances of distress. The worst of men still have some friend who, if no better than themselves, can yet feel for their calamities, and would gladly relieve their pains." But in hell, if orthodoxy is true, all humanity is extinct. Every feeling of love or sympathy or kindly regard is dead. As Rev. Thomas Boston says: "There, *natural affection* will be extinguished. The parents will not love their children, nor children their parents. The mother will not pity the daughter in the flames, nor will the

father pity the mother. The son will show no regard to his father there, nor the servant to his master, where every one will be roaring under his own torment."

But this is far from being the worst of the case. It was long ago that "the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty;" and it might not seem strange if the darker places of hell were so. But what is unspeakably more surprising and lamentable, heaven itself has lost all its charity! "In hell," says Christopher Love, "you shall lose all kind of pity. God shall not pity you. The godly shall not pity you. It is the speech of Austin [Augustine], *Nec Creator nec creatura ulla erga damnatos afficietur sympathia* (Neither Creator nor creature shall be affected with any sympathy towards the damned in their torments). Here if thou art in misery, there is pity shown thee, but in hell there is none to pity thee, and so thy misery is the greater." Upon this point all orthodox writers agree. "Though they have so many companions in hell," says President Edwards, "yet they are no comfort to them, for there is no friend, no love, no pity, no quietness, no prospect, no hope." Again: "They will be in a most dreadful condition; they will have no friends. God will be their enemy; angels and the spirits of the just will be their enemies; devils and damned spirits will be their enemies. They will be hated with perfect hatred; will have none to pity them, none to bemoan their case, or be any comfort to them." Once more: "They will

not be able to find any to *befriend* them and intercede with God for them. They had the offer of a mediator often made them in this world ; but they will have no such offers in hell. None will befriend them in hell ; all there will be their enemies. They will have no friend in heaven ; none of the saints or angels will befriend them ; or if they should, it would be to no purpose. There will be no creature that will have any power to deliver them, nor will any ever pity them."

President Edwards has a whole sermon devoted to this thought, in which, with much iteration, he affirms "that the torments of the wicked in hell are no occasion of grief to the saints in heaven." He shows, in the first place, that heaven and hell will be so near each other, or in some other way, that the saints will see the punishments suffered by the damned, and that the damned will also see the happiness of the saints in glory. But while this vision of the joys of heaven will greatly aggravate the torments of the damned, the sight of their torments will not in the slightest degree lessen the felicities of heaven. "The two worlds of happiness and misery," he says, "will be in view of each other. Though we know not by what means nor after what manner it will be, yet the Scriptures certainly lead us to think that they will some way or other have a direct and immediate apprehension of each other's state. The saints in glory will see how the damned are tormented ; they will see God's threatenings fulfilled, and

his wrath executed upon them. . . . The miseries of the damned in hell will be inconceivably great. When they shall come to hear [perhaps *bear*] the wrath of the Almighty poured out upon them without mixture, and executed upon them without pity or restraint, or any mitigation, it will doubtless cause anguish and horror and amazement beyond all the sufferings and torments that ever any man endured in this world, yea, and beyond all extent of our words or thoughts. For God, in executing wrath upon ungodly men, will act like an Almighty God. The Scripture calls this wrath God's *fury* and the *fierceness of his wrath*."

In the second place, President Edwards tells us that the inhabitants of heaven will understand vastly better than it is possible for us now to do, how terrible these torments of the damned really are. "The saints in glory will see this," he says, "and be far more sensible of it than now we can possibly be. They will be far more sensible how dreadful the wrath of God is, and will better understand how terrible the sufferings of the damned are."

But this vision, this knowledge of the condition and miseries of the damned, will be the source of no regret, excite no sympathy, occasion them no pain. "This will be no occasion of grief to them," he says. "They will not be sorry for the damned ; it will cause no uneasiness or dissatisfaction to them." And he proceeds to show why it cannot, and why it ought not, to produce any sorrow,

or be the cause of any grief to the saints. "That seeing the wrath of God executed upon the damned should cause grief in the saints in glory is inconsistent with that state of perfect happiness in which they are. There can no such thing as grief enter, to be an alloy to the happiness and joy of that world of blessedness. Grief is an utter stranger in that world. God hath promised that he will wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more sorrow."

Besides, the saints will have no love for the damned. "The sufferings of the damned will be no occasion of grief to the heavenly inhabitants," says President Edwards, "as they will have *no love nor pity* to the damned as such. . . . For the heavenly inhabitants will know that it is not fit that they should love them, because they will know then that God has no love to them, nor pity for them, but that they are the objects of God's eternal hatred. And they will then be perfectly conformed to God in their wills and affections. They will love what he loves, and that only."

In conclusion, he warns sinners that if they perish at last, their condition will be "destitute of any comforting consideration." "You will have none to pity you," he says. "Look which way you will, — before or behind, on your right hand or left, look up to heaven or look about you in hell, — and you will see none to condole your case, or to exercise any pity towards you, in your dreadful condi-

tion. . . . You will have no pity from the *created inhabitants* of heaven. . . . God will exercise no pity towards you. If you might have his pity in any degree, that would be of more worth to you than thousands of worlds. That would make your case to be not without comfort and hope. But God will exercise no pity towards you. He hath often said that his eye shall not spare, neither will he have pity. You will see nothing in God, and receive nothing from him but perfect hatred and the fierceness of his wrath ; nothing but the mighty falls or outpourings of wrath upon you every moment ; and no cries will avail to move God to any pity, or in the least to move him to lighten his hand, or assuage the fierceness and abate the power of your torments. . . . Jesus Christ will have no pity on you. Though he had so much love to sinners as to be willing to lay down his life for them, and offers you the benefit of his blood while you are in this world, and often calls upon you to accept them, yet then he will have no pity upon you. . . . You will find none that will pity you in hell. The devils will not pity you, but will be your tormentors, as roaring lions or hell-hounds, to tear you in pieces continually. And other wicked men, who shall be there, will be like devils ; they will have no pity on you, but will hate and curse and torment you. And you yourselves will be like devils ; you will be like devils to yourselves, and will be your own tormentors."

Dr. Dwight draws a most fearful picture of the desola-

tion, abandonment, and misery of the damned. "It is evident," he says, "that there can be no confidence in the regions of misery. The wretched inhabitants of those regions will know all around them to be enemies and deceivers. Amid the vast multitudes not an individual will be found possessed of either natural affection or benevolence or sincerity. This will probably be one of the most painful and wearisome among all the ingredients of future woe. . . . The miserable inhabitants of hell will have no God, no Savior, no virtuous friends, no parents, no relatives, before whom they may spread their calamities with the hope of being heard, or in whose hearts or hands they may find refuge from the bitterness of woe. . . . Thus, while the inhabitant of that melancholy world looks around him, when he casts his eyes abroad through the universe, he will perceive that it contains no friend to him. In the midst of millions he is alone, and is sure of being loathed, rejected, and shunned by every being in the universe of God. Not a sigh can he breathe, not a tear can he shed, not a sorrow can he unfold, not a prayer can he utter, with the hope of being befriended, heard, or regarded !"

What a scene of loneliness and desolation ! In the midst of millions, and yet alone. Surrounded by those of our kind, and yet none to love or pity or care ! To sigh, to weep, to pray, and yet to feel and know that in the wide universe, from the dog that we fed to the

Creator who made us, there is not one solitary being who hears or heeds us ! If there is such a hell as this, what worse to a sensitive and social being is there to be conceived ? But poets unite with our theologians in this doctrine. Thus Pollock : —

Their hollow eyes did utter streams of woe,
And there were groans that ended not, and sighs
That always sighed, and tears that ever wept,
And ever fell, but not in mercy's sight.

Mercy is dead in heaven as well as in hell. I do not wonder, therefore, that Dr. Young should represent one of the damned as crying out

And this, my help ! my God, at thy decree !
Nature is changed, and Hell should succor me.

But what is strangest of all here is the wonderful agreement and harmony existing in the tempers and conduct of these two worlds. Heaven and hell have finally come to think and feel and act alike. God hates the damned in hell, and so does the Devil. Angels and saints hate them, and so do wicked spirits and wicked men ! Was there ever anything like this seen before ? Or could any mortal have rationally dreamed that in the process of the ages God and the Devil should thus come to agree ? And the conversion seems unfortunately to have taken place on the wrong side. It is not the Devil who has become better, more just, more merciful, more humane, but —

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SAINTS REJOICE IN THE MISERIES OF THE DAMNED.

IT seems terrible enough that the saints in heaven should have lost their Christian tenderness and sympathy, so as to feel no pity for the damned in hell, and be perfectly indifferent to their torments ! The Christian religion makes our second duty the love of our fellow-men. And our Savior himself teaches that it is not enough to love our friends and those who love us, but, in order to be his disciples and the children of God, we must love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them who hate us, and pray for such as despitefully use us and persecute us. God is said, even in the Old Testament, to be good to all, and his tender mercies to be over all his works ; from which it would be no violent inference that if there is a hell, such as orthodoxy describes, it cannot be wholly beyond the range of his goodness, nor utterly without any reflection of the divine mercy. But our great Teacher would not leave a point like this to an inference ; he therefore declares plainly that God “is kind to the un-

thankful and to the evil," and, with so many instances of goodness and mercy in the world about us, still affirms that "there is none good but one, that is, God," — none so steadily, universally good ; none good without variable-ness or shadow of turning ; none good without limit and without end. And his children are required to be like him.

When, therefore, we are told that God and good angels and saints in heaven have ceased to feel pity for any individual of the human race, it becomes a trial of Christian faith ; but when the matter is carried still farther, and we are required to believe that these saints — to say nothing of God and Christ and the blessed angels — actually rejoice in the damnation of their fellow-men, and find an increase of their own felicity in the miseries of those of their own kind, our faith stumbles, and we refuse to believe. Nature is not changed. God is God, and goodness is goodness still ; and Christian love is not devilish hate, and the felicities of heaven are not created by beholding the torments of hell !

"God shall not pity you," says Christopher Love, "but shall laugh at your destruction, and mock when your fear comes. The godly shall not pity you, but they shall rejoice to see God's power and God's glory in your damnation. . . . When thou art scorching in thy flames, when thou art howling in thy torments, then God shall laugh at thy destruction, and then the saints of God shall sing and

rejoice that thou art a vessel of his justice, and so his power and wrath are made known in thee." So Rev. Mr. Boston says: "None were so compassionate as the saints on earth during the time of God's patience. But now that time is at an end. Their compassion on the ungodly is swallowed up in joy in the Mediator's glory, and his executing of just judgment, by which his enemies are made his footstool. Though sometimes the righteous man did weep in secret places for their pride, and because they would not hear, yet then he shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance, *he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked*. No pity shall then be shown to them from their nearest relations. The godly wife shall applaud the justice of the judge in the condemnation of her ungodly husband. The godly husband shall say *amen* to the damnation of her who lay in his bosom. The godly parents shall say *hallelujah* at the passing of the sentence against their ungodly child; and the godly child shall from his heart approve the damnation of his wicked parents, — the father who begat him, and the mother who bore him."

On this point, as on the preceding, President Edwards is painfully express and full. We have seen how, in his theology, saints in glory and the damned in hell are to see each other, and be acquainted with each other's condition; and how the saints are to find "no occasion for grief," or to feel any pity in the miseries of their fellow-men. The picture would have been dark and revolting

enough had he stopped here, and would have suggested far more difficulties than orthodoxy could ever explain. But he chose to go farther, or, I ought rather say, the necessities of his creed urged him much farther. These necessities required him to affirm, not only that the saints in heaven will feel no sorrow for the damned in hell, but that the torments of the damned will prove a source of sublime and never-ceasing joy to them. And what his creed required, that President Edwards said without reservation, and endeavored to justify. The saints are not only to rejoice in the damnation of the wicked, but the miseries of hell are forever to enhance the happiness of the blessed in heaven ! “They will not be sorry for the damned,” he says ; “it will cause no uneasiness or dissatisfaction to them ; but, on the contrary, when they have this sight, it will excite them to joyful praises. . . . Therefore the damned and their misery, their sufferings and the wrath of God poured out upon them, will be an occasion of joy to them. . . . When the saints in glory, therefore, shall see the doleful state of the damned, how will this heighten their sense of the blessedness of their own state, so exceedingly different from it ! . . . When they shall see the smoke of their torment, and the raging of the flames of their burning, and hear their dolorous shrieks and cries, and consider that they, in the mean time, are in the most blissful state, and shall surely be in it to all eternity, how will they rejoice !”

We should do the intelligence of President Edwards great injustice were we to assume that he did not see the unnatural and abhorrent character of this doctrine. To be utterly indifferent to the miseries of any of our fellow-beings, however vicious or criminal, betrays a condition of mind and heart that is far enough from being commendable, even in "natural men," to say nothing of those touched by the divine charities of the gospel; but that the saints in heaven should be so lost to all the better feelings of our nature as to rejoice in view of the unspeakable torments of the damned in hell shocks human sensibilities, and outrages common sense. Yet orthodoxy can hardly avoid this issue. And President Edwards meets it like a man, avowing it without reservation, and earnestly endeavoring to persuade himself and others that, bad as it looks and bad as it is, it is still the most amiable, the sweetest, divinest thing imaginable, the very perfection of piety, the maturest blossom of celestial holiness. Next to being willing to be damned one's self is the grace of rejoicing in the damnation of one's neighbors. He who can do either of these gives full proof that he is no longer "a natural man," and is therefore fit for heaven." In favor of such an abomination, President Edwards summons more considerations than he would deem sufficient to establish the most important and useful truth, and urges them with a zeal worthy of a better cause.

As God is the author of hell-torments, so the saints in

glory are wholly conformed to his will. What he loves they love, and what he hates they hate. Now, he can have no love to the damned, or he could not inflict upon them such dreadful, unintermitted, and endless torments. He must hate them with a perfect hatred, and desire to do them all the evil he can, with no ulterior object and without end. In this, therefore, his saints should be in complete harmony with God. They should desire what he desires and delight in whatever he does. "The saints in heaven," says President Edwards, "will be perfect in their love to God ; their hearts will be all a flame of love to God, and therefore they will greatly value the glory of God, and will exceedingly delight in seeing him glorified. The saints highly value the glory of God here in this [world], but how much more will they do so in the world to come. They will therefore greatly rejoice in all that contributes to that glory. The glory of God will, in their esteem, be of greater consequence than the welfare of thousands and millions of souls."

Now it happens, according to orthodoxy and President Edwards, that "God glorifies himself in the eternal damnation of ungodly men. God glorifies himself in all he doth ; but he glorifies himself principally in his eternal disposal of his intelligent creatures ; some are appointed to everlasting life, and others left to everlasting death." And it appears as if, in the orthodox view, it is a matter of the profoundest indifference whether souls are damned or

saved. God reaps an equal harvest of glory in both cases. He is glorified in men's salvation, and he is glorified just as really and just as much in their damnation. "Men who bring forth no fruit to God," says President Edwards, "may yet in suffering destruction be useful. Although they be not useful in anything they do, yet they may be useful in what they may suffer, just as a barren tree, which is no way useful standing in the vineyard, may be good fuel. God can find use for the most wicked men; he hath his use for vessels of wrath, as well as for vessels of mercy." Our author has, indeed, a whole sermon, the object of which is to demonstrate that the wicked are "useful only in their destruction," and at the same time to show in how many ways this endless destruction is to contribute to the glory of God and the happiness of his saints. It seems a little remarkable, certainly, that under these circumstances the thought of saving sinners should ever have occurred, since God would have gained all the glory in their damnation that he could promise himself in saving them; so that the great end he had in view — his own glory — would have been equally attained without the humiliation, sufferings, and death to which Christ so unprofitably subjected himself.

The reader cannot fail to be interested in following President Edwards in his discussion of this delightful topic, and seeing what inexhaustible sources of satisfaction his saints find in the endless torments of their fellow-

creatures. "It will be an occasion of their rejoicing," he says, "as the *glory of God* will appear in it. The glory of God appears in all his works; and therefore there is no work of God, which the saints in glory shall behold and contemplate, but what will be an occasion of rejoicing to them. God glorifies himself in the eternal damnation of ungodly men."

The saints in heaven, he tells us, "will rejoice in seeing the *justice* of God glorified in the sufferings of the damned. The misery of the damned, dreadful as it is, is but what justice *requires*. . . . They will greatly rejoice to see justice take place, to see that all the sin and wickedness that have been committed in the world [except their own] is remembered of God, and has its due punishment. The sight of this strict, immutable justice of God will render him amiable and adorable in their eyes. They will rejoice when they see him who is their Father and eternal portion so glorious in his justice."

And this leads President Edwards to say: "Then there will be no more difficulties about the justice of God, about the absolute decrees of God, or anything pertaining to the dispensations of God towards men. But divine justice in the destruction of the wicked will then appear as light without darkness, and will shine as the sun without clouds, and on that account will they sing joyful songs of praise."

Certain it is that the saints will have nothing to complain of in God's dispensations towards themselves. Entirely

freed from all punishment, delivered by sovereign grace from the damnation they deserved, taken into God's special favor, and assured of endless felicity, they would be most unreasonable beings if they still found fault with the divine treatment of them. And when we add that in addition to their own happiness they are permitted to behold the unspeakable torments of the damned, and to rejoice over them, their case appears enviable, and I should think it very strange if they found any "difficulties about the justice of God, or about the absolute decrees of God." Could they conceive of anything more fully in their favor?

I can easily imagine how glad a human being would be, who, justly sentenced to the scaffold, or to be burnt at the stake, should receive a full pardon and be permitted not only to live but to go free. I strive to imagine how one "bound over to the wrath of God and curse of the law, and so made liable to death, with all miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal," would feel, if delivered from this awful condition, and made partaker of the glories and joys of heaven. Our love of happiness, our dread of misery, will easily help us to interpret to our own souls something of the joy one would experience in such a translation from darkness to light, from death to life. But this natural feeling does not at all meet the case of President Edwards. His saints, not content with being saved and blessed themselves, are required to rejoice in the damna-

tion of their fellow-men ! It is not enough that they are happy ; they must be glad to see their neighbors miserable ; nay, their happiness is to be forever augmented by the torments of others of their race.

To see the enormity of all this, let us suppose that there are two men, brothers, if you please, who are guilty of the same capital offence, and condemned to the same punishment by fire. What should we think, if one, having been so fortunate as to obtain pardon, should attend the execution of the other, and instead of exhibiting any tokens of grief or pity, should merely dance and sing, as he witnessed the sufferings of his brother ; and in the language of President Edwards, should "rejoice to see justice take place," rejoice to see the guilt of his brother remembered, and have its due punishment? Would not every man think this pardoned brother a wretch, not only without ordinary human feeling, but a monster of depravity? Yet this monster, so callous, so inhuman, would be an angel by the side of President Edwards's "saints in glory." For what would be the sufferings of a human being for a few minutes at most in an earthly fire, in comparison with an eternity of torments in the fire of hell ! The rich man in Hades remembered his five brethren, and desired that they might be warned, so as not to fall into like misery with himself. President Edwards's saints not only have no pity upon their brethren, but rejoice in their most horrible torment.

"They will rejoice in it," says President Edwards, "as it

will be a glorious manifestation of the *power* and *majesty* of God. God will show his own greatness in executing vengeance on ungodly men. . . . God will show his glorious power in destroying these enemies. . . . The power of God is sometimes spoken of as very glorious, as appearing in the temporal destruction of his enemies. . . . Moses rejoiced and sang when he saw God glorify his power in the destruction of Pharaoh and his host at the Red Sea. But how much more will the saints in glory rejoice when they shall see God gloriously triumphing over all his enemies in their eternal ruin. Then it will appear how dreadful God is, and how dreadful a thing it is to disobey and condemn him. It is often mentioned, as a part of the glory of God, that he is a terrible God. To see the majesty and greatness and terribleness of God, appearing in the destruction of his enemies, will cause the saints to rejoice ; and when they shall see how great and terrible a being God is, how will they prize his favor ! how will they rejoice that they are the objects of his love ! how will they praise him the more joyfully, that he should choose them to be his children, and to live in the enjoyment of him."

It might not be amiss to reflect that when Moses sang over the destruction of Pharaoh and his hosts, he had as little thought of their endless damnation as he had of the Westminster Confession of Faith or the power of the Pope. And it would do no harm to remember also that when Moses desired to see the glory of God, God was graciously

pleased not to call attention to his naked power, his wrath, or terribleness exhibited in the destruction he was able to accomplish, but chose rather to make "all his goodness pass before him." Even under the Law goodness was more glorious than omnipotence itself !

But beyond all this very narrow and selfish joy, the saints will find occasion for rejoicing, "as they will have the greater sense of their own happiness by seeing the contrary misery. It is the nature of pleasure and pain, of happiness and misery, greatly to heighten the sense of each other. Thus the seeing of the happiness of others tends to make men more sensible of their own calamities ; and the seeing of the calamities of others tends to heighten the sense of our own enjoyments. When the saints in glory, therefore, shall see the doleful state of the damned, how will it heighten their sense of the blessedness of their own state, so exceedingly different from it ! When they shall see how miserable others of their fellow-creatures are, who were naturally in the same circumstances with themselves ; when they shall see the smoke of their torment and the raging of the flames of their burning, and hear their dolorous shrieks and cries, and consider that they, in the meantime, are in the most blissful state and shall surely be in it to all eternity, how will they rejoice !"

Not to do President Edwards any injustice, I must allow him to explain his own doctrine fully. "Hereby the

saints," he says, "will be made the more sensible how great their salvation is. When they shall see how great the misery is from which God hath saved them, and how great a difference he hath made between their state and the state of others, who were by nature, and perhaps for a time by practice, no more sinful and ill-deserving than any, it will give them a greater sense of the wonderfulness of God's grace to them. Every time they look upon the damned it will excite in them a lively and admiring sense of the grace of God in making them so to differ. . . . The sight of hell-torments will exalt the happiness of the saints forever. It will not only make them more sensible of the greatness and freeness of the grace of God in their happiness, but it will really make their happiness the greater, as it will make them the more sensible of their own happiness ; it will give a more lively relish of it ; it will make them prize it more. When they see others, who were of the same nature and born under the same circumstances, plunged in such misery, and they so distinguished, oh, it will make them sensible how happy they are. A sense of the opposite misery in all cases greatly increases the relish of any joy or pleasure."

This seems to me little better, let me confess, than moral madness. The man, saint or sinner, who could find happiness thus in the misery of his fellows, ought evidently to be somewhere else than "in glory." It would betray a nature so perverted and callous that he would be

an object of the profoundest pity or the sharpest indignation of his race.

Now, as the torments of the damned are "unspeakably, inconceivably great," it follows, upon the reasoning above, that the sight of them must be the source of a vast, measureless joy, an exquisite and perpetual delight; and hence the greater the miseries of the damned in hell, the greater the happiness of the saints in heaven! In this ungodly world, where fortunately we have few approximations to this kind of sainthood, practices founded upon this doctrine of President Edwards would not only be thought strange and inconsistent with the lowest conceptions of morality, but absolutely revolting. We call the rabble brutal that gathers about the scaffold on which the most guilty wretch pays the penalty of his crimes, if they exhibit any tokens of joy at his sufferings, or even of levity. Yet they ought to shout and sing for very delight, since seeing his misery should heighten their happiness! What would the community think of a party of young people who should gayly prosecute the most innocent amusements, while one of their companions, ay, or any human being, was known to be dying in an adjoining room, in full hearing of their hilarity and mirth, and whose expiring groans mingled every moment with their pleasures? What would the world say of a company of learned orthodox divines, who should sit enjoying a sumptuous dinner, while a house across the street was on fire, and its

unhappy inmates were perishing in the flames, and filling the whole neighborhood with what President Edwards would call "their dolorous shrieks and cries"? And what should we think of their humanity, not to say their religion, if they were afterwards to tell us what a zest the horrors of this scene gave to their entertainment, and to assure us that never before did they eat a dinner with such perfect satisfaction, since the miseries of their neighbors added amazingly to their enjoyment? If President Edwards's doctrine is good for heaven, it ought to be tolerable on earth.

It is easily seen that on this theory hell, with its horrible torments, is a necessary foil for the glories and joys of heaven. Heaven without hell by its side would be heaven no longer; and were it not for the torments of the damned, President Edwards's saints would lose more than half their happiness. Which reminds me of a remark of Goethe, that there were some in his time "who thought there would be no pleasure in being Christians, if all the heathen were not to be roasted eternally."

President Edwards finds another consideration which greatly fortifies his position. The Apostle, in one of his epistles, told his Christian brethren that all things were theirs, from which the President generously infers that "the saints in heaven possess all things as their own, and therefore all things contribute to their joy and happiness. . . . All things in the world to come, or in the future and eter-

nal world, are the saints' ; not only life, but death, men and angels, and devils, heaven and hell, are theirs, to contribute to their joy and happiness. Therefore the damned and their misery, their sufferings and the wrath of God poured out upon them, will be occasion of joy to them."

But while proving and illustrating this important doctrine, President Edwards meets with one objection. He was always asserting that the devil and his wicked angels hate the damned, and rejoice in their torments ; and now it appears that God and good angels and the saints in heaven are in perfect harmony with the devil in this, and do the same thing ! "God has no love to them, nor pity for them," but, on the contrary, "they are the objects of his eternal hatred." In like manner the devil has no love to them, nor pity for them, but they are the objects of his eternal hatred. The coincidence is remarkable, and would somewhat stagger ordinary men ; but to President Edwards it presented no considerable difficulty. He explained the striking similarity of temper and conduct on the principle that extremes are apt to meet. God and the saints in glory hate the damned out of an exuberance of goodness, out of a transcendent holiness ; the devil and his angels, on the contrary, hate them, and rejoice in their damnation out of a wicked and malignant feeling ; just as Dr. Adam Clarke says the effects of extreme heat and cold, frost and fire, are the same. The streams come from different fountains, but flow in the same channel,

and, unluckily for the damned, prove equally bitter and fatal.

The difficulty is somewhat increased, as President Edwards is obliged to confess, by the circumstance that "Christ, by many precepts in his word, hath made it our duty to love all men. We are commanded to love wicked men, and our enemies and persecutors." Then Paul's love to his countrymen was so great that he declared he could wish himself accursed from Christ for the sake of his brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh. The good angels, too, take an interest in human welfare, and are said to rejoice over any sinner that repents. That Christ loved sinners may be safely inferred from the single fact that he died for them ; and the Apostle affirms the same of God himself, when he says that "he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all," and commended "his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." It is the commandment of God that we should not only love him supremely, but love our neighbor as ourselves. In the time of our Savior the Jews had come to explain this as meaning only that we should love our neighbor, but hate our enemy. "This gloss," says the learned Dr. Lightfoot, "came from hell, not from heaven ; from Satan, not from God." Our divine Master not only corrected their error, but defined the commandment : "I say unto you, Love your enemies ; bless them that curse you ; do good to them that hate

you ; and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." And he enjoined this upon them that they might be the children of their Father in heaven, who is good to all, making his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sending rain upon the just and the unjust. From all which we may confidently infer, not only that the spirit of the Christian religion is benevolent, but that God is good, and loves his enemies, and therefore cannot hate them, and curse and endlessly torment them, as orthodoxy teaches.

All this President Edwards seems willing to allow — with some pretty serious exceptions, certainly — so far as the present world is concerned, but denies that it holds at all with respect to the future. Here in this momentary life the saints are required to love their neighbors, and, indeed, to love the wicked ; but as soon as they attain to "glory," the moment they reach heaven, the scene changes, and what was the most sacred duty in this world falls away, and is a duty no longer ! Speaking of this love of enemies, which Christ clearly makes the distinctive mark of his disciples, President Edwards says : "This command doth not extend to the saints in glory, with respect to the damned in hell ; nor is there the same reason that it should. We ought now to love all, and even wicked men ; we know not but that God loves them. However wicked any man is, yet we know not but that he is one whom God loved from eternity ; we know not but that Christ loved

him with a dying love, had his name upon his heart before the world was, and had respect to him when he endured those bitter agonies upon the cross. We know not but that he is to be our companion in glory to all eternity." Is not this to place the second commandment of the law on very narrow and insecure grounds? As I read the Scriptures, we are under obligation to love our neighbor because God commands it; and I conclude that God commands it because it is right; or, if one chooses to go further, God requires us to love our fellow-men because He himself, who is the standard of all moral excellence, loves them. According to orthodoxy, our duty to love the wicked rests upon our ignorance. We are to love them because we do not know that God does not love them, and that Christ did not die for them, and that they may not be saved! This is an unconscious confession on the part of orthodoxy of the superior moral power of Universalism. That teaches, without any reservation or doubt, and as fundamental truths, that God loves all men, and that Christ died for all, and hence that we all ought to love one another and perform the works of a genuine and universal benevolence.

But President Edwards's difficulties do not end here. If a part of the human race is ultimately to be damned to all eternity, and the saints do not know who they are that are thus to be lost, that happy ignorance can hardly belong to God; and it becomes a very serious question

why he should command his saints on earth to love those whom he hates and proposes to damn forever ; or, to change the statement, why Christ should enjoin it upon his disciples to love and bless and pray for and do good to those whom he himself did not love and for whom he did not die. Here is one of the mysteries which orthodoxy should endeavor to explain. Would God have his children on earth better and more benevolent than himself? Would Christ require his disciples to go beyond their Head? He said it was enough that the disciple is as his Master, and the servant as his Lord. He could hardly wish his followers to be better than the Author and Finisher of their faith, to love where he hates, to bless where he curses, and do good where he does the contrary.

According to President Edwards, there is to be a great, an unaccountable difference in the moral government and Christian temper between this and the future world. While, as he confesses, "we are commanded to love wicked men, and our enemies and persecutors" here, "this command doth not extend to the saints in glory with respect to the damned in hell. Their ignorance will there have passed away, and they will see things as they are, and know whom they ought to love and whom they should hate. "The saints in glory," he says, "will know concerning the damned in hell, that God never loved them, but that he hates them, and [that they] will be forever hated of God. This hatred will be fully declared

to them ; they will see it, and will see the fruits of it in their misery. Therefore, when God has thus declared his hatred of the damned, and the saints see it, it will be no way becoming them to love them, nor to mourn over them. It becomes the saints fully and perfectly to consent to what God doth, without any reluctance or opposition of spirit ; yea, it becomes them to rejoice in everything that God sees meet to be done." True ; but to what a waste of affection and prayers and good works this ignorance of God's will has led the saints ! As only a small part of the human family, as we shall see, is finally to be saved, it is quite certain that far the larger part of all the love, all the prayers, and all the beneficence of the saints has been completely thrown away, and worse ; and this, too, at the command of God ! If they had only known — had God declared it betimes to them that "he never loved" those that are finally to be lost — that he hated them, and will hate them forever, it would have saved them an immense amount of affection and kind offices, and the growing habit of tenderness and good-will, which, when they enter President Edwards's heaven and take their places in glory, they will be obliged to eradicate and lay aside. There, in that world of perfect holiness, fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, relatives and friends, will be obliged to strip themselves of all natural affection and other earthly attachments, and enter upon an entirely new mode of existence, insomuch

that many of them, it is to be feared, will hardly know themselves, or even the God that made them, or the Savior that bought them. Everything will be strange to them. They will no longer love the greater number of those they loved before ; and in God and Christ they will see little of that great love which had, through their earthly pilgrimage, been growing year after year upon their understandings and their hearts. "The different circumstances of our nature now," says President Edwards, "from what will be hereafter, make that a virtue now which will be no virtue then. For instance, if a man be of a virtuous disposition, the circumstances of our nature now are such that it will necessarily show itself by natural affection ; and to be without natural affection is a very vicious disposition. But natural affection is no virtue in the saints in glory. Their virtue will exercise itself in a higher manner."

Is there not a little danger that in this kind of spiritual sublimation heaven and its felicities may be put quite beyond all human apprehension, and so beyond all human interest and desire ? A heaven where there are no natural affections, where all the sympathies and ties that bind us together here on earth, and which give to earth most of its beauty, and to existence itself its chief value, are rooted out and banished, may, for aught we know, be far higher than one where all our human affections, purified and expanded, shall exist in their perfection, but at the

same time must be one as foreign to our hearts as it is inconceivable to our intellects. Imagine President Edwards called upon to minister the consolations of religion to parents weeping over the bier of a beloved child. What should he say to them? Would he tell them that this natural affection which now caused them so much pain was to endure only a little while ; that their lost child would be nothing more to them forever ; that if they were to meet in heaven they would not know each other, or, knowing, would not care ; and if their child were in hell, it would be the occasion of no grief, and they would rejoice in its damnation, and find an eternal source of happiness in its torments ?

It must have struck every reader of the quotations above that there are some souls, nay, that all the souls which shall finally be lost, have always been objects of God's hatred. "The saints in glory," says President Edwards, "will know concerning the damned in hell, that God never loved them, that he hates them, and [that they] will be forever hated of God." So he speaks of some as being "appointed to everlasting life, and others left to everlasting death." This language expresses the familiar doctrine of eternal election and reprobation, which teaches that some of the human race were made for heaven and blessedness, and others were created to be damned and tormented in hell-fire forever. "God never loved them," says President Edwards. He did not love them when he

made them, and has never loved them since. He has always hated them, and will hate them forever. Their existence is no blessing, but a curse. The good things they have received, the apparent benefits and mercies, were not good in their intention, and will not be good in the end. All are designed to contribute to their misery. God never loved them, and Christ never died for them. They have never had any real offers of mercy, and no genuine calls to repentance and salvation. All has been hypocritical and false. No salvation was ever provided or intended for them. God never did, or designed to do, them any good, for he never loved them.

This terrible doctrine is not only Calvinistic, but it is orthodox. Every form of the Christian religion which teaches the doctrine of endless punishment necessarily implies it. Affirm the endless damnation of one solitary soul, and the only way of avoiding this doctrine is by denying the foreknowledge of God. If he sees the end from the beginning, then that end, whatever it may be, determines the purpose of the Creator in respect to the creature whose history is thus traced from its beginning to its close, by the omniscience of God. And it matters not at all whether man's action is necessitated or free : if necessitated, then the whole web of causes and consequences, of motives and actions, were prearranged and inviolably foreordained ; if free, then God clearly foresaw how free powers would move amidst their manifold sur-

rounding, and that in the end they would compass the free agent's damnation. The final result is equally certain in both cases, and God, who foresaw that result, created that human soul for that terrible destiny !

The fact is not to be denied that the problem, *How* are saints in heaven to be happy in the sight or knowledge of the torments of the damned in hell? is becoming, year after year, more pressing and more painful in the Christian consciousness of the world. "The plain truth is," says Rev. Dr. Townsend, "that this subject has relations to certain emotions of the human heart, the deepest and tenderest of which it is capable. The constitutional antipathies, the inward disturbances, the multiplication of personal anxieties, objectionable methods of presentation, are nothing in comparison, or are each a hundred fold intensified by the thought that a father, a mother, a brother, or a sister, or a darling child, may be suffering endless punishment. How can I be happy in heaven if my child is in hell? is the blunt and awful question which the preacher is frequently called upon to answer."

And how, pray, does Dr. Townsend answer it? We have seen how President Edwards and men of his school of theology attempt to answer it and how their solution rather aggravates than lessens the difficulty. The saints are to become happy by first becoming inhuman, or perhaps I should say unhuman. They are to undergo a moral revolution on entering heaven, and be made so ter-

ribly holy as to lose more than half the graces they have been all their lifetime cultivating. Instead of becoming more tender, loving, sympathetic, and pitiful, as they walk the golden streets, they grow suddenly hard, selfish, cruel, and monstrous, so as to rejoice in the sufferings of their fellow-beings, and even those bound to them by the strongest earthly ties, and claim to gain an accession of happiness from their intolerable torments. But how does Dr. Townsend meet the difficulty? "Various answers," he says, "are attempted; and many of them are good for other folks, but not for us. It is possible that every reader will pause at this point, and insist upon an answer. We, too, will pause, but merely to remark, that after giving the question some degree of attention, we can only say, that, judging from our present human nature and relations, we do not know exactly how a mother can be perfectly happy in heaven, whose son is in hell; nay, worse, we are willing to confess that at times, while facing this question, perplexity has settled down upon us like night."

And how does Dr. Townsend attempt to dissipate this Egyptian darkness, and relieve himself of such distressing perplexity? He can hardly be said to make any attempt, but coolly tells us that the question to be answered is "whether the doctrine of endless punishment is true. Let that first be settled, then afterwards we will seek an explanation of minor considerations."

But does not Dr. Townsend see that a doctrine which

outrages humanity and tramples underfoot the tenderest and best affections of our being—a doctrine which, in the light of our nature and relations, causes perplexity to settle down upon him like night whenever he honestly confronts it—becomes just in that degree more and more improbable, and hence demands clearer and more abundant evidence? One can have no just conception of the Christian religion if he does not perceive that one of its offices, if not its highest office, is to cultivate a broad and generous benevolence. It refines and purifies all our best affections; and while it teaches the mother to love her child more, it also teaches her to extend something of that affection to all who come within the range of her influence, or can be the objects of human goodwill. Rude men, hard, cruel men, men of savage natures and dispositions, all, indeed, whose affections are dull and cold, are very little touched or moved by the doctrine of endless torments; and they generally accept it without difficulty, and believe it without pain. It does not distress them; in confronting it no perplexities settle down upon them like night. They are never tortured with the question, How am I to be happy in heaven if those I love are in the torments of hell? Is it probable, then, that the Author of our nature has given us a religion that makes the best among us the most unhappy? Is it reasonable to suppose that Christianity, which immeasurably quickens our sympathies, and invigorates and refines all

our benevolent affections, is only fitted to wrench our nature, and torture the very powers it improves and sanctifies?

It is somewhat amazing to observe that President Edwards's doctrine, of nearly a century and a half ago, that the happiness of the saints in glory is to be indefinitely heightened by beholding the torments of the damned in hell, still finds its advocates in the ranks of orthodoxy. But why should this be thought singular? Is not orthodoxy essentially the same under all its appearances? Its forms of expression may change with the fashion of the times or the spirit of the age, but its fundamental notions remain the same.

I find a paper in the *Princeton Review* of January, 1878, by the Rev. Prof. Patton, of the Theological Seminary of Chicago, in which, after speaking of the effect of contrast in producing pleasure, the author adds: "Nay, one could go further, and could hold that contrast may be a necessary factor in the divine economy, and that, for aught that is known, the eternity of evil finds some explanation here. It is here, however, that human sympathy is aroused, and would do violence to the cause of light and shade, in order that the dream of a happy universe may be realized. Here, by the throne of the Almighty, is the point of highest light in God's great picture; but as the light fades away into the deep darkness of the bottomless pit, men recoil and ask the artist to take away the

shadows, and flood the canvas with golden glory. But how does the poet-painter of the Apocalypse handle the great theme of human destiny? He paints the river of life, the throne of God, the golden streets, the white-robed throng; and, as if to bring out the bright light of the picture, men see in shadow the place whose portals bear the dark inscription, 'Abandon hope, all ye who enter here!' And now that so much time has been spent in ridiculing the scholastic and patristic writers who, in language coarse it may be, and grating to the ear, have spoken of the punishment of the lost as a factor in the happiness of the saints, would it not be well to stop and ask whether, after all, there may not be a profound philosophy in the speculation of Aquinas, which finds some support in the science of æsthetics, and in the psychology of pleasure and pain."

Here, then, we are brought back to the old doctrine of President Edwards by the new path of æsthetics and high art. The divine plan of creation is a sublime specimen of imperial painting, and painting, we know, is nothing but dull outline without light and shade. Taken out of the realm of æsthetics and poetry, and reduced to the plain prose of common-sense, Dr. Patton's opinion is our modern doctrine of relativity run mad, and amounts simply to this: That goodness is not good unless it stands over against evil; that holiness is nothing if it is not confronted by sin; that happiness owes its chief value to

corresponding misery ; that the saints in glory find their highest joy in contemplating the torments of the damned in hell ; that the throne of heaven gathers its brightest light from the darkness of the bottomless pit ; and, finally, that God owes much of his greatness and goodness to the devil. Hence sin and misery are essentially necessary, and must be so to all eternity, to give life and worth to holiness and happiness, and furnish Dr. Patton with the requisite light and shade for his immortal painting. Tertullian had not scientifically studied theological æsthetics, as it has been the privilege of Dr. Patton to do, but he enjoyed in a high degree the same æsthetic feeling, and expressed it in barbarous Latin, with a genuine African warmth. And it is pleasant to set, side by side, this ancient Father—who would doubtless have been a saint if he had not been a Montanist—and our modern Christian philosopher of Chicago, and to observe how charmingly they agree in temper and spirit, though they express themselves in a somewhat different manner. He was writing upon the subject of spectacles, of which the Romans were very fond, and many of which they made very cruel and demoralizing ; and, wishing to impress the minds of his heathen countrymen with an idea of the grander spectacles of the Christian religion, as he held it, he exclaimed : “What a spectacle is at hand at the advent of the Lord, once disbelieved, now in glory, and then triumphant ! What rejoicing among the angels !

What glory of the rising saints ! What a kingdom thenceforth of the just ! What a city, the new Jerusalem ! But there are other spectacles still remaining, — that last perpetual day of Judgment, that day unanticipated, derided by the Gentiles, when the whole course of time and all its nations are swallowed up in one common conflagration ! What a profusion of spectacles will then be exhibited ! How shall I admire, how laugh, how rejoice, how exult, when I see so many mighty kings, said to have been received into heaven, with Jupiter himself, and his worshippers, groaning together in the profoundest darkness, and rulers, persecutors of the Lord's name, liquefying in flames more raging than they ever caused to rage against Christians ; when I shall see sage philosophers blushing for shame in the presence of their disciples, and burning together with those whom they persuaded that nothing pertains to God, and to whom they declared, either that they had no souls, or that they would never return to their former bodies ; and also the poets trembling before the tribunal, not of Rhadamanthus or Minos, but of the unexpected Christ. Then the tragedians will be heard more vocal with their own calamity. Then shall the dramatist be more extravagant by means of the fire ; then shall the charioteer be seen all red in his blazing car ; then shall the athletes be thrown, not in the accustomed lists, but in the fire."

We can easily frame apologies for such an outburst of

savage temper on the part of Tertullian. He was not a saint in his own day, though really worth scores of those the Church has honored with this title, but he was an earnest, honest man, who spared nothing in the propagation and defence of the Christian religion as he had received and understood it. Exposed to constant and bitter opposition, living in the midst of bloody persecutions, and suffering day by day from the enemies of the religion he loved, should we feel surprise if at times he forgot the gentleness of the Christian in the indignation of the man, and looked forward with a feeling of satisfaction, if not of revenge, to the approaching hour when these enemies of Christ should suffer the vengeance their conduct had provoked?

But what shall we say of the Christian philosopher who, in this nineteenth century of grace, sits quietly in his study and coolly speculates and argues in favor of an eternity of human sin and suffering as a necessary means of reflecting glory upon the throne of God, and appeals to the miseries of the damned as an essential element in the happiness of the blessed? To such a mind and heart the love and holiness of God must either never have been revealed, or been revealed in vain.

There can be no doubt, however, that this indifference of the saints in glory to the miseries of the damned in hell, and still more, this fiendish joy in heaven, in view of the torments of their fellow-creatures in the pit below,

must, if it were to exist, prove a most bitter ingredient in their cup of woe. Bad and lost, as they may be, it can hardly fail to add another pang to their grief, and increase the measure of their wretchedness, to see that all goodness, all mercy, all pity, is dead in the universe, and that heaven itself, through excess of holiness, has become as hard and unsympathetic as the depths of hell.

CHAPTER XVII.

ALL THESE MULTIPLIED AND DREADFUL TORMENTS ABSOLUTELY WITHOUT END.

WHAT is to add immeasurably to all the torments of the damned — what is to give accent and emphasis to their misery, and thus complete the wretchedness of their condition — is the fact that it is to be absolutely without remedy and without end. On this point the whole orthodox world is agreed. Genuine orthodoxy admits no lessening of the variety of hell-torments, nor will it allow of any mitigation of their severity. After describing them in all the colors that human language is capable of giving, or that the human imagination, in its loftiest flights, can conceive, we are told that this is nothing to the dread reality. “There is no reason,” says President Edwards, “to suspect that possibly ministers set forth this matter beyond what it really is, that possibly it is not so dreadful and terrible as it is pretended, and that ministers strain the description of it beyond just bounds. . . . There is no reason to think that ministers describe the misery of the wicked beyond what it is, because the Scripture teaches

that this is one end of ungodly men, to show the dreadful power of God's wrath. . . . The Scripture teaches that the wrath of God on wicked men is dreadful beyond all that we can conceive. . . . As it is but little that we know of God, as we know and can conceive but little of his power and his greatness, so it is but little that we know or can conceive of the dreadfulness of his wrath; and therefore there is no reason to suppose that we set it forth beyond what it is. We have rather reason to suppose that after we have said our utmost, and thought our utmost, all that we have said or thought is but a faint shadow of the reality," or, as he says in another place, it is "but painted fire."

But "unspeakable and inconceivable" as this punishment is, its eternity is the one element lacking to give it its full power and efficiency. It matters not how multiplied its pains may be, nor how severe, nor how long they may be continued, though it were countless millions of ages, it avails nothing if it is not positively without end. It is its eternity alone that gives to the divine punishment all its distinctive weight and terror. Deduct a single day from its duration, and you strip it of its proper force. Drexelius, a learned Jesuit, well expresses the orthodox thought and feeling on this point when he says: "If for every sin, or for every hour of a man's life, he was doomed to a year in hell, and no longer, the punishment would be tolerable. Upon such a presumption men would be

tempted to continue in their sins ; and I do not doubt that a great many would never leave them, could they be assured that the torments of the damned would ever have an end." Hence the imperious necessity of maintaining the absolute endlessness of this punishment. As orthodoxy reasons, the torments inflicted upon the wicked must be as great as possible, and as long as possible, in order to be effective ; and yet, as Archbishop Tillotson well observed, they prove all too mild to answer that important purpose ; which led the good Archbishop to think that God would undoubtedly have made them more dreadful if it had been in his power to do so ! What seems quite remarkable, and greatly needs explanation, is the momentous fact that those who professedly believe in the eternity of this most fearful punishment are not at all distinguished by exceptional virtues or general worth from their neighbors of a less alarming faith. Whether it may not be possible to represent punishment so terrible as to render it practically incredible, and hence powerless ; or whether it happens that those who believe it have come to look upon it as belonging chiefly to their neighbors, — a good thing to preach to others, but from which they themselves have happily nothing to fear, — are questions which it would do my orthodox friends no harm to consider, but with which at present I have nothing to do.

But however this may be, it is still a very serious fact

that orthodoxy insists upon the eternity of punishment as if the salvation of the world depended upon it. Dr. Watts, indeed, ingenuously says : " I never knew but one person in the whole course of my ministry who acknowledged that the first emotions of religion in their own heart arose from a sense of the goodness of God, and that they were gently and sweetly led at first to this inquiry : *What shall I render to the Lord who hath dealt so bountifully with me ?* But I think all besides, who have come within my notice, have rather been first awakened, by the passion of fear, to fly from the wrath to come." But, according to President Edwards, this solitary exception, acknowledged by Dr. Watts, must have been a spurious conversion ; for the President teaches explicitly that before any will seek for grace and salvation, they must be sensible " that they hang over the pit of eternal misery," and, further, " that it would be just with God to do as he hath threatened in his holy law, namely, make them objects of his wrath and curse in hell to all eternity : " thus every sinner who is saved must see and feel that he is not only in imminent danger of being damned forever, but also that he deserves it. Hence it must be impossible for any person to be saved, or ever to make any effort, or even form a resolution, to seek salvation, if he does not first thoroughly believe in the doctrine of endless punishment, and that, too, not in the manner generally done, as something to which one's neighbors are chiefly exposed, but as a per-

sonal danger of the most alarming kind. And this, if I do not mistake, is the proper orthodox position. It is the ground on which Universalists to-day are denied the name of Christian, or at least the title of "Evangelical," and so excluded from the fraternity of those sects which assume this distinguishing appellation.

It necessarily follows that this great doctrine of endless punishment is not only fundamental in the Christian religion, but, like the existence of God and the Messiahship of Jesus, cannot be denied or doubted without vitiating one's whole faith, and unavoidably casting him out of the Christian Church. It should excite no surprise, therefore, that this doctrine, at once so momentous and so indispensable, should have received great attention from its advocates, and been insisted upon with a frequency and zeal in some small degree commensurate with its vital importance.

Thus Rev. Mr. Boston, after describing the torments of the damned as manifold, as most vehement and exquisite, as uninterrupted, and, indeed, as universal, adds: "Lastly, to complete their misery, their torments shall be *eternal*. Ah! what a frightful case is this, to be tormented in the whole body and soul, and that not with one kind of torment, but many; all of these most exquisite, and all this without any intermission, and without pity from any! What heart can conceive those things without horror! Nevertheless, if this most miserable case were at length to

have an end, that would afford some comfort ; but the torments of the damned will have no end." In another place he says : "The last aggravation of that torment is the eternal duration thereof ; they must depart into *everlasting fire*. That is it that puts the cape-stone upon their misery, namely, that it shall never have an end." He afterwards endeavors to give some notion of that eternity of which he speaks. He calls it "the creature's eternity," because it has a beginning, while the Creator's eternity has no beginning. "But who can measure the waters of the ocean, or who can tell you the days, years, and ages of eternity, which are infinitely more than the drops of the ocean? None who can comprehend eternity but the eternal God ! Eternity is an ocean, whereof we shall never see the shore ; 't is a deep sea where we can find no bottom ; a labyrinth from whence we cannot extricate ourselves. . . . The first who entered into an eternity of woe is as far from the end of it as the last who shall go thither will be at his entry. They who have launched out farther into that ocean are as far from land as they were the first moment they went into it. And thousands of ages after this they will be as far from it as ever. . . . God's wrath in hell will ever be *the wrath to come*. But there is no middle in eternity. When millions of ages are past in eternity, what is past bears no proportion to what is to come ; no, not so much as one drop of water falling from the tip of one's finger bears to all the waters of

the ocean. There is no end of it. While God is, it shall be."

On this point President Edwards dwells frequently, and with great force. "Well may there be weeping and gnashing of teeth in hell," he says, "where there is such misery. . . . The misery is not only amazingly great and extreme, but of long continuance ; yea, of infinitely long continuance. It never will have an end. There will be no deliverance, no rest, no hope, but they will last throughout all eternity. Eternity is a thing in the thought of which our minds are swallowed up. As it is infinite in itself, so it is infinitely beyond the comprehension of our minds. The more we think of it, the more amazing will it seem to us. Eternity is a duration to which a long period of time bears no greater proportion than a short period. A thousand years or a thousand ages bear no greater proportion to eternity than a minute ; or, which is the same thing, a thousand ages are as much less than eternity as a minute. A minute comes as near an equality to it ; or you may take as many thousand ages out of eternity as you can minutes. If a man by the utmost skill in arithmetic should denote or enumerate a great number of ages, and should rise by multiplication to ever so prodigious numbers, should make as great figures as he could, and rise in multiplying as fast as he could, and should spend his life in multiplying, the product of all would be no nearer equal to the duration which the wicked

must spend in the misery of hell, than one minute ! Eternity is that which cannot be made less by subtraction. If we take from eternity a thousand years or ages, the remainder is not the less for it. Eternity is that which will forever be but beginning, and that because all the time which is past, let it be ever so large, is but a point to what remains. The wicked, after they have suffered millions of ages, will be, as it were, but at the first point, only setting out in their sufferings. It will be no comfort to them that so much is gone, for they will have none the less to bear. There will never come a time when, if what is past is compared to what is to come, it will not be as a point. The continuance of their torment cannot be measured out by revolutions of the sun or moon or stars, by centuries or ages. They shall continue suffering after these heavens and this earth shall wax old as a garment, till the whole visible universe is dissolved. Yea, they shall remain in misery through millions of such ages as are equal to the age of the sun, moon, and stars, and still it will be all one as to what remains, still no nearer the end of their misery."

This is the doctrine of the orthodox church, Catholic and Protestant. Cornelius à Lapide, a learned Jesuit commentator, asks : "How long shall the wicked burn in hell? Forever! How long is that? Imagine a hundred thousand years: but that is nothing in respect to eternity. Imagine ten hundred thousand years, yea, as

many ages : but that is nothing in respect to eternity. Imagine a thousand millions of years : still they are nothing. Eternity is the same, and always will be so. Proceed and number as many more as you can ; add millions of millions more, as long as you please, and then suppose the damned in hell to burn all this vast duration ; and, when you have done all this, you have not found the beginning of eternity. Imagine again as many millions of millions of years as there are drops in the sea, and you have not yet come to the beginning of eternity. Such is the duration of that eternity of torment which God hath decreed to the damned in hell."

It has been a favorite employment of the advocates of endless torments to invent various devices intended to give some notion of the extent of eternity. All such attempts necessarily fail, because our faculties are finite, and cannot comprehend the infinite. Drexelius, another good Jesuit, says : " Should God say to the damned : Let the earth be covered with the finest sand, and let the world be filled therewith ; let heap be piled upon heap, till it reaches up to the highest heavens ; and let an angel every thousand years take one grain from it, and when the whole shall be removed, after so many thousand years as there were grains, I will release you out of hell : should God, I say, make any such promise to those miserable spirits, what a mighty consolation it would be to them ! How would they exult and rejoice ! Their

damnation would seem somewhat easy to them. But alas ! after millions and millions of years, there remain more millions, and still more millions forever and ever."

Gulielmus Peraldus, "a very learned and religious man," as we are assured, and once Bishop of Lyons, adopted a different mode of illustration. "Should the damned," says he, "every day distil from their eyes but one tear only, and should the tears they thus distil day after day be preserved in a convenient place, they would at length exceed the vast ocean of waters. The drops of the sea have their number and measure ; it is an easy thing for God to say they are just so many, and no more ; but the tears of the damned can never be numbered." Another ingenious advocate of this great doctrine, with a particularly sharp arithmetical turn of mind, supposes a strip of parchment — I do not see why paper would not serve the purpose as well — long enough to encircle the globe, say 25,000 miles, and this to be filled with the cypher 9 from beginning to end, so close together as to have no space between them. Who could express, who could conceive, the number they would represent? And yet, if these figures expressed years, ages, or centuries, or thousands or millions of ages, they would no more represent eternity than would a single day or hour !

Father Furniss, whose little tract on the Sight of Hell I have taken occasion to mention, surpasses all other writers whom I have chanced to meet in his inventive powers

here. He supposes our globe to be solid cast-iron, and that every million years a little bird should fly over it and once touch it with the tip of its wing! Imagine how long a time it would take to wear off the thickness of this sheet of paper over the space of one's finger-nail; and calculate, if you can, the millions and millions of ages necessary to wear away a single cubic inch. Then find the number of cubic inches in our globe, and multiply these two factors together, and have you made any approximation to eternity? None at all! After these countless millions of millions of ages were exhausted, there would be an eternity still remaining!

"Think of the extent of eternity!" exclaims Rev. Austin Dickinson, of our own age and country. "Oh, send an angel forward on the awful deep, with the speed of lightning, for millions and millions of centuries, and the dread waves of perdition are still rising and rolling beyond!" "Let imagination stretch her wings again," said the celebrated Dr. Griffin, of Park Street Church, Boston, "and follow the excruciated soul through ages of unutterable endurance—through fire intense enough to melt down all the planets! One period after another passes by it as it flies, until it looks back on the first million of years as on a speck in the horizon, and still it hears the tormented soul exclaim: *My agony is just begun!*"

And this thought of eternity as the duration of their misery, President Edwards suggests, must be a great ag-

gravation to the torments of the damned. "The more the damned in hell think of the eternity of their torments, the more amazing it will appear to them ; and alas ! they will not be able to keep it out of their minds. Their tortures will not divert them from it, but will fix their attention to it. Oh, how dreadful will eternity appear to them after they shall have been thinking on it for ages together, and shall have so long an experience of their torments ! The damned in hell will have two infinities perpetually to amaze them and swallow them up. One is an infinite God, whose wrath they will bear, and in whom they will behold their perfect, irreconcilable enemy. The other is the infinite duration of their torment. If it were possible for the damned in hell to have a comprehensive knowledge of eternity, their sorrow and grief would be infinite in degree. The comprehension of so much sorrow, which they must endure, would cause infinite grief for the present. Though they will not have a comprehensive knowledge of it, yet they doubtless will have a vastly more lively and strong apprehension of it than we can have in this world. Their torments will give them an impression of it. . . . Besides, their capacities will probably be enlarged, their understandings will be quicker and stronger in the future state ; and God can give them as great a sense and as strong an impression of eternity as he pleases, to increase their grief and torment." "What a miserable unhappiness will it be," says Jeremy Taylor, "to burn in these

flames of hell, not only for an hour, but till the day of judgment ! yea, even for all eternity, and world without end ! Who would not esteem it a hideous torment if he were to be burned alive a hundred times, and his torment was to last every time for the space of an hour ? With what compassionate eyes would all the world [except the saints in glory] look upon such a miserable wretch ! Nevertheless, without all doubt any of the damned in hell would receive this as a great happiness to end his torments with these hundred times burning ; for what comparison is there betwixt a hundred hours' burning, with some space of time betwixt every hour, and to burn a hundred years of continual torment ? And what comparison will there be betwixt burning a hundred years' space and to be burning without interruption as long as God is God ?" So the Larger Catechism teaches that "the punishments of sin in the world to come are everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God, and most grievous torments, in soul and body, without intermission, in hell-fire forever." The pious Christopher Love says : "Lastly, the *eternity* of all this, the consideration of the eternity of these torments makes them the most grievous. Beloved, when a man lies upon a sick-bed, here is his comfort ; though he hath grievous pain, is sadly afflicted, and cannot rest, night nor day, yet he hath hopes it will not last long : either I shall be killed or cured, and so my pain ended.

But this consideration cannot comfort in hell ; thou art there in pain, and thou shalt be there forever. And here saith Mr. Bolton : This word *ever* should break the hard heart of the sinner ; thy pains are many, thy pains are universal, thy pains are extreme, and they shall be everlasting and eternal, and eternity makes all miserable." President Edwards, having spoken of the fire of hell as a devouring fire, a furnace of fire, and illustrated the fierceness of it by a house all on fire, where "the heat in a particular place, besides the heat which proceeds out of the fuel in that place, is increased by the additional heat of the fire all around it," says : "Hence we can conceive something of what fierceness that fire will be, when the visible world shall be turned into one great furnace. . . . The whole world will probably be converted into a great lake or liquid globe of fire, a vast ocean of fire, in which the wicked shall be overwhelmed. It will be an ocean of fire, which will always be in a tempest, in which the wicked shall be tossed to and fro, having no rest, day nor night, vast waves or billows of fire continually rolling over their heads. But all this will be only an *image* of that dreadful fire of the wrath of God, which the wicked shall at the same time suffer in their *souls*. We read of *the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God*. . . . Oh, what is that ! the fierceness and rage or fury of Omnipotence ! of a being of infinite strength ! What an idea doth that give of the state of those worms that

suffer the fierceness and wrath of such an Almighty Being !” But the damned will be “sensible that this devouring fire will be *everlasting*. If a man were brought to the mouth of a great furnace, to be cast into the midst of it, if at the same time he knew he should suffer but *one minute*, yet that minute would be so terrible to him that fearfulness would surprise and astonish him. How much more, if he were to be cast into a fire much fiercer ; the fire in which wicked men are hereafter to be tormented ! And if the thought of suffering this devouring fire for one minute would be enough to fill one with such surprising fearfulness, what will seize them when they know that they are to bear it, not for one minute, nor for one day, nor for one year, nor for one age, nor for a hundred ages, nor for a million of ages, one after another, but *forever and ever*, without any end, and never, never be delivered ? They shall know that the fire itself shall be everlasting fire. . . . And they shall know that their torment in that fire never will have an end. They shall know that they shall forever be full of quick sense within and without ; their heads, their eyes, their tongues, their hands, their feet, their loins, and their vitals, shall forever be full of glowing, melting fire, fierce enough to melt the very rocks and elements ; and also that they shall eternally be full of the most quick and lively sense to feel the torment. They shall know that they shall never cease restlessly to plunge and roll in that mighty ocean of fire. They shall know

that those billows of fire, which are greater than the greatest mountains, will never cease to roll over them, following one another *forever and ever*. At the same time they will have a more lively sense of eternity than we can have here."

Father Furniss indulges a very odd, unorthodox conceit, and affirms that "there is one thing which would change hell into heaven." He thinks that were an angel of God to go to the gates of hell and tell the damned that after burning there "almost countless millions of years," a day would come when the pains of hell would cease, and they would be delivered, it would work an instant reformation in all its inhabitants. "If such a message came," he says, "hell would no longer be hell. Hell would no longer be a house of blasphemy, but a house of prayer and thanksgiving and joy." In other words, hell would be changed into purgatory, the damned be converted into saints, unfortunately conditioned for the time, and instead of rage and blasphemies, that world of woe would become the "house of prayer and thanksgiving." Thus goodness would gain a victory that wrath cannot attain, and even the worst of men come to love God because convinced that he first loved them. The experiment seems worth trying.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ETERNITY OF HELL-TORMENTS BANISHES ALL HOPE, AND PRODUCES DESPAIR.

AS would naturally be expected, such a condition, filled with inexpressible pains of body, and inconceivable anguish and horror of mind, with the certain knowledge that there is no hope of relief, and that it is to continue through all eternity, must produce absolute despair. It might be wished by the benevolent that such a state would end presently in positive madness, and thus relieve the sufferer in some degree from his torments; but orthodoxy, as we have seen, provides against any such mitigation. Not only are all the faculties of the mind to be maintained, as if by a constant miracle, but if need be a miracle will be wrought to add something to their powers and susceptibilities, in order that their sufferings may be increased! But that the damned will be reduced to absolute despair all preachers and writers agree. If the bitterest ingredient in the torments of hell is the consideration of their eternity, one of the saddest to contemplate is the deep despair into which the soul

must inevitably sink. "Do but consider," says President Edwards, "how dreadful despair will be in such torment. How dismal will it be when you are under such racking torments to know assuredly that you never, never shall be delivered from them ; to have no hope ; when you shall wish that you might be turned into nothing, but shall have no hope of it ; when you shall wish you might be turned into a toad or a serpent, but shall have no hope of it ; when you would rejoice, if you might have any relief, after you shall have endured these torments millions of ages, but shall have no hope of it. After you shall have worn out the age of the sun, moon, and stars in your dolorous groans and lamentations, without rest day or night, or one minute's ease, yet you shall have no hope of ever being delivered ; after you shall have worn out a thousand more such ages, you shall have no hope, but shall know that you are not one whit nearer to the end of your torments ; but still there are the same groans, the same shrieks, the same doleful cries, incessantly to be made by you, and that the smoke of your torment shall still ascend up forever and ever. Your souls, which shall have been agitated with the wrath of God all this while, will still exist to bear more wrath ; your bodies, which shall have been burning all this while in these glowing flames, shall not have been consumed, but will remain to roast through eternity, which will not have been at all shortened by what shall have been past. You may, by considering,

make yourselves more sensible than you ordinarily are ; but it is a little that you can conceive what it is to have no hope in such torments. How sinking would it be to you to endure such pain as you have felt in this world, without any hopes, and to know that you never should be delivered from it, nor have one minute's rest ! You can now scarcely conceive how doleful that would be. How much more to endure the vast weight of the wrath of God without hope." In a similar strain Dr. Trapp bears his testimony upon this point. After speaking of hell and the state of the damned, he says : —

Damnation, Death, in every dreadful form,
The gnawing conscience, never-dying worm ;
The inextinguishable fire ; no gleam
Of cheerful light ; no sweet, refreshing beam
Of joy or hope : despair, despair, despair,
Is still the sound that breaks the sullen air.
Forever ! Never ! Never be released ?
Oh no ! 'Tis torment never to be eased.
All evil there ; not good : Death lives, Life dies ;
" Deliver us, good Lord." — In tears, and sighs
Here rather pardon let us strive to gain
Than there, when seas of tears will stream in vain.
Sometimes, as if such groans could soften hell,
They throw to heaven, with hideous, frantic yell,
Expostulating cries — they cannot pray —
" Is there then left of hope no glimm'ring ray ?
Can nothing, nothing for our crimes atone ?
Great God, is mercy infinite thus shown ?
Can nothing ever wash away our guilt ?
Was it for this thy precious blood was spilt ?
That millions, who have oft invoked thy name,
Should, years unnumbered, welter in this flame ? "

Dr. Thomas Goodwin tells us that "hope was given to reasonable and intelligent natures, to be as a breathing-hole, in time of misery, to keep up life in such an one to sustain itself. And the reasonable soul being in its duration eternal, and having an eternity of time to run through and sail over, hath this privilege, denied to beasts, to take a prospect or foresight of time that is yet to come, and if it can spy out any space or spot of time in which it shall have happiness or ease, or outlive its misery, it will not utterly die ; yea, it will harden itself against present misery with this thought : *that, however, it shall not always be thus with me.* But, on the contrary here, by reason of this ability of foresight, it comes to pass that a wretched soul in hell, viewing, turning over all the leaves of time to eternity, both finds that it shall not outlive its misery, nor yet can find one space or moment of time of freedom or intermission, having forever to do with the living God. And then it dies, and dies again, and sinks into a gulf of despair for the future, as well as it is swallowed up with a sense of present wrath." "There they shall be tortured," says Rev. Mr. Swinden, "with an absolute and complete despair of any better condition, or of the least relaxation from their pains, so much as a drop of water to cool their tongues tormented in these flames." In like manner Mr. Pollock says : —

And sorrow, and repentance, and despair
Among them walked, and to their thirsty lips
Presented frequent cups of burning gall.

And how completely they will be crushed, President Edwards admirably shows: "Some of you have seen buildings on fire; imagine therefore with yourselves what a poor hand you would make at fighting with the flames, if you were in the midst of so great and fierce a fire. You have often seen a spider, or some noisome insect, when thrown into the midst of a fierce fire, and have observed how immediately it yields to the force of the flames. There is no long struggle, no fighting against the fire, no strength exerted to oppose the heat, or to fly from it; but it immediately stretches forth itself and yields; and the fire takes possession of it, and at once it becomes full of fire. Here is a little image of what you will be in hell, except you repent and fly to Christ. To encourage yourselves that you will set yourselves to bear hell-torments as well as you can, is just as if a worm that is about to be thrown into a glowing furnace should swell and fortify itself, and prepare itself to fight the flames. What can you do with lightnings? What doth it signify to fight with them? What an absurd figure would a poor, weak man make who in a thunder-storm should expect a flash of lightning on his head or breast, and should go forth, sword in hand, to oppose it, when a flash would in an instant drink up all his spirits and melt his sword!"

It ought to be remarked, however, that all do not agree in this representation as to the utter helplessness

and "sinking" of the soul in hell. Some, on the contrary, speak of the damned as full of animosity, as rising in resistance, unavailing, indeed, and indulging in a rage that, though impotent, still shows the unconquered will and the eternal hate. "They are filled," says Rev. Matthew Henry, "with an incurable indignation against God." "The damned in hell," says Rev. Christopher Love, "gnash their teeth out of indignation against Jesus Christ." Dr. Trapp says : —

They fling
Tartarean rage towards heaven, against heaven's King ;
Against the Highest fiercely they blaspheme.

So Mr. Pollock says : —

And as I listened, I heard these beings curse
Almighty God, and curse the Lamb, and curse
The earth, the resurrection morn.

Neither picture is altogether pleasing. A world of patient suffering, without hope, or an effort to ward off the pain, appeals powerfully to our pity. A world filled with curses and execrations can hardly be agreeable to God or good men.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE DAMNED WISH AND PRAY TO DIE.

THAT beings so wretched, so desolate, so abandoned of God and their fellows, so lost to all good and all hope, should wish to die and be extinct, is not to be deemed remarkable. Yet few thoughts are more abhorrent, more revolting to human nature, than that of annihilation. We cling to life with an instinctive tenacity, and, when we relinquish our hold upon it, it is only with the hope of renewing it in another state of being. We talk about annihilation, but we cannot conceive it as a thing possible to ourselves. In giving us existence and making us rational, God imparted to us an almost unconquerable love of life, so that we shrink with horror from the thought of its termination, or, rather, we find it impossible to construe the word to human thought at all. Every language on earth, I believe, is so framed as, in one way or another, to carry, beneath all its phraseology expressive of death as the end of life, the notion of an existence beyond. All nations have felt — the most ignorant as well as the most cultivated — if they have not

expressly said, "We do not wholly die." Milton exhibits the native feeling of the human soul in its normal condition, when he makes Satan, contemplating a possible annihilation, say : —

Sad cure ! For who would lose,
Though full of pain, this intellectual being :
Those thoughts that wander through eternity,
To perish rather, swallowed up and lost
In the wide womb of uncreated night,
Devoid of sense and motion ?

But the advocates of endless punishment unite in representing the damned as earnestly desiring and praying for this "sad cure" of their intolerable and never-ending miseries ! And under the accumulated horrors of hell, a school of theology is growing up, which looks forward with a kind of grim semi-satisfaction to the time when annihilation is to end the disgraceful history of the wicked, and God's tarnished honor be partially restored by his utterly destroying what he should never have created.

In all our earthly sufferings and sorrows, when health and strength are gone, when racked with pain, and all hope of relief is lost, death, terrible as it ordinarily is, loses its frightful aspect, and appears as our unfailing friend and final earthly resource. In like manner in the world to come, if, as orthodoxy teaches, the condition of the damned is so desperate ; if their miseries are so various and so extreme ; if, indeed, their torments are un-

speakable, and to us now inconceivable, and that both in soul and body ; if they are perpetual, admitting no intermission and no alleviation ; and, finally, if they are to be without end, allowing no hope of their termination, even after countless millions of ages, it would be marvellous if the sufferers did not at last relinquish all love of life, and come to look upon existence as a curse, and desire annihilation, reluctant as the conscious soul may be to adopt so frightful an alternative.

“They shall desire death,” says Jeremy Taylor, “and death shall fly from them ; for unto all their evils and miseries this, as the greatest, is adjoined that neither they nor it shall ever die. They shall always burn and never be consumed ; they shall seek for death in the flames, but shall not find it. Therefore justly doth one cry out, O woe eternal, that shall never have end ! O end without end ! O death more grievous than death ; always to die, and never to be quite dead !” President Edwards, as we have seen, speaks of the damned as wishing that they “might be turned into nothing,” or into a toad or viper. This reminds me of what an old friend once told me of his personal experience, that when a lad, and taught as he was, that he was in the utmost danger of suffering endless torments in hell, he was so alarmed and wretched that he could hardly sleep, and wished a thousand times, in his fear and misery, that he had been created a toad or anything, however mean and revolting, rather than a

human being! Such creatures, poor or miserable as they might be, were not born "totally depraved," nor exposed to hell-torments forever.

Pollock, who lavishly employed his powers on descriptions of the torments of the damned, after giving a picture, as we have seen, of "the worm that never dies," produces another of "eternal death," as follows:—

Fast by the side of this unsightly thing,
 Another was portrayed, more hideous still :
 Who sees it once shall wish to see 't no more.
 Forever undescribed let it remain !
 Only this much I may or can unfold —
 Far out it thrust a dart that might have made
 The knees of terror quake, and on it hung
 Within the triple barb, a being pierced
 Through soul and body both : of heavenly make
 Original the being seemed, but fallen
 And worn, and wasted with enormous woe.
 And still around the everlasting lance
 It writhed convulsed, and uttered mimic groans,
 And tried, and wished, and ever tried and wished
To die ; but could not die. Oh, horrid sight !
 I trembling gazed, and heard this voice
 Approach my ear : *This is eternal death !*

Dr. Young quite agrees with other orthodox authorities in describing the damned as praying for annihilation. In his work entitled "The Last Day," he says :—

I tremble as I write ;
 The whole creation swims before my sight ;
 I see, I see the Judge's frowning brow :
 Say not 't is distant, I behold it now ;
 I faint, my tardy blood forgets to flow,
 My soul recoils at the stupendous woe ;

That woe, those pangs, which from the guilty breast,
In these, or words like these, shall be expresst :

“ Who burst the barriers of my peaceful grave ?
Ah ! cruel death, that would no longer save,
But grudged me ev’n that narrow, dark abode,
And cast me out into the wrath of God !
Where shrieks, the roaring flame, the rattling chain,
And all the dreadful eloquence of pain,
Our only song ; black fire’s malignant light
The sole refreshment of the blasted sight.

Oh, must I look with terror on my gain,
And with existence only measure pain !
What ! no reprieve, no least indulgence given,
No beam of hope from any point of heaven !
Ah ! Mercy ! Mercy ! art thou dead above ?
Is love extinguished in the source of love ?

Just is my lot. But, oh, must it transcend
The reach of time, despair a distant end ?
With dreadful growth shoot forward, and arise
Where thought can’t follow, and bold fancy dies !

“ *Never !* where falls the soul at that dread sound,
Down an abyss how dark ? and how profound ?
Down, down (I still am falling, dreadful pain !)
Ten thousand thousand fathoms still remain :
My plunge but still begun — And this for sin ?
Could I offend if I had never been,
But still increased the senseless happy mass,
Flowed in the stream, or flourished in the grass ?
Father of mercies ! why from silent earth
Didst thou awake and curse me into birth ?
Tear me from quiet, ravish me from night,
And make a thankless present of thy light ?
Push into being a reverse of thee,
And animate a clod with misery ?

“ The beasts are happy, they come forth and keep
Short watch on earth, and then lay down to sleep.
Pain is for man ; and oh ! how vast a pain
For crimes which made the Godhead bleed in vain ?
Annulled his groans, as far as in them lay,

And flung his agonies and death away ?
 As our dire punishment forever strong,
 Our constitution, too, forever young,
 Cursed with returns of vigor still the same,
 Powerful to bear, and satisfy the flame ;
 Still to be caught, and still to be pursued ;
 To perish still, and still to be renewed !
 And this my help ! my God ! at thy decree !
 Nature is changed, and hell should succor me.
 And canst thou then look down from perfect bliss,
 And see me plunging in the dark abyss ?
 Calling the Father in a sea of fire,
 And pouring blasphemies at thy desire ?
 With mortal's anguish wilt thou raise thy name,
 And by my pangs Omnipotence proclaim ?

* * * *

Forbid it ! and oh ! grant, great God, at least
 This one, this slender, almost no request ;
 When I have wept a thousand lives away,
 When torment is grown weary of its prey,
 When I have raved ten thousand years in fire,
 Ten thousand thousands — *let me then expire* "

Deep anguish ! but too late ; the hopeless soul,
 Bound to the bottom of the burning pool,
 Though loath, and ever loud blaspheming owns
 He 's justly doomed to pour eternal groans ;
 Enclosed with horrors, and transfixed with pain,
 Rolling in vengeance, struggling with his chain ;
 To talk to fiery tempests, to implore
 The raging flame to give its burnings o'er ;
 To toss, to writhe, to pant beneath his load,
 And bear the weight of an offended God !

It may be doubted if this fearful subject was ever more effectively presented than Dr. Young has done in these impressive lines. The lost soul acknowledges its sins, and confesses the justice of its condemnation, but still implores mercy. But when it finds that mercy is "dead"

in heaven, and love extinguished in its source, and that pardon is impossible, it humbly craves the last boon and the least, it thinks, that the Creator could bestow, — it asks only to be permitted to die, *to be annihilated*. And lest this should seem to imply a desire on its part to escape punishment, and thus defraud justice of its due, and rob God of any part of his glory, it ventures to propose such terms as in its poor opinion would amply protect both. It does not beg for immediate annihilation, but is willing that God should take any amount of revenge he pleases.

When I have wept a thousand lives away,
 When torment has grown weary of its prey,
 When I have raved ten thousand years in fire,
 Ten thousand thousands — let me then expire !

But even this poor request cannot be granted ; for which I have never heard any reasons that did not rather increase than lessen my wonder. That God should wish to perpetuate sin and suffering for their own sake, in any part of his universe, is equally at war with his benevolence and his holiness. If any souls have become “incurable,” it would seem far better that they should be annihilated than exist to deform the otherwise fair universe of God. But sound orthodoxy cannot allow this. Their annihilation would, in the first place, deprive the saints in glory of half their happiness. They would no longer know how happy they were ; for it is from beholding the miseries of the damned, and by way

of contrast only, that they become sensible how blessed their own condition is. These torments of the damned mightily heighten and set off the joys of God's favored children. Annihilating the damned and extinguishing the fires of hell would dim the glories of heaven itself, since it would deprive them of their dark background, so important in Professor Patton's theory of the perfection of the universe. Heaven without a hell would be but a dull and uninteresting place, and its felicities would soon pall upon the senses of our saints in glory. The annihilation of the wicked is therefore no longer to be deemed possible. It would mar "the eternal fitness of things."

But, in the second place, the annihilation of "incorrigible sinners" would defraud the justice of God of its rightful dues. That the wicked must be punished is at once the express teaching of Scripture, the dictate of reason, and the common voice of history and experience. "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished." It is the declaration of President Edwards, that "God is a strictly just Judge. When men come to stand before him, he will surely judge them according to their works. They that have guilt lying upon them, he will surely judge according to their works. The debt they owe to justice must be paid to the uttermost farthing." This exhibition of the divine justice is vastly pleasing to the saints. They love to see the wicked suffer the just deserts of their sins. Justice

must have its due. The only end of punishment is to satisfy justice. Yet justice is of such a peculiar nature that it is never to be satisfied. Its claims are so enormous that it must be forever impossible to meet and answer them. "One sin, every sin," as President Edwards and the Westminster Assembly of Divines say, "deserves eternal death and damnation, which, in the least degree of it, is the total destruction of the creature." It necessarily follows that it can never be completely suffered; nay, that however much or however long a sinner may suffer, he will at no point in eternity have suffered any appreciable part of what he deserves. All that can be said is, that the work of retribution is going on. "This is the condition of those miserable wretches who suffer the vengeance of eternal fire," says the learned Drexelius, "that they are *always burning*. When a thousand years are gone and past, *they burn*; let another thousand years fly away, *they burn*; their torments are the same as at the beginning; and if after several millions of years some curious person should desire to know how it is with them, whether their condition is not altered for the better, or whether they find no abatement of their pains, no other answer can be given than this: They are *always burning*." They are always being punished, but their punishment is never done. They are always dying, but are never dead. "If you should suffer that punishment," says President Edwards, "you would never pay the

whole debt. Those who are sent to hell never will have paid the whole of the debt they owe to God, nor indeed a part of it which bears any proportion to the whole. They never will have paid a part which bears so great a proportion to the whole as one mite to ten thousand talents. Justice, therefore, never can be actually satisfied in your damnation." In other words, justice insists on being satisfied, and must have the last farthing the sinner owes ; but unfortunately this can never be obtained. Were a sinner to burn in hell a thousand million years, or ten thousand million ages, it would be nothing to eternity ! But this leads to the consideration of the justice of endless punishment.

CHAPTER XX.

ENDLESS TORMENT IN HELL-FIRE IS THE JUST PUNISHMENT OF SIN.

THAT endless punishment, as it has now been described, horrible beyond conception as it is, is strictly just, must of necessity be maintained by all who believe in its existence. No one, professing faith in a God of moral perfections, can admit that any of his acts are unjust, and, least of all, that which determines the eternal destiny of his creatures. Many who have great difficulty in reconciling such punishment with their conceptions of the divine goodness and mercy still insist that it is clearly in harmony with perfect justice. But the manner in which it is generally attempted to show this carries with it evidence of the little serious thought the subject has received, and the very slight apprehension men have of the problem with which they are dealing. From the numerous quotations I have made from the writings of President Edwards, it might be confidently expected that he, at least, must have entertained most impressive notions of endless punishment, and deeply felt what a terrible thing, what a

nameless horror, it is. Yet the facile, not to say superficial and utterly fallacious, way in which he attempts to prove its justice, clearly shows how slight a hold after all it must have taken of a mind like his to permit him to justify it on grounds so wholly assumptive and untenable. Had he been vindicating the shooting of a mad dog, he could hardly have done it in a more summary way than he employed to prove the justice of the punishment — inconceivable in its severity, and endless in its duration — of countless millions of beings made originally in the image of God !

Let us consider for a moment the prominent facts of the problem before us. We all professedly believe in God and in his infinite wisdom, goodness, and power, as well as his justice, mercy, and love. We gladly acknowledge him as our Creator, and ought to rejoice in his moral government over us. It is wise and beneficent. Having made man in his own image, a moral being, endowed with reason and the power of self-determination, he placed him under a moral law, or code of laws, wisely designed to promote his welfare and secure his happiness. But since man is a moral being, and therefore free, he is at liberty to choose whether he will obey the law his Creator has given him, and enjoy the rewards that follow obedience, or disobey and suffer the just punishment that is attached to transgression. Now, it is a fact of universal experience, observation, and history, that men disobey,

and thereby become sinners, and hence proper subjects of God's righteous retributions. Not that men sin always, and in everything, as some pretend, but all are more or less guilty of transgressing the divine laws, so that, as the Apostle says, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

Now, orthodoxy assumes and insists that any and every dereliction from the path of duty, the slightest violation of the law of God, is "an infinite evil," and deserves an endless punishment. Thus President Edwards declares that "every sin deserves eternal death for its punishment;" and in another place says that "any sin deserves death and damnation, which, in the least degree of it, is the total destruction of the creature." So the Westminster Divines affirm that "there is no sin so small but it deserves damnation;" and we know what these terms mean in the orthodox vocabulary. It is exclusion "from the comfortable presence of God," and with that, as we have seen, exclusion from all good, and the suffering of what Dr. Watts calls "exquisite pain," the least degree, the mildest form of which is, as President Edwards says, "the total destruction of the creature."

In imperfect human governments crimes are not only recognized as having a great variety of shades, but efforts are made to proportion the penalty to the various degrees of guilt they imply. All this is done very imperfectly, I need not say, here on earth, but the principles involved

are clearly recognized, and civilized governments endeavor to apply them, as far as possible, in practice. In the divine government, as orthodoxy interprets it, all sins, in one aspect, are alike ; that is, they all deserve an *endless* punishment. They all involve an endless banishment from God, and a condition that forever forbids any return, any possible improvement of temper or purpose. In human governments all penalties are not absolutely destructive to the transgressor, but some are designed to reform him. In the divine government, however, this can never be the case, because the first sin of which one is guilty seals his endless damnation. It is as if, in teaching a child to write, the master should cut off the fingers of all who did not at once write perfectly. It would be a very summary way of punishing. In the same manner, if God's children do not obey him perfectly, he sends them to hell forever, which certainly proves decisive. It would seem more reasonable that a good and holy Being, loving holiness, would rather correct and improve his intelligent creatures than to consign them to a state where all moral improvement is impossible, and suffering is at once severe, unintermitted, without object, and without end. But orthodoxy does not regard the matter in this light. This state of endless sin and suffering has, in its theory, the most important uses. It adds to the happiness of the saints, it glorifies God, and it satisfies justice. The sinner deserves it, and unless it is inflicted, at least in some

cases, the character and administration of God would be dishonored forever.

It is just, we are told. Let us see how this is shown. And to do this I shall first present in full the argument of President Edwards : " I am to show that it is not contrary to the divine perfections. . . . I shall briefly show that it is not inconsistent with the justice of God to inflict an eternal punishment. To evince this, I shall use only one argument, viz., that sin is heinous enough to deserve such a punishment, and such a punishment is no more than proportionable to the evil or demerit of sin. If the evil of sin be infinite, as the punishment is, then it is manifest that the punishment is no more than proportionable to the sin punished, and is no more than sin deserves. And if the obligation to love, honor, and obey God be infinite, then sin, which is the violation of this obligation, is a violation of infinite obligation, and so is an infinite evil. Again, if God be infinitely worthy of love, honor, and obedience, then our obligation to love, honor, and obey him is infinitely great. So that God, being infinitely glorious, or infinitely worthy of our love, honor, and obedience, our obligation to love, honor, and obey him, and so to avoid all sin, is infinitely great. Again, our obligation to love, honor, and obey God being infinitely great, sin is the violation of infinite obligation, and so is an infinite evil. Once more, sin being an infinite evil, deserves an infinite punishment, an infinite punishment is no

more than it deserves. Therefore such a punishment is just ; which was the thing to be proved. There is no evading the force of this reasoning but by denying that God, the sovereign of the universe, is infinitely glorious ; which I presume none of my hearers will venture to do."

This mode of reasoning is much older than President Edwards, though I do not know that it was ever drawn out in the form of a mathematical demonstration before, and the several parts knit together with such apparent skill and perfection. There is no doubt that he himself regarded the argument as absolutely unanswerable ; and it has probably carried conviction to thousands and thousands of ingenuous minds, and, in a manner, reconciled them to a doctrine against which their whole better nature instinctively rebelled. Then the reputation of President Edwards as a thinker and a prince among metaphysicians has given additional weight to this reasoning, and led many to accept it under the supposition that, on a point of this importance, he could hardly fall into error. Yet, when considered for a moment, the whole argument is seen to be a house built upon sand, — a piece of logical filigree work, not worth the paper on which it was written, — a fallacy, indeed, so egregious that the wonder is how such a mind as Edwards's could have been amused by it, and much more how he could have sent it forth into the world as affording a rational and stable ground for the

most horrible dogma ever associated with any religion, human or divine.

In this famous argument it will be observed that we have nothing but a series of infinities. God is infinite, and infinitely glorious, and infinitely worthy of love, honor, and obedience ; and hence the obligation to love, honor, and obey him is infinitely great ; and the violation of this infinite obligation is, therefore, infinite, and an infinite evil, or, in other words, an infinite sin ; and an infinite sin deserves an infinite punishment ; an infinite punishment is only proportionate to the sin or the offence punished. Now, were it a fact that man also is infinite, able to comprehend infinity, to recognize the infinite gloriousness of God, and to feel the infinite obligation to love and obey him ; in a word, were he a God instead of a man, the argument might have been valid, if one infinite being could be supposed dependent upon another, and under obligation to love and serve him. But man is very clearly not a God of infinite capacities and powers, but a mere creature, of a finite nature, who talks about infinity, but cannot comprehend it, and whose obligations cannot transcend the limits God has assigned him. As a finite being, all his acts, duties, obligations, responsibilities, are necessarily finite ; and to talk as President Edwards does of his being under infinite obligations, in the strict sense of the term, is not merely nonsense, but an absurdity. It

is a thing that is a self-contradiction, and cannot be. The whole argument, therefore, rests on a gross assumption, an assumption so enormous that it is a marvel how any thoughtful man could ever be guilty of making it. Yet, as far as I have observed, it runs through all of President Edwards's works. He never speaks of sin otherwise than as infinite, and is always guilty of drawing its infinity, not from the nature of the sinner, but from that of God, against whose law the sin is committed. "Why should not that majesty, which thou hast despised," he asks, "be manifested in the greatness of thy punishment? . . . Thou hast despised the mighty power of God; thou hast not been afraid of it. Now, why is it not fit that God should show the greatness of his power in thy ruin? . . . Think it not strange that God should deal so severely with thee, or that the wrath which thou shalt suffer should be so great. For great as it is, it is no greater than that love of God which thou hast despised." In another place he says: "If there be *any* evil or faultiness in sin against God, there is *certainly infinite* evil; for if it be any fault at all, it has an infinite aggravation, viz., that it is against an infinite object. If it be ever so small upon other accounts, yet, if it be anything, it has one infinite dimension; and so is an infinite evil, which may be illustrated by this: if we suppose a thing to have infinite length, but no breadth and thickness (a mere mathe-

matical line), it is nothing ; but if it have *any* breadth and thickness, though never so small, and infinite length, the quantity of it is infinite ; it exceeds the quantity of any thing, however broad, thick, and long, wherein these dimensions are all finite."

It is in this way President Edwards always speaks on this subject. Sin is infinite, and deserves an infinite punishment, not because man is infinite, but because God is so. In like manner, though with evident hesitancy and some qualification, Dr. Watts says : "There is a sort of infinite evil in sin, arising from the consideration of the person against whom it is committed, that is, the great and blessed God. . . . All sin being an offence against God, an infinite object, and a violation of his law, is a dishonor of infinite Majesty, an affront of the divine authority, and therefore its aggravations arise in that proportion to a sort of infinity, and require an equal punishment. . . . When divine justice pronounces a sentence against the sinner equal to the demerit of sin, it must be infinite, that is, eternal ; and the prisoner shall never be released from the prison and the punishment till he has paid the uttermost farthing, and till he has made satisfaction to God equal to his demands and the demerit of his offence." So the learned Pareus reasons. "It belongs to justice," he says, "to maintain the proportion between the offence and the punishment. But a sin committed against God is an infinite sin. God is an infinite being, and an infinite pun-

ishment is, therefore, due to a sin committed against an infinite God. Justly, therefore, does he threaten the sinner with temporal and eternal death."

"So foul and horrid a thing is mortal sin, in its own nature," says Jeremy Taylor, "that though it passed only in thought, and none knew it but God and he who committed it, and which endured no longer than an instant, yet it deserves the torments of hell for all eternity; for by how much greater is the majesty of God, which is despised, by so much greater is the injury offered him; and therefore, as the majesty of God, which is despised by sin, is infinite, so the despite of it must contain, in itself, a certain kind of infinity."

Thus, if the advocates of endless punishment are permitted to invent premises for their argument to suit their fancy, and to assume as facts whatever they think necessary to their purpose, there should be no great difficulty in demonstrating the absolute justice of any possible degree or duration of hell-torments. Let them take for granted that sin is infinite, and must it not appear reasonable that the punishment should be so? This point, however, which they so readily assume, is the very thing to be proved. Is sin infinite? Has it any element of infinity in it? And, if so, whence is it derived? To say that it is infinite because it is a violation of divine law amounts to nothing; for in that case obedience to divine law should be infinite, which none will allow. Then the

absurdity of the whole argument may be shown in the following simple manner.

Let us suppose a human being to commit one sin only, and that the least conceivable ; let us further suppose that the punishment is nicely adjusted to the sin, and is therefore the least known in "the world of woe," but endless in its duration. Now, it is easily shown that this punishment, though the mildest, must in the ages of eternity amount to more suffering than has been endured by the whole human race, in all its individual members, since its creation ! Nay, this is but the beginning of its punishment. For as the ages go on, though it be not at all increased, as some have dreamed it will be, it must keep adding more and more to the dread amount already suffered ; and the time will by and by come when it will have endured more misery than the whole human race will have endured on earth, should it continue for a million or ten millions of years in the future ! Now, will any man, in his senses, pretend to say that such an amount of suffering, and, I must add, hopeless suffering, is the just punishment of the least sin mortal ever committed ? What, then, would be an adequate punishment for the greatest sin ?

But the least punishment in hell, if we may believe the advocates of its torments, is something fearful in degree as well as endless in duration. We have already seen some descriptions of its variety of pains and their ter-

rible severity. "If one were cast into some deep dungeon," says Jeremy Taylor, "without clothes, exposed to the inclemency of the cold and moisture of the place, where he should not see the light of heaven ; should have nothing to feed on, but once a day some little piece of hard barley-bread ; and that he were to continue there six years without speaking or seeing of anybody ; and not to sleep on other bed but the cold ground ; what a misery were this ! One week of that habitation would appear longer than a hundred years. Yet compare this with what shall be in the banishment and prison of hell, and you shall find the miserable life of that man to be a happiness ; there, in all his troubles, he should not meet any one to scoff at his misfortunes, none to torment and whip him ; but in hell he shall find both ; the devils shall not cease to deride, whip, and cruelly torment him : there should be no horrid sights, no fearful noises of howlings, groanings, and lamentations ; in hell the eyes and ears of the damned shall never be free from such affrights : there should be no flames of fire to scorch him ; in hell they shall burn into his bowels : there he might move and walk ; in hell not stir a foot : there he may breathe the air without stink ; in hell he shall suck in nothing but flames, stink, and sulphur : there he might hope for coming forth ; in hell there is no redemption : there that little piece of hard bread would seem every day a dainty ; but in hell, in millions of years, his eyes shall not behold a

crumb of bread nor a drop of water, but shall eternally rage with hunger and a burning thirst : this is to be the calamity of that land of darkness."

One great factor of the torments of hell, upon which all insist with frequency and eloquence, is fire ; and this is described as so much more penetrating and terrible than any with which we are acquainted, that the fiercest earthly fire, a blazing furnace, would seem a delight, or, as Father Müller expresses it, "a pleasure-garden," in comparison. The reader will not forget the declaration of Jeremy Taylor, before quoted, that "such are the torments and miseries of hell, that if all the trees in the world were put in one heap and set on fire, I would rather burn there till the day of judgment than suffer only for the space of one hour that fire of hell." And this is but a single example of the intensity of all hell-torments. Everything there is represented on a similar scale of severity. The following is the declaration of the good Jesuit Drexelius, embracing the whole round of the punishments of the future world.

"If," says he, "all the severest and most barbarous tortures which were ever invented by the tyrants of the earth, who, by anxious thoughts and hellish contrivances, improved and refined the art of cruelty, and brought it to perfection ; if these, I say, were to be heaped upon the head of one man, and he were to endure them for a hundred years, yet they would not come near the pains of the damned even for one day !"

I do not know that I have ever met so bold and, at the same time, so sweeping a statement as this in any other writer, but something like it is implied by all writers on this subject. It is involved in the very spirit of the doctrine, and is thought to be necessary to make it effective to the purpose in hand. Men are to be terrified from sin, and frightened into religion and heaven ; and the more dreadful the punishments before them, so much the more efficient the doctrine becomes. But this statement of Drexelius — and the same may be said of the statements of President Edwards, Jeremy Taylor, Dr. Watts, and the whole rank and file of the advocates of endless punishment — carries an implication that seems to me not simply profane, but would be blasphemous if those who utter it knew or had any sense of what they are saying ; for what is it but saying that God is about to act as much worse than all the tyrants of the world have ever acted, as he is greater and more potent than they. They have, by anxious thoughts and hellish contrivances, improved and refined the art of cruelty, and brought it to such perfection as it is capable of here on earth and in the hands of such mortals as they ; but God will outdo them all ! In the way of cruelty, of inflicted torments, of all forms of suffering, of all imaginable horrors, hell is to be the master-work of the Almighty. Clothe the Devil with omnipotence, give him all the knowledge and wisdom of God, — if wisdom can be used to such devilish purposes, — and

what could he do worse than these saints, so anxious to honor their Creator, habitually ascribe to their heavenly Father? Here in this world, even the wicked are generally tender of the reputation of their parents, and look at their character through the eyes of filial affection, and speak of them in tones to reflect what honor they can on their life and memory. But these good people, who claim to be the children of God and his especial favorites, seem to find high satisfaction in representing him as the most cruel, the most unrelenting being in the universe, who finds joy and gains glory in tormenting his sinful creatures through all eternity; and his saints share in his joy and triumph.

But this argument for the justice of endless punishment from the infinity of sin has not been uniformly satisfactory. Dr. Dwight, while maintaining the eternity of punishment, and vindicating its justice on other grounds, speaks of this argument of President Edwards and others in the following manner: "It is not my design to deny this doctrine, nor to scrutinize the arguments by which it is usually supported. It is, however, but just to observe that neither the doctrine nor the arguments have appeared so satisfactory to the minds of others as they seem to have done to those by whom they have been alleged. We know nothing of infinity, but *the fact that certain things are infinite*. The *nature* of infinity we do not comprehend at all, nor form a conception what the phraseology means.

It hardly needs be observed that where we have no con-
• ceptions we can form no comparisons, and therefore can
make no propositions the truth of which can be perceived
by our minds. Concerning the fact that some things are
infinite, we may, with sufficient care, argue to some ex-
tent successfully. Concerning the nature of infinity, I
discern no manner in which such minds as ours can argue
at all. But in our discussions concerning infinity, we are
prone, insensibly, to blend these two things together, and
often are amused with words only, when we suppose our-
selves to be employed about ideas. Hence have arisen
the perplexity and the want of satisfaction which have
attended inquiries concerning this subject. I shall, there-
fore, not insist on these arguments, nor on the conclusion
to which they conduct us."

It should need no elaborate proofs of reasoning to con-
vince any fair mind that it is not possible for a finite being
to perform any infinite action, or any action of infinite
desert, good or bad ; God only is equal to that. And
while we rightly ascribe infinite attributes and perfections
to him, I do not know that we have proof that he has ever
exercised either infinite power or infinite goodness in their
full extent. In his works of power can we say with con-
fidence that he could not do more than he has done ;
and in his works of grace is it not possible that he might
have transcended all the exhibitions of his love ? In
both fields of activity he has acted in accordance with his

infinite wisdom and sovereign will. We speak of God's infinite justice ; but is infinite justice anything but perfect justice everywhere manifested? Besides, it is the peculiarity of justice which many of the writers I have quoted above seem to have overlooked, — that it must be *just*. It can never go beyond the limit of right without losing its character, and becoming unjust. The Scriptures uniformly represent the divine justice as proportioning the punishment to the sin punished. It renders to men “according to their works ;” “he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong that he hath done.” “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”

If punishment exceeds the measure of guilt, it at once takes on the character of revenge. It loses its venerable aspect, and becomes an object of universal detestation. Every one, except him who is indulging this malignant passion, feels how brutal and base it is. It is essentially an unreasoning, savage passion that proposes no end but its own gratification by the pain of another. And it is clear that, if properly analyzed, the doctrine of endless punishment, as described above, is finally reduced to revenge, and far the most striking and revolting instance of it the universe has ever seen or can see. If we concede to the sinner the worst aims and the worst actions for his whole life of a hundred years, however vast the mischief he may do to his fellow-men, and the dishonor he may reflect upon his Maker, it is still finite, and may be meas-

ured. Infinite it is not ; infinite it cannot be. If now we assume the doctrine of endless punishment as it has been exhibited in the words of its advocates in the preceding pages, "God takes this sinner in hand," to use the phraseology of President Edwards, and shows us what He can do. If the sinner has done the worst he could toward God, God now does the worst he can toward the sinner ! The sinner during his hundred years never tired of sinning, and God through eternity will never tire in punishing him. He can never punish him enough. He proposes no object but to punish, unless it is "to satisfy his justice," which had better be called revenge, and even that will never be satisfied ; for, however long and however severely he may punish him, there is still an eternity remaining in which to punish him more. The very notion of *endless* punishment precludes all notion of any good to be accomplished in the punished. God does not propose to teach him anything, to lead him to better thoughts, to bring him to repentance, or quicken him to spiritual improvement of any kind. He punishes only to make his victim suffer, and to show his power in thus making him suffer ; and orthodoxy beholds in this exhibition of the divine power the glory of God, and in this bitter, unrelenting revenge that will yield to no expostulations, that will hear no prayers, that will show no mercy, an eternal occasion for thanksgiving and joyous praise ! There may be beauties in this doctrine, but my eye has not been

trained to behold them ; it may have inexpressible charms, but my heart has not been taught to feel them. To my poor reason, an endless hell in the universe of God would be an endless reproach to its Maker ; “a world of woe,” for which no adequate cause can be assigned, filled with sentient beings, which either should not have been created or, as a less evil and dishonor than endless torment, should now be annihilated.

CHAPTER XXI.

ALL MANKIND WITHOUT EXCEPTION DESERVE ENDLESS DAMNATION.

IT is a constant doctrine of the so-called orthodox church, that our first parents, by their sin in eating the forbidden fruit in the garden of Eden, not only incurred the wrath of God, but justly made themselves liable to endless damnation. This was the proper penalty of the law. When referring to the forbidden fruit, God said, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," the words carried the terrific import that in case of disobedience they should suffer the torments of hell throughout eternity. "This," says President Edwards, "was the death threatened in the law. This is to die, in the highest sense of the word. This is to die sensibly, to die and know it; to be sensible of the gloom of death." The Westminster Confession expresses the penalty of that law in the same manner, saying that by it man is "made subject to death, with all miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal."

But this represents, after all, only the very smallest part

of the consequences of that primal sin. True, to consign two human beings to hell and an eternity of such torments as we have been taught make up its punishment, is not a matter of trifling import in any view we are pleased to take of it. Lost and sinful as the world is, or may be thought to be, the story of one man—and he the greatest criminal on earth—suffering hell-torments for one year or one month, would excite the sympathies of the whole human family, and call forth their united prayers for his release or his death. Such sufferings for one day would shock all mankind. The hardest and most cruel would stand aghast with horror. It would be something so strange, so contrary to all experience and observation, that none could fail to be struck with amazement. Here, if suffering is carried beyond a certain point, nature gives way, and insensibility ensues. It is a benevolent arrangement of divine Providence. Excessive sufferings, too, are generally short. God has kindly ordered that one shall not live long in fire. Severe as the agony may be, it is soon over. Such a spectacle as here supposed would, therefore, amaze the world.

But, as I have said before, the damnation of our first parents, terrible as it must be in itself considered, is as nothing to the wide-spread ruin their sin occasioned. It is the doctrine of the orthodox church in all its branches that, by a special and most remarkable as well as disastrous arrangement,—as arbitrary as it is unaccountable,—

this sin of Adam and Eve is imputed by our wise and gracious Creator to their children and children's children, throughout all the generations of the human race ; so that we are all born under the same "wrath of God and curse of the law" as they brought upon themselves, and therefore deserve, and may justly suffer, the same intolerable and eternal damnation ! The doctrine is not a pleasant one, and even those who profess to believe it are obliged to confess that it is mysterious, and surrounded by difficulties. Calvin and his school of divines boldly resolve it into the will of God. "The loss of salvation by the whole race, through the guilt of one parent," he says, "was an event that did not happen by nature ;" that is, it was the result of a special divine ordinance. Again he says : "The Scripture proclaims that all men were, in the person of their father, sentenced to eternal death. This, not being attributable to nature, it is evident must have proceeded from the wonderful counsel of God." The meaning obviously is that there is no natural law by which the sins of parents are imputed to their children, and their children punished for these sins as if they had themselves committed them. No one ever dared to urge the doctrine of "heredity" so far as this. Then, if the Scriptures affirm what Calvin ascribes to them, "that all men were, in the person of their father, sentenced to eternal death," — which I have failed to find in their pages, — they very plainly contradict themselves, which, if it does not de-

stroy the authority of the Bible, certainly demands that we should adopt the doctrine that is clear instead of one that is doubtful, and that which is in harmony with nature and the dictates of common-sense rather than one that outrages both. There is no principle of ethics more determinate and universally acknowledged than that the innocent cannot be punished for the guilty ; and Moses made it a law among the ancient people of God that "the fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers : every man shall be put to death for his own sin." Ages subsequent to the time of Moses, the Hebrews had adopted a saying, that "the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." The falsehood and moral mischiefs of this proverb were so gross that God instructed his prophet to reprove the people, and call them back to wholesome opinions. "Behold," he said, "all souls are mine ; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine : the soul that sinneth it shall die. . . . The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son : the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him ; and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." In other words, sin and its punishment are strictly personal affairs, which admit of no substitution. No man can sin for another, or be punished for another. That all are liable to *suffering* as a consequence of the

sins of others is matter of every-day observation. We are so linked together by the ties of blood, affection, or interest, that the conduct of one naturally affects the happiness of others. The family of a drunkard, a thief, a murderer, cannot avoid the suffering which his guilt and disgrace occasion them ; but to confound this suffering with punishment is a flagrant violation of right thinking and an offence to good morals.

Instead of teaching, as the orthodox world declares, that "all men were, in the person of their father, sentenced to eternal death," the Holy Scriptures are express and emphatic everywhere in inculcating, what the universal conscience of mankind approves, that God "renders to every man according to his works," and that "he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons." In its immoderate zeal to maintain the doctrine of endless punishment, orthodoxy has invented a new kind of sin,—a kind of which the Bible makes no mention, and which no human conscience ever yet acknowledged,—which it calls "original" or "birth" sin. It is not anything we have done, nor anything we could avoid, but something inflicted upon us by the will of God, and for which we are held responsible, and, as Calvin says, "sentenced to eternal death." In other words, we are, unfortunately, born sinners, born guilty of offending God, born heirs of damnation ! And orthodoxy ascribes this fearful doom,

this intolerable curse, this awful injustice, to the Creator ! “ I inquire,” says Calvin, “ how it came to pass that the fall of Adam, independent of any remedy, should involve so many nations and their infant children in eternal death, but because such was the will of God. . . . It is an awful decree, I confess ; but no one can deny that God foreknew the future final fate of man before he created him, and that he did foreknow it because it was appointed by his own decree.”

That we cannot see the moral beauty and justice of this transaction, Augustine tells us, is because we have lost “ the perception of that most exalted and purest wisdom by which we could apprehend how great a sin was committed in that first transgression.” But whatever we may think of the validity of Augustine’s reasoning, he still maintained it as a fact that, on account of this first sin of Adam and Eve, “ the whole mass of the human race is damned ;” and in this the whole orthodox church practically agrees. “ It is an awful decree,” they are all obliged to confess ; but what can orthodoxy do without it ?

CHAPTER XXII.

ALL ARE BORN TOTALLY DEPRAVED, YET ARE
REQUIRED TO KEEP A HOLY LAW.

AS now exhibited, the condition of the human race seems sufficiently calamitous. We come into the world accursed, with the wrath of God upon us, and under sentence of "eternal death," that is, endless damnation. But this, bad as it is, is not the worst of our case. We are here placed under a divine moral government, with a whole code of laws, which are holy, just, and good, and which we are required constantly and perfectly to obey, and for every act of disobedience we are threatened with a retribution of another eternal death equal to that to which we were born. And what makes our condition the harder and the more calamitous is the fact that we are, by the very constitution of our nature, "totally depraved," and consequently wholly unfitted, not merely for perfect obedience, but any obedience whatever. It was one of the evils of our first parents' sin, that by it "they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all

the faculties and parts of soul and body." And, "being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation." Hence we not only come into the world under the wrath and curse of God and heirs of endless damnation, but to complete our misfortunes we are utterly incapable of doing anything to help ourselves, or even to avoid constant accumulations of sin and increasing damnation. To sin is as natural to us as to breathe, and as necessary; and we can no more live and avoid one than the other. Yet God demands an obedience to all his laws that shall be at once ready and perfect! By a wise and benevolent ordinance we inherit Adam's sin and depravity, and are still held bound to the performance of every moral and religious duty. God knows perfectly that we can no more perform the least of these duties than we can change the course of the earth in its orbit or reverse the procession of the seasons. For all the faculties of man's soul are "wholly defiled;" he is by nature "utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good," and as if that were not sufficient to unfit him for any proper moral action, he is by the same nature "wholly inclined to all evil." How is it possible to conceive of a more unfortunate and helpless being — helpless, I mean, in regard to the obedience God requires — than we have here? We should think a parent very unreasonable and cruel who

should insist that his child, born a cripple, should run and play with other children, or that one born blind should see, or one born deaf should hear, and should severely punish such a child because it did not implicitly obey. What is beyond our powers is impossible to us, whether in the realm of the physical or the moral, and it is unreasonable to require it. "The Bible," says Dr. Hodge, the latest expositor of systematic theology in this country and perhaps in the Christian world,— "the Bible uniformly represents men in their natural state, since the fall, as blind, deaf, and spiritually dead, from which state they can no more deliver themselves than one born blind can open his own eyes, or one corrupting in the grave can restore himself to life." Yet it is a very patent fact that the Bible everywhere speaks of man as a moral being, addresses him as one who is able to see and hear and obey ; calls him to duty, urges upon him motives to obedience, threatens him with punishment if he disobeys, and treats him precisely as if he possessed all his faculties and had the power of using them. And are we, indeed, to believe that God is so unreasonable a master as to demand of a blind man that he shall see, or of a dead man that he shall live? And especially are we to believe that for not doing what we acknowledge is simply impossible, God is so unjust as to threaten and inflict endless torments?

President Edwards is eloquent in describing the fearful condition in which, in our natural state, we are placed.

"We may learn," he says, "how dismal are the effects which the fall of man has brought upon the world. It has brought all mankind into this dreadful condition of which we have heard. . . . What a miserable world, therefore, is the world in which we live ! This world lies under a curse." This he proves by showing in his way, that is, asserting, that human nature is suffering under a fatal poison, "which has been infused into and spread over the man. He has been bitten by a fiery serpent, whose bite issues in a most tormenting death." He is a child of the Devil ; he has no God, at least no friend in God : God is his constant enemy. He is in danger of destruction every moment. "Natural men hang over the pit of hell, as it were, by a thread that has a moth continually gnawing it. They know not when it will snap in twain and let them drop. . . . A natural man never goes to sleep but he is in danger of waking up in hell."

But this is not all. While he continues in a natural state he is constantly increasing his guilt, and adding to the horrors of his damnation. "It would be dreadful," says President Edwards, "to be in a natural condition, if a person could continue as he is, and his condition grow no worse ; if he could live in a natural condition, and never have it any more dreadful than when he first begins to sin. But it is yet much more dreadful when we consider that it every day becomes worse and worse. The condition of natural men is worse to-day than it was yesterday, and

that on several accounts. The heart [which was utterly averse to all good, and inclined to all evil at one's birth] grows more and more polluted and hardened. The longer sin continues unmortified, the more it is strengthened and rooted. Their guilt also grows greater, and hell every day grows hotter ; for they are every day adding sin to sin, and so their iniquity is increasing over their heads more and more. Every new sin adds to their guilt. Every sin deserves eternal death for its punishment. And therefore in every sin that a man commits there is so much added to the punishment to which he is exposed. There is, as it were, another eternal death added to augment his damnation. . . . If a man has lived twenty years in a natural condition, the fire has been increasing every day since he lived. It has been, as it were, blown up to a greater degree of fierceness. Yea, how dreadfully does one day's continuance in sin add to the heat of hell-fire."

And all this, I beg the reader to remember, while he is born totally depraved, and, according to the theory, is as unable to obey God, to repent, to do a good act, or think a good thought, as a man born blind is to open his own eyes, or a dead man to raise himself to life ! Is it possible to conceive of a moral government more unreasonable or more unjust ? Without conversion all men must certainly be damned, and "they have nothing on which to depend," says President Edwards, "for conversion. They

have nothing in the world by which to persuade themselves that they will ever be converted. Left to themselves, they never will repent and turn to God. If they are ever converted, therefore, it is God who must do it. But they have no promise of God that they ever shall be converted." In other words, they cannot help themselves ; God alone can help them, and he does not ; and, as President Edwards says, "it is but a peradventure whether he will ever give them repentance." It was this thought that so tormented the late Rev. Albert Barnes. "I confess," said he, "when I look on a world of sinners and sufferers, — upon death-beds and grave-yards, — upon the world of woe filled with hosts to suffer forever ; when I see my friends, my parents, my family, my people, my fellow-citizens, — when I look upon a whole race all involved in this sin and danger, — and when I see the great mass of them wholly unconcerned, and when I feel that God only can save them, and yet He does not do so, I am struck dumb. It is all dark, dark, dark to my soul, and I cannot disguise it."

It is obvious that, as Catherine Beecher once said, "there must be a terrible mistake somewhere," when an intelligent and pious Christian — for such Mr. Barnes is acknowledged by all to have been — is forced to make a confession like this. Either the moral government of God is a very unfortunate one, or men take a very false view of it. It was the boast of the beloved disciple that "God is

light, and in him is no darkness at all ;” and in another place he says : “ The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.” Yet to Mr. Barnes and many others it is not only dark, but all dark. On some of the gravest problems of our being there is no light. Dr. Pond, though less distressed than Mr. Barnes, finds difficulties in his path, which he is obliged to confess, but is unable to remove. “ Theological writers,” he says, “ have found much difficulty in reconciling the earnestness of God for the salvation of sinners with the fact that so many of them are not saved. It results from the moral perfection of God that he must earnestly desire the salvation of sinners. To suppose the contrary would be to divest him of even common benevolence. . . . But how are we to reconcile the earnestness of God for the salvation of sinners with the fact that so many are not saved? If he desires their salvation, why does he not save them? If he has no pleasure in the final destruction of the wicked, why does he not rescue them from so dreadful an end? Shall we reply to these questions by saying that God *cannot* save more of the human family than he does without destroying their free agency, which is equivalent to saying that he cannot save them at all? For to convert, sanctify, and save sinners, or rather creatures, *beings*, which are not free agents, is a contradiction in terms. Shall we, then, meet the difficulty in question by affirming that God *cannot* save more of the human family than he does? He desires

to save more, but he *cannot* accomplish it. He saves as many as he *possibly can*. But are such assertions consistent with reason or with truth? Is not God omnipotent? Has he not the hearts of men in his hand, as the rivers of water, to turn them whithersoever he will? Could not the Being who converted Paul have converted Judas? Was not he who converted three thousand on the day of Pentecost *able*, had he put in requisition all his power, to have converted a great many more? And besides, if God is not *able* to do all the good which he, on the whole, desires, — if the promptings of his benevolence must be forever restrained through a want of power, — how can he be happy? Confident I am that this mode of relieving the difficulty above suggested cannot be, with propriety, adopted. We are constrained, therefore, to seek for some other mode, and in this search we are essentially aided by the views which have been exhibited on the general subject of probation. Is God able to do more for the salvation of sinners than he is actually doing — I speak now of sinners under the gospel — consistently with their being in a state of probation, and with their having a fair and sufficient trial? That he has power to do more than he does, were not his omnipotence held in check by moral considerations, I have no doubt. But his omnipotence is held in check by moral considerations; and among these may not this be chief, — the necessity of furnishing to our race in this world a season of trial?"

But does this consideration materially relieve the difficulty? The trouble is that a world of human beings, made in the image of God and for his glory, instead of reaching the end of their being, should, the great majority of them at least, sink into final and remediless destruction, and, so far from glorifying their Creator, are to exist through eternity a perpetual reproach to his goodness, his wisdom, or his power. The doctrine of probation can be only a statement of the method by which God proposed to accomplish his purpose ; and, as Dr. Pond is obliged to confess, it proves a sublime failure. "The moral perfection of God" makes it necessary that he should propose, as the end of man's creation, his final holiness and happiness. "To suppose the contrary would be to divest him of even common benevolence." Then as to the divine power there can be no dispute. If failure occurs, therefore, it must arise from the badness of his plan, or the use of injudicious means, that is, from a want of wisdom. In other words, to state it plainly, God is good enough to desire, and consequently to propose, the best and noblest ends for the human race. He has power sufficient to carry out and accomplish any plan he could devise for the attainment of these ends ; yet the issue is such as shocks the reason and the moral nature of his best friends, and strikes them dumb. The divine wisdom has failed ! He does not know enough to do what he

desires, to reach the ends he proposes, and thus accomplish his will. How, then, is he to be happy?

But is this difficulty really in the plan of God, or only in the narrow and imperfect views men are pleased to take of it? We have all heard the story of the astronomer who, looking through his telescope, saw a monster in the heavens; it was only an insect on one of the lenses of his instrument. In like manner our theologians find frightful defects in the government of God, while the only trouble is in their own minds by which this government is contemplated. They insist on limiting the Holy One of Israel, and, therefore, without warrant of Scripture or reason, confine the whole economy of his grace to this speck of earth and this moment of time. The divine plan is too broad and too beneficent to be cooped up within such narrow bounds. Is it reasonable to suppose that God, who occupies a thousand years in the growth of a tree, which yet is destined to fall and perish utterly, should, as by law, confine himself to a human lifetime of ten, twenty, fifty, or a hundred years here on earth, in making and training, expanding and beautifying, a human soul, which is to endure and shine like a star in the firmament forever? Then, let it be remembered, this soul is not a *thing* subject to merely physical laws, but is a conscious being, endowed with personality, having an individual will, and the power of self-determination, and hence naturally demands scope for its energies and vari-

ous activities. And being a free agent, as Dr. Pond properly calls it, it is able, not only to act in harmony with the divine will, but against it ; able not only to obey God, but to disobey him. It enters the world ignorant, and it has everything to learn. It is placed upon probation, if you please, but not that kind of commercial probation which Dr. Pond describes. It is not here for the purpose of teaching God whether it is such as he wishes, and if not, to be thrown away, but to be itself taught, to be educated, trained, disciplined ; and the process does not end till his purpose is attained, it matters not through what length of time or change of worlds it may extend. God made that soul to mirror his own perfections, and reflect his glory ; and do you think he will finally be disappointed ? He has in his possession all the resources of the universe, and before him all time, and all eternity, if need be, for doing his work and accomplishing his pleasure. That he has shut himself up to a few days, as the doctrine of Probation teaches, is at once so unreasonable and so contrary to the whole spirit of the gospel that no Christian has a right to believe it but upon better grounds than have as yet ever been offered. But this leads to a fuller discussion of the subject.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE DESTINY OF ALL SOULS IRREVOCABLY FIXED AT DEATH.

IT is a fundamental doctrine of the orthodox church that there is no opportunity for repentance, no possibility of attaining salvation, after the close of the present life. The fate of the soul may be decided long before one's death, but in no case does a state of probation extend beyond that moment. This doctrine was taught by Clement of Rome, if we may accept the writings ascribed to him. "After we depart from this life," he says, "we can no longer make confession or repent." So Augustine says, "God has given men only the time of this life for obtaining eternal life." And this opinion Peter Lombard, the Master of Sentences, quotes as decisive. Nor does the doctrine of Purgatory, as held by the Roman Church, at all conflict with this generally accepted dictum ; for, in the first place, the benefits of Purgatory extend only to the members of the true Church, that is, the Roman or Papal, and, in the second place, souls in Purgatory must be in a state of grace, that is, true Christians, only with

some stains of sin to be washed, or rather burned out, before they are fit to enter heaven. But all orthodox people agree that no unconverted person, no person dying in unbelief, or unrepented and unforgiven sin, can by any possibility be saved. The grace of God is confined to this present life. Our orthodox neighbors seem to interpret literally and in a very stringent way the declaration that "Christ Jesus came *into the world* to save sinners," and that he cannot, or will not, save them only "in the world" to which he came ! The present state of our being is one of probation ; the future is one of retribution. As Dr. Watts sang in his time, and so many thousands have sung since : —

Life is the time to serve the Lord,
The time to insure the great reward :
And while the lamp holds out to burn,
The vilest sinner may return.
Life is the hour that God has given
To 'scape from hell and fly to heaven ;
The day of grace, and mortals may
Secure the blessings of the day.

President Edwards perpetually enforces the doctrine that the moment of death closes all opportunities for repentance or reformation, brings an end to all offers of mercy, and to the unrepentant and unbelieving sinner forever seals his damnation. I have already quoted, more than once perhaps, his declaration that "natural men hang over the pit of hell, as it were by a thread that has a moth continually gnawing it. They know not when it will snap

and let them drop. . . . A natural man never goes to sleep but that he is in danger of waking up in hell. . . . And how well may it affright you, and strike terror upon you, when you consider that if you die in your present condition, it is as impossible that you should escape this misery as that God should cease to be just and true. . . . If you should die in your present condition, it is impossible that you shall escape eternal misery. . . . Natural men are in continual danger from death. They know not when nor how death may come. But if it comes while they are in that condition, it sinks them into hell." So Rev. Mr. Love says, — "Let this astonish all of you that are wicked, for as soon as you are dead, you shall go, not into Purgatory, but into hell, where a fire, kindled by the breath of the Lord, shall burn you forever. No better place is provided for thee, when thy soul and body part asunder." "We come into this world fallen creatures," says Dr. Watts, "children of iniquity, and heirs of death ; we have lost the image of God who made us, . . . nor can we ever be made truly happy till the image of the blessed God be restored upon us, till we are made holy as he is holy, till we have a divine change passed upon us, whereby we are created anew and reformed in heart and practice. And this life is the only time given us for this important change. If this life be finished before the image of God be restored to us, this image will never be restored, but we shall bear the image of devils forever. . . . As soon as ever an impeni-

tent sinner has the veil of death drawn over him, all his opportunities of this kind are forever cut off. He that has never repented, never prayed, never honored his God, shall never be able to pray, or repent, or do anything for God or his honor through all the ages of his future immortality."

Does Dr. Watts here mean, what his language clearly expresses, that it will be no longer *possible* for the sinner, after leaving this world, to repent or pray or do anything for God or his honor? Then repentance can no longer be required, and failing to repent can be no sin. Then to love God with all the heart and our neighbor as ourselves will be no duty, and cursing God and hating our fellow-men will offend no law; and where there is no law there can be no transgression. Is the Christian world prepared for a doctrine like this? But Dr. Watts goes on:—

"At the moment of death the time of our preparation for the hour of judgment and for the insurance of heaven and happiness shall be no longer. Miserable creatures that are summoned to die thus unprepared! This life is the only time to prepare for dying, to get ready to stand before the Judge of the whole earth, and to secure our title to the heavenly blessedness. . . . There are blessings offered to sinful, miserable men in time, which will never be offered in eternity, nor put within their reach forever. The gospel hath no calls, no invitations, no encouragements, no promises for the dead who have lost and wasted

their time, and are perished without hope." "The Scriptures everywhere represent our life on earth," says Dr. Pond, "as the seedtime and the only time we shall ever have in which to lay up treasures in heaven." This learned author finds the present life to be a state of "probation," while the future is made exclusively a state of "retribution." We are here, he tells us, in order that our characters may be formed and tried, and we be prepared for the judgment and the awards of eternity. And he thinks this world admirably fitted for giving us all "a fair and sufficient trial." Unfortunately for this popular conception, the present life is one of retribution as well as probation. It is a state of discipline, rather than probation, in the ordinary acceptance of that term. Besides, cannot men see that this life affords the most dissimilar, the most unequal advantages for the attainment of the character required by the gospel? One man is born under the fullest light of the Christian religion, while another opens his eyes upon the world in the midst of pagan darkness. One is led by pious parents in the way of life, while another is brought up surrounded by all vicious examples and influences. There is no end to these diversities, and they go very far to explain the different characters formed. Then look at the differences in the length of life, as well as in its opportunities. One man lives, after arriving at the age of moral responsibility, eighty or a hundred years; another lives forty or fifty; another twenty or thirty; and another

still but ten, five, or perhaps but one, or even a single month, or a single day. It matters not whether life be long or short ; it matters not whether one lives in the blaze of American orthodoxy or amidst the shadows of Asiatic or African ignorance and idolatry. Each human being has his lifetime here to form his character and prepare for the final judgment and its everlasting awards ! And as he is found at the moment of death, so his destiny is determined for eternity. True, the longest human life bears no proportion to the endless ages of the future, not so much as a single drop of water bears to all the oceans of the globe, or a particle of sand to the aggregated matter of the universe. Still the orthodox world insists that the eternity of weal or woe for every human soul depends on the character it forms here in this moment of time. Beyond the grave there is no repentance, no remission of sin, no possibility of securing salvation, and all who die without the true knowledge of God and faith in Jesus Christ, all who die in an unrepentant and unconverted state go immediately to hell, from which there is no deliverance ! Is it possible that men who entertain this opinion have ever seriously thought upon it, and so contemplated its character and consequences as to enable them in any degree to apprehend its enormity ? Its sweep is tremendous and its consequences simply appalling. I do not wonder, therefore, that Dr. Watts, who seems sometimes to have caught a glimpse of the terrible reality, should have cried out as he did : —

Great God! on what a slender thread
 Hang everlasting things!
 The eternal state of all the dead
 Upon life's feeble strings!
 Infinite joy or endless woe
 Attends our every breath!
 And yet how unconcerned we go
 Upon the brink of death!

A doctrine is sometimes best exposed, not by a formal refutation, but by exhibiting the consequences to which, if true, it would necessarily lead. I venture to assume that we are not living in a universe created and governed by deliberate and unmitigated diabolism, but, on the contrary, under a moral economy whose leading characteristic is goodness. With Dr. Hodge, whose orthodoxy none will call in question, I wish to avow the conviction "that it is more congenial with the nature of God to bless than to curse, to save than to destroy;" and with this fundamental principle in mind, I propose to consider, and ask my orthodox friends to go along with me in considering, how large a portion of the human race must be hopelessly lost, if God's grace is, as they generally maintain, confined exclusively to this world.

1. In the first place, if it is true that no soul can be saved which has not previous to death exercised true repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, it follows unavoidably, so far as I can see, that all the heathen must be remorselessly consigned to hell. Perhaps this naked statement would not greatly disturb what

Neander calls "the Christian consciousness" of the Church, since it has for ages been industriously educated in the belief that they are undoubtedly lost. Yet when we reflect that, prior to the Christian era, the whole world was heathen, if we except the little nation of the Jews, and that to-day, after more than eighteen centuries, Christendom embraces, nominally, but about one-third of the human family now on the earth, it must be confessed by all candid persons, and especially by all thoughtful Christians, that, notwithstanding our education, this wide-spread and continuous damnation becomes somewhat startling. It is not precisely what a reverent mind and heart would naturally expect under the government of a God of infinite wisdom, goodness, and power; and, however it may have been in ages past, it is not, let me gratefully acknowledge, what the best Christian thought and feeling can in the present age well bear. It offends reason, and shocks humanity. Still it is what the orthodox church has sedulously taught through all the ages of its history, what has been all but universally believed by it down to the present century, and is no doubt believed by the great majority of the Christian world at this very moment. The Roman Church has always maintained that all the heathen will be damned; and the Protestant churches have, for the greater part, followed, apparently without thought or inquiry, in the footsteps of that venerable mother. Even within the present

generation the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, which undoubtedly represents the popular opinion of the orthodox body, says in one of its Reports : "To send the gospel to the heathen is a work of great exigency. Within the last thirty years *five hundred millions*, for aught we can see in their character or in the Word of God, have gone down to eternal death." These five hundred millions were then understood to constitute a whole generation of the heathen world. More recent, and it is thought more accurate, statistical information has considerably increased the population of the earth. The Board of Commissioners intended merely to say, what they undoubtedly believed and wished the religious world to consider, that all the heathen, as they died, went down to eternal death. The Rev. David Abeel, who will be remembered as a zealous missionary, then recently returned from China, in speaking of the favorable condition of our countrymen as compared with that of the Chinese, used the following expressive words : "Here there are few comparatively to be saved ; there crowds are lying in hopeless, helpless wretchedness. None of these few are obliged to sink into hell ; none of those crowds, we fear, can rise to heaven. They know no Savior ;" and he beseeches his Christian countrymen, "if there is anything in the eternal and irremediable destruction of millions of immortal beings," to rouse themselves and engage more earnestly in the work of saving the

heathen from hell. The Rev. Dr. Cheever, I very well remember, spoke in the same manner: "The belief of the truth that hundreds of millions of our fellow-beings are, generation after generation, sinking into endless ruin," said he, "and that God has placed in our hands the means of their salvation, — an appreciation of this truth, with a spiritual vividness and power at all like that which dwelt in the souls of the Apostles, would quite arrest and enchain the mind beneath its influence, so that a man would act with so much resistless energy for the redemption of his fellow-beings that the world would wellnigh deem him mad. And such madness would be true wisdom." Another writer, whose name I cannot at the moment recall, is still more rhetorical, if not more impressive. "Fifty thousand a day;" says he, "so fast the heathen die! They have sinned and not repented, and are unprepared for heaven. . . . Fifty thousand every day go down to 'the fire that is not quenched;' and should we not think of it as often as *once* every day? *Six hundred millions* more are going the same road. . . . Christian reader, I have been among them, and have seen many of those thousands. . . . Think of them, I pray you. All can do that. Think for at least *one minute*, each day, of the *fifty thousand* who that day sink to the doom of the lost, and the *six hundred millions* more who are hastening to the same ruin of the soul!"

Nothing could be more modest than this request, and

nothing more reasonable than the duty to which it invites us. Fifty thousand of our fellow-beings, flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone, are sinking into an endless hell every twenty-four hours ; and a Christian minister, who seriously believes this, beseeches us to think of this mass of inconceivable wretchedness at least once every day, and to give the subject one minute's thought ! One is naturally tempted to imagine that he would have asked his hearers, not only to think of these daily fifty thousand lost souls, but to offer up a prayer for their deliverance from that state of torment, or, if that were not possible, at least for their annihilation. But if a God of mercy could grant neither of these petitions, a Christian heart might certainly appeal to infinite goodness to stop the creation of these countless millions who seem born only to be damned.

The learned Dr. Hodge, who recently died, after more than fifty years of service in the Princeton Theological Seminary, seems to accord entirely with the writers above quoted as to the damnation of the heathen, but finds the cause of it, not in any want of wisdom, goodness, or power in the Almighty, but in the lukewarmness, indifference, and inactivity of the Church. "In the gift of his Son," he says, "the revelation of his word, the mission of his spirit, and the institution of the Church, God has made abundant provision for the salvation of the world. That the Church has been so remiss in making known the gospel

is her fault. We must not charge the ignorance and consequent perdition of the heathen upon God. We have kept to ourselves the bread of life, and allowed the nations to perish." Dr. Pond, I observe, takes the same general view of the subject. "Is God in fault," he asks, "that the heathen have not the gospel? or does the blame attach exclusively to men?" All exhortations to missionary work breathe the same thought. But what shall we say of the divine wisdom which has placed interests of such infinite moment in hands so unfaithful? The damnation of a single soul is something so immense and terrible that no one can contemplate it without horror. And when this is multiplied by millions and millions, when it is extended to embrace whole nations and races, it becomes not simply appalling, but overwhelming. I can only say again, with Miss Catherine Beecher, "There is a terrible mistake somewhere." But, adopting the opinion of these learned professors, and of the orthodox world with them, we are left to conclude that the heathen are all damned everlastingly because they are ignorant and wicked, and that the Church deserves to be damned for allowing the heathen to be so.

2. The whole heathen world being thus summarily disposed of, to say nothing of the Church itself, let us now inquire into the prospects of Christendom. How large a proportion of what I have generously called a third part of the human race now on earth may with confidence be

considered, actually or prospectively, heirs of salvation? That we have many excellent Christians in the world, whom all should regard as walking in the ways of life, is a fact in which I rejoice, though unfortunately too many of them deny or doubt the salvation of each other. The Roman Church is unhappily infallible, or rather has recently discovered that its Pope is so, and thinks no one can be saved who does not belong to its communion and acknowledge its visible head. All other churches are, in its sight, heretical or schismatic, and are therefore excluded from the benefits of the grace of which the Pope is the divinely appointed almoner. But as this haughty church judges, so she is judged, and with what measure she metes, it is measured to her again. And thus the doubt and condemnation go round, each questioning his neighbor's orthodoxy, and throwing distrust over the prospect of his salvation. But, dismissing all the doubts they entertain about each other's Christian state, and believing that all, of every sect and party, who sincerely call upon the name of Christ, — though entangled in many misconceptions and errors, — will finally be saved, I beg to inquire about the prospects of the great mass of our common Christendom, these three or four hundred million souls, scattered over the continents and islands of the sea, and passing in the world as Christians? Tried by orthodox principles, how many of them can be regarded as within the ark of safety, or, judging by what we know of human

nature and history, have a reasonable prospect of being saved?

In the first place, we cannot overlook the fact that there are many in Christendom who do not believe in the Christian religion, and are not only unbelievers, but entirely reject its claims, spurn it, and would gladly destroy it from the earth. How large this class may be, we have no statistics to show, but such persons are found in almost every Christian community, and are as numerous at Rome as at Berlin or London or Boston. Where there is freedom of speech and the press, they speak and write against this religion, and make war upon it in every way in their power; and where they cannot destroy faith in it, they strive to oppose its progress and lessen its influence. What is the prospect of their salvation? That they may be converted before the close of their life is possible, but the probability is not by any means assuring. Then there is another class, much larger than is honorable to the character of our religion, who are so ignorant and degraded as but poorly to deserve the Christian name. What shall become of them? Are they to be saved on the ground of "invincible ignorance," as our Catholic neighbors sometimes talk, or be damned everlastingly for lack of repentance and faith? After these we have another class, quite Christian by profession, but vicious and criminal by practice, whom all give over to damnation unless they repent and are regenerated.

But, beyond all these classes, there is another, larger and more important than all the others together, made up generally of intelligent, well-meaning people, industrious and honest, and reputable in all the relations of civil and social life, who, while they constitute a large proportion of orthodox parishes, and of almost every community, yet "have no religion," or none at least that would gain them admission to the fellowship of the very churches they help so essentially to maintain. They are "the world's people," "natural persons," who, though born and educated in a Christian land and under Christian institutions, and are largely governed by the principles and spirit of this religion, have never made any "profession," have never experienced that vital change which is deemed essential to salvation, and are consequently regarded by the religious world as in a condition of the greatest danger. In accordance with a wide-spread orthodox opinion this large class of persons is as far from the Kingdom as the heathen themselves; and sometimes they are represented as more unlikely to be converted and brought to glory than the openly irreligious and profane. Such persons, it is said, are apt to trust to their morality, — a self-righteousness no better than filthy rags, — and hence neglect the only means of salvation. In a sermon specially addressed to this class of people President Edwards says: "It may well be a dreadful thought to you that you have no goodness in you, nor have ever done anything which has the least goodness

in it ; that you have never exercised one act of love, nor true thankfulness or obedience to God in your life ; nor ever did the least thing out of true respect to God. The consideration of the dreadful depravity and wickedness of your heart may well be frightful to you ; to think what a sink of corruption it is, how full of all manner of wickedness, how full of enmity against God ; to think that there are the same corruptions in your heart as in the heart of the devil, and that there are the seeds of the same enmity against God, and that you are in the very image of the devil ; . . . that you are a poor desolate creature that have no God to protect you and guide you, and provide for you in the world. . . . You may flatter yourselves that you are not so bad as others. Herein you deceive yourself. It is because you are ignorant of your own heart. What has been said of the depraved state of natural men, of their blindness, their deadness, all belong to you. You may flatter yourself that your condition is not so doleful, because you have always walked orderly, have been moral and religious. Here, also, you deceive yourself. For, notwithstanding your moral and religious behavior, and all your sobriety, you never did the least thing out of a gracious respect to God. You have a heart in the likeness of the heart of the devil. You are without God in the world. God is angry with you every day ; his wrath is not at all appeased. You may flatter yourselves that you are the children of godly parents, that you have many

godly friends who may put up prayers for you, and that your case is not so doleful on that account, and that your danger is not extremely great. But in this you miserably deceive yourselves. You are children of the devil notwithstanding all this. If you die in your present condition, it is impossible that you shall escape eternal misery. And there is great danger that you will die in it. You have no security that you shall not be in hell before to-morrow morning."

Dr. Hodge, after reciting various passages of Scripture which exhibit, as he thinks, the prerequisites necessary to an admission into heaven, asks with becoming emphasis, "Who then can be saved? If the Bible excludes from the kingdom of heaven all the immoral ; all whose hearts are corrupted by pride, envy, malice, or covetousness ; all who love the world, all who are not holy ; all in whom the love of God is not the supreme and controlling principle of action, it is evident that so far as adults are concerned, salvation must be confined to very narrow limits. It is also evident that mere natural religion, the mere objective truth, must be as inefficacious in preparing men for the presence of God, as the waters of Syria to heal leprosy."

Assuming the doctrine of total depravity, as orthodoxy does, these opinions of President Edwards and Dr. Hodge seem not only just, but unavoidable ; and this great class of honest and reputable men, as the world judges, are as far from heaven, and in as manifest danger of hell, as the

darkest pagan or the most flagrant transgressor. It follows, therefore, that while all the heathen, making even to-day two-thirds of the human race now living, are necessarily lost, a very large part of Christendom is left to share the same terrible fate. Indeed, if we may believe the highest authorities, the future condition of those born and educated in Christian lands, and yet dying unsaved, will be unspeakably worse in the future world than that of the most unhappy pagans. They have had greater light, and abused greater privileges, and their damnation will therefore be the more condign. On this point President Edwards often insists. He tells his unconverted hearers that they are greater sinners than the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. Many others speak in the same way. Dr. Pond asks if God is unjust "in punishing the idolatrous heathen in the other world, not as though they had enjoyed and rejected the offers of the gospel, but according to their deserts," clearly implying that their damnation would be less severe than that of the most common sinners among Christian people. But be this as it may, it is obvious, from the general representations of orthodox writers, that of "adults," as Dr. Hodge says, even in Christendom, very few, relatively, will be saved !

3. But speaking of "adults" naturally suggests the problem about the salvation of "infants dying in infancy." What is to become of them? I am quite aware how delicate this question has now become, and how averse

the orthodox world is to its serious consideration, whether in the light of orthodox history or theology. But it is a question that cannot be lightly passed, and ought not to be settled, as is sometimes done, either on the ground of dogmatic partiality on one side, or mere feeling on the other. Several facts give the subject a grave interest. In the first place, the number of infants dying in infancy is very large. I need not here appeal to statistics, but every community, and almost every family, knows by sad experience how frail the life of children is. Then I hardly need say what a tender interest gathers about them. Infancy has a peculiar claim upon the human heart, a claim which even the doctrine of their native depravity has been unable to destroy. The most orthodox seem to love their children as well as the world's people, or even the heathen, and lose them with the same bitter pain. No one possessing the affections and sympathies of our common nature can look on an infant without being touched by a sense of its innocence and its helplessness ; and our own children appeal to us with a force that no good heart can resist. They are objects of our profoundest love. We live in them, and their welfare makes a good part of our own. And when they die, they leave a gap in our hearts that time can never fill. Their images live in our memories long after their little forms have mouldered into dust, and one of the sweetest thoughts of the future is that of meeting them in a world where death is unknown. While

the living about us are perpetually changing, they remain the same ; others may grow old, but to us they are infants still.

It is not to be thought singular, therefore, that in an age like this, to speak of the damnation of infants should seem like an offence against religion, as well as human nature. And I rejoice that it does so. I rejoice that under the best forms of Christian civilization this terrible doctrine, which was so long the disgrace of Christendom, is no longer held, and that the severest schools of theology reject it with something of the abhorrence with which it ought to be contemplated. As a prominent and honored representative of such schools, the late Dr. Hodge said, with a definiteness and a frankness worthy of all praise, and in spite of all the Confessions of the orthodox world, that "all who die in infancy will be saved. . . . The Scriptures nowhere exclude any class of infants, baptized or unbaptized, born in Christian or heathen lands, of believing or unbelieving parents, from the benefits of the redemption of Christ." But he could hardly have been unconscious of the sharp antagonism this noble utterance exhibited to the Confession of Faith he acknowledged, and the whole system of theology with which his life was identified.

That infants are sinners is a doctrine upon which the whole orthodox world is agreed. They are born sinners. They open their eyes to the light of the sun under the

wrath of God and curse of the law, and are at their birth "subject to death, with all miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal." Connected with the native depravity and sinfulness of infants, stands the doctrine that there is no change after death ; that he who is not regenerated and saved before leaving this world is placed beyond the reach of mercy and salvation. How, then, are infants to be saved? The Bible reveals but one method by which sinners are saved. It is by repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But infants are incapable of exercising either of these graces. They are burdened with damnable sin, for which they have no power of repentance, and of which indeed they are wholly unconscious. They are offered salvation, but are unable to accept it, or even know that a Savior has come. Thus loaded with guilt, thus ignorant of their condition, they live their little life and die as they live, unrepentant and unsaved ; and as there is no possibility of salvation beyond the present life, one readily sees no means in the orthodox system to rescue a single infant from the damnation they all so richly deserve for being born the accursed heirs of Adam.

But so sweeping an act as this is intolerable ; and hence several parties have, at whatever cost of consistency, provided means by which their own children at least may, as they hope, be saved. The Roman Church, which believes in the divine power of sacraments, makes provision to save its infants by regenerating baptism ; and

some of the older Protestant sects practically adopt the same unreasonable and unscriptural theory : as if, by the ordinance of a wise and good Creator, the condition of infants, his children, is to be determined for eternity by an outward rite of this kind,* and especially where the recipient is utterly unconscious both of the rite and its purpose ! In the New Testament, certainly, there is no instance of Christian baptism antecedent to Christian faith. But the Roman Church attaches such importance to infant baptism that it will not allow the burial of an unbaptized child, though of Catholic parents, in consecrated ground ! I was once acquainted with a case in Central New York, where the body of such a child had to be exhumed and removed before the Bishop would consecrate a cemetery ; and the scene was rendered memorable by the frantic grief of the poor mother, who seems to have felt that such a removal of the body of her child was equivalent to the damnation of its soul. The Augsburg Confession affirms that " baptism is necessary to salvation," and that children are to be baptized, who, " being offered to God, are received into God's favor." The English Church declares that baptism is not only a token of a Christian profession, but rather a sign of God's good-will, " by the which he doth work invisibly in us." In other words, these early churches followed essentially the doctrine of the Roman Church from which they sprang, and ascribed regenerating power to the rite of baptism.

The Reformed or Calvinistic churches adopted, in harmony with their system, a different method of securing the salvation of infants. Believing as they did in eternal election and reprobation, some infants, it was reasonable to suppose, were to be found among the elect. The Westminster Confession, therefore, affirms that "elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when and where and how he pleaseth. So also are all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word." The necessity of baptism could not be affirmed in connection with eternal election, since being chosen "without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature moving God thereunto," it would be unreasonable to suppose that infants, dying in infancy, and heathen, beyond the reach of the gospel in this life, were wholly excluded from the divine favor, and consequently provision must be made for their salvation quite outside of all ordinary means. Thus the doctrine of no salvation after death was quietly surrendered, and liberty was generously conceded to the Holy Spirit to work, for the regeneration of infants and pagans, "when and where and how" he pleases—here or hereafter, on this side of the grave or beyond! Why might not good Christians trust God so far as to permit the Holy Spirit to work in the same free manner with other sinners? Why is it necessary

to limit the Savior of men to this little world and the present life in the accomplishment of his divine pleasure? The Methodist Articles of Religion involve infants in sin and damnation, and make no other provision for saving them than the Church of England had done before, that is, by regenerating baptism. So the Church at large is reduced to two expedients for the salvation of infants dying in infancy, — one by the fiction of sacramental baptism, and the other by practically denying the great fundamental maxim of orthodoxy that there is no salvation except in the present world, and thus necessarily opening the gates of life beyond the grave !

But these ingenious devices were intended only for very partial application. Sacramental baptism reaches hardly a quarter of the infants dying in infancy, while the extended power of the Holy Ghost, "who worketh when and where and how he pleaseth," was never designed for any but "elect infants," and other "elect persons" whose unfortunate "environment" left them outside of the ordinary means of grace. Both of these contrivances for the salvation of a few infants only emphasize the grim and now unpalatable fact that, in the economy of God's infinite love, millions of infants are really placed beyond the reach of mercy and must suffer endless damnation ! No orthodox scheme has yet been devised, certainly no one has ever been promulgated, which would at all justify Dr. Hodge's broad assertion that "all who die in infancy

will be saved." That this is becoming the popular Christian faith, may be true, but it affords no solution of so unorthodox a fact. It stands in harmony with no orthodox theory with which I am acquainted, but is plainly inconsistent with them all, as well as with the history of religious opinions through the last fifteen centuries.

Dr. Hodge not only avows his own conviction on this subject, but evidently wishes to give the impression that this has been the current thought of the orthodox world through the ages, or at least with that portion of the Church — the Calvinistic or Augustinian — with which he was personally associated. Dr. Krauth, Professor of Theology in the Evangelical Lutheran Seminary, had charged the Westminster Confession with teaching "that only a certain part of those who die in infancy will be saved ;" to which Dr. Hodge replies : "We can only say that we never saw a Calvinistic theologian who held that doctrine [the doctrine of infant damnation]. We are not learned enough to say that no Calvinist ever held it ; but if all Calvinists are responsible for what every Calvinist has ever said, and all Lutherans are responsible for everything Luther or Lutherans have ever said, then Dr. Krauth, as well as ourselves, will have a heavy burden to carry." The *argumentum ad hominem* is here well taken, for on this point the Lutheran Church stands essentially on the same ground as the Reformed. Both believed and taught expressly, or by plain and necessary implication, that hosts

of infants dying in infancy are not saved ! Indeed, neither the Roman Church nor any of our orthodox Protestant Churches ever entertained any other belief till quite recent times. Since the days of Augustine the doctrine of infant damnation has been the constant faith of the Catholic Church. It naturally grew out of the doctrine of original sin and eternal election and reprobation, which Augustine maintained, and of which he was perhaps the inventor. At times he seems to have been shocked by the enormity of such a doctrine, and expressed the belief that infants would suffer *mitissima damnatione*, the mildest torments of hell ; but at others, when hard-pressed, he insisted that there were only two states of being in the future, — heaven on one side, with its felicities, and hell on the other, with the devils in eternal fire, — and that in one or the other of these abodes all souls must dwell forever. And this continued for many ages to be the unquestioned faith of the Catholic Church till Peter Lombard in the twelfth century invented the doctrine of a *limbus infantum*, by which infants were saved from being eternally burned, but were still deprived of all Christian grace and all possibility of salvation, and left to drag out an existence which, if not, indeed, as bad as it might be, is still a very doubtful blessing. That the doctrine, in the hands of intelligent and Christian people, has undergone still further improvements would appear from the manner in which Rev. Mr. Oxenham treats it in his Catholic

Eschatology. It is grateful to note any modification of this as of other ancient abominations with which our religion has been burdened and deformed, and the reader will be glad, therefore, to see how the most advanced Catholics now represent infant damnation. "Unbaptized infants," says Mr. Oxenham, "who have been raised by no sacrament from the condition of original sin, and who, dying before the use of reason, have had no opportunity of corresponding with grace, are indeed 'damned,' in the sense that they cannot attain to the Beatific Vision, for which their natural capacities do not qualify them. As they had not been raised on earth to the state of supernatural grace, they have no aptitude for the life of supernatural glory. And this is, of course, in itself, a most momentous 'loss' (or damnation) as compared with the future state of the glorified. But it is no conscious loss to them. Still less does it imply any suffering of body or soul. On the contrary, it is consistent with the highest enjoyment of natural beatitude, and with a natural knowledge and love of God." And he quotes Thomas Aquinas, who tells us that "they are united to God by a participation of natural goods, and are able to rejoice in a natural knowledge and love of him." Some of the theologians in the Council of Trent went perhaps somewhat further, maintaining, according to Sarpi, that these children dying without baptism amuse themselves in philosophizing, and employ themselves in the knowledge of natural things,

tasting that great pleasure and contentment of mind which is found in gratifying one's curiosity in the invention of beautiful things ; and one surpassed all others by declaring that they were visited and consoled by the angels and the blessed saints. But all did not entertain these humane sentiments, but believed they were kept in limbo under darkness. The Council was exceedingly anxious to condemn the Protestant doctrine upon the damnation of infants, but could not do it without condemning Augustine, and, indeed, the whole Church for seven hundred years after his time. Catharinus was very urgent for an express declaration on the subject, for the purpose of curbing, as he expressed it, "the audacity and ignorance of some preachers, who preached this doctrine [of Augustine] to the great scandal of the Church." We are not to accept Mr. Oxenham's rose-tinted views of the condition of unbaptized infants as the popular opinions of the Roman Church. Let any one read Father Furniss's little Tract for children, on the Sight of Hell, before referred to, and he will at once recognize the vast difference between a gentleman and a scholar writing for educated people and a mere "priest" instructing the lower strata of Roman Church life. If unbaptized infants hold the respectable place in the future world ascribed to them by Mr. Oxenham, it is quite unaccountable that their bodies are not permitted to rest by the side of their friends in a Catholic cemetery, and that the remains of an infant of a family of

his flock must be removed from its burying-place before the Bishop, now our American Cardinal, would perform the rite of consecrating the ground where it lay ! Among intelligent Catholics the following statement of Cornelius à Lapide probably expresses the prevailing opinion at the present day. He was commenting on the final judgment, and, after saying that they would take their places in this great transaction, he adds that unbaptized infants, " being separated from others, will receive from Christ their own sentence *mediam* (midway) between the adult saints and reprobates ; for neither will they be condemned to the fire of Gehenna, like the adult reprobates, nor adjudged to heaven for the vision of God, like the adult elect."

The fact is that, however it may affect us at the present day, the doctrine of infant damnation did not disturb the equanimity of the best of Christians a few centuries ago. That they admired it, I would not say, but Augustine taught it plainly without offending orthodox people of his time ; and it continued to be taught and believed for long centuries after his day ; and in the Reformation, as Augustine became the great teacher of both Luther and Calvin, so this doctrine took its place in the Protestant churches. No one supposes that Calvin, for instance, loved the doctrine of infant damnation. Yet the logical treatment of his theory of religion forced him to it, and he allowed no weak sentimentalism to interfere with his principles, whatever their result might be. "The

Scripture proclaims," says he, "that all men were, in the person of their father, sentenced to eternal death. This, not being attributable to nature, it is evident must have proceeded from the wonderful council of God. . . . I inquire again how it came to pass that the fall of Adam, independent of any remedy, should involve so many nations with their infant children in eternal death, but because such was the will of God. . . . It is an awful decree, I confess ; but no one can deny that God foreknew the future final fate of men before he created them, and that he did foreknow it because it was appointed by his own decree. If any one here attacks God's foreknowledge, he rashly and inconsiderately stumbles.' For what ground of accusation is there against the heavenly Judge for not being ignorant of futurity? If there is any just or plausible complaint, it lies against predestination." And that is precisely the point which neither Calvin nor any of his followers have explained. Why a good Being, as all acknowledge God to be, should adopt such a plan, foreseeing the fearful consequences in which it must issue, is a question that no mortal can either answer, or for which one can suggest a plausible reason. The counsel which ordained such an awful decree may be "wonderful," but it is, to all human apprehension, also demoniac rather than divine. In this almost universal damnation are we to be surprised if infants suffer with others? It certainly did not surprise our Reformers or their followers for two

or three centuries. I have before me a sermon by "that faithful servant of Jesus Christ, Mr. Christopher Love, minister of Lawrence-Jury, London," as the title-page informs me, preached two hundred years ago, in which that excellent man did not shrink from bearing his testimony to what he and other saints of that day regarded as wholesome truth. "Learn, hence," says he, "that little children and young infants, though they live but a day, they are in as great danger as men that live a hundred years ; for it is not for your time that God will censure [judge] you, but for the odious nature of sin. And the reason why I draw this inference from hence is to take off that blind conceit of people [under which] they will call children innocent, as if they were harmless, as if they were without sin ; and many women will wish themselves where that [dead] child is, though that child may be damned. Yet mistake me not ; I do not say that all children are damned, for God hath secret ways to work grace in them as he hath open ways to save others. Yet children, I say, though they live but a minute in this world, God may justly punish them for the sin of their nature."

Such was the orthodoxy of the Church two hundred years ago ; and it is the orthodoxy of the creeds to-day. If Dr. Hodge had never seen a Calvinistic theologian who entertained it, the fact only shows how widely the Calvinists of the present age have departed from the Cal-

vinism of Calvin, just as the Catholics have departed from Augustine. Their definition of Catholic doctrine, that it is what is always, everywhere, and by all believed, would make a very short creed and a very small church.

It is easily seen that under the popular but formidable doctrine that there is no change after death, no repentance and no salvation, that is not accomplished in this present life, we are logically forced to believe, first, that all the heathen are lost ; second, that of adults, the great majority of those called Christians or living in Christendom are damned ; and, finally, that no infants dying in infancy can be saved, unless, with some, we are good-natured enough to believe in the regenerating power of baptism, or, with others, in direct contravention of the doctrine we began with, allow God to regenerate and save infants and all others, "when and where and how he pleaseth," that is, without regard to place or time.

Now it ought to require no argument to convince any candid person that a doctrine which leads to consequences so disastrous and sweeping cannot be of God ; or if it is still insisted that it is revealed in the Scriptures, it obviously demands an amount of evidence, and evidence so clear and so decisive as to admit of no denial and no doubt. There is nothing in the nature of the case, whatever some may fancy to the contrary, to suggest a termination of God's benevolent measures with a sinner, at the moment of death, and a total reversal of his whole gov-

ernment over him. The soul is the same after its separation from the body as it was before, and in a moral point of view neither better nor worse. God is the same on the other side of the grave as he is on this. And the great moral laws of the universe should be deemed as unchangeable as their Author. All that we can reasonably conceive as having undergone a change is simply the place or mode of the soul's existence. Itself, its relations, its duties, remain the same. Some Universalists, interpreting literally the expression of St. Paul that "he who is dead is freed from sin," have indulged the opinion that death does much for the sinner, and that, having passed this change, he is at once translated into a higher and better life. This mode of thinking has been exposed to infinite contempt and ridicule on the part of our orthodox friends, who seemed profoundly unconscious that they themselves were fostering precisely the same kind of opinion only in the opposite direction. If some Universalists have believed that death would prove a minister of good to wayward souls, the orthodox world has at the same time, and for no better reason, believed that it was to be a minister of unmitigated evil to the vast majority of the human race. It closes their probation ; it fixes the unconverted soul in evil ; it changes millions of honest, moral, benevolent people instantly into infernal demons. It does far more than this: Not content with working changes in man, it revolutionizes the moral government of God, and

finally God himself, transforming the benevolent Ruler of this world into a relentless Judge in the other, and making Him who is the Father of mercies here, a monster of remorseless hate and insatiable revenge hereafter. To say, with these facts before us, that there is no change after death, seems a misstatement so obvious and so gross as to require great ignorance or great audacity. These two opinions of the moral effects of death, that of some Universalists on one side and this of the orthodox world on the other, are, I conceive, twin errors, — though the latter is infinitely more mischievous, — resting on a common misconception and ending in opposite results. Both are advocated in the simple interest of preconceived and adopted dogmas, and are employed in carrying out a system. Why can we not agree in seeing that death, in itself considered, does nothing morally for us, that it makes us neither better nor worse? It does not change a sinner into a saint, nor transform a moral, honorable “natural man” into a devil. Both enter the world before us as they leave this. Both are the same beings there they were here : both are under the same moral government, subject to the same moral laws, holding the same relations to God and their fellow-beings, and changed in no respect, save in their place or state. God is still their Creator, and they his creatures ; he is their Father and they his children ; he is their Governor, and they his subjects. There, as here, they are bound to love him with all

the heart, and to love their neighbor as themselves. And as long as they exist, it matters not where or how, these obligations will rest upon them. They cannot shake them off; sin will not annul them; punishment itself, however severe or protracted, can have no other purpose than to teach them the lesson of obedience. "My son, give me thy heart," is what God is saying to every human soul; obedience to this divine call is what he demands, and what he will continue to demand till we offer the sacrifice he asks. Supreme love is what we owe him, and nothing short of this — no duration or amount of suffering — will pay the debt. Nor will he accept hatred for love or blasphemy for the praises that are so justly his due. If the soul refuses obedience to-day, the command rises fresh and strong to-morrow, and at last, delay as long as we will, the happy hour will come when without any violence done to human volition the soul will confess itself conquered by divine grace and sweetly submit to Christ and God. We are on probation, if you please to call it so, but a probation that ends only in willing obedience to the royal, the imperial law.

CHAPTER XXIV.

FAR THE GREATER PART OF MANKIND WILL FINALLY BE DAMNED.

AFTER what has now been said, it is hardly necessary to add that it has been the prevailing opinion of the orthodox world that much the larger portion of the human race will be irretrievably lost. From such a theological system no other result could naturally be expected, and hence from the time of Augustine, at least, both the Roman and the Protestant Churches, of all sects and parties, have, till within a single lifetime, steadily maintained that many more would finally be lost than saved, and hell be far more populous than heaven. Thus Augustine tells us that *multo plures* (many more) are left under the vengeance of God than are made objects of his saving grace ; and he accounts for such an unequal division of the human race by saying that it shows what all deserved, and so magnifies the divine favor in redeeming the smaller number. Even the Church itself he compares to a threshing-floor, in which "there is more chaff than wheat, more to be damned than saved." By the Athanasian

creed, so called, — though Athanasius never saw it, — we are taught that, “Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith; which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the Catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity;” and then follows a metaphysical juggle, which it may be easy for some to say they believe, but which no mortal ever understood, or of which he could form any conception. The Roman Church has always been rather distinguished for the narrowness of salvation, believing in the damnation of all the heathen, and confining all saving grace within its own pale, in accordance with its maxim, *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*; but while none can be saved who are outside of its communion, there are multitudes to be damned who are within it. Drexelius reports a story from Hieronymus Plautus, that “a certain woman hearing Bertoldus, a very eminent and powerful preacher, inveigh bitterly against a sin of which she knew herself guilty, fell down dead; but after a while, being brought to life again by the pious prayers of the congregation, she gave them an account of what she had seen in her trance, which was to this effect: I stood, she said, before God’s tribunal together with sixty thousand souls, who were summoned from all parts of the universe to appear before the Judge; and they were all sentenced to eternal death, *three only excepted!*” The learned Cor-

nelius à Lapide has a large note upon this point, in which he argues that "the far greater part of mankind will be damned," because the far greater part are "infidels, Turks, Saracens, and heretics." After reciting a number of types, as he calls them, illustrating the smallness of the number to be saved, he says: "Finally, the multitude of the damned may be determined from the magnitude of hell, which is sixteen hundred stadia (Rev. xiv. 20), that is, two hundred Italian miles, and this in all directions, to wit, as hell is two hundred miles deep, so it is the same in length and breadth, which is a space capable of holding many thousand millions of the damned." What would the honest Jesuit have thought had he heard some of our modern divines speak of hell, not as a prison of two hundred miles on a side, but as a "*world* of woe," a *universe* of death? Some of the Jewish Rabbins represented hell as so extensive that it would take a man three hundred years to pass through it; and even Milton described it as so wide that an angel's eye could not comprehend it. Massillon has an eloquent sermon on the small number of the saved: "In glancing at the history of the just from age to age, you will observe that at all times the elect have been very few. The family of Noah was alone saved from the general flood; Abraham only was distinguished from the rest of the world, and became the depositary of the covenant; Joshua and Caleb only, out of six hundred thousand

Hebrews, entered the land of promise ; Job was the only just man in the land of Uz ; Lot in Sodom ; and the three Jewish children in Babylon. To such frightful images succeed the expressions of the prophets. . . . The gospel adds new traits to the fearfulness of these images. I have spoken to you of two ways, one of which is straight and rough, the way of a very small number ; the other broad and spacious, strewed with flowers, which is the common way, as it were, of all men. In a word, you will observe that through the Sacred Scriptures the multitude is always reprobate, and the elect compared with the rest of mankind make only a little flock, which almost escapes our notice."

If we now turn from the Roman to the Protestant Church, we shall find the same general opinion prevalent upon this subject. Calvin drank so largely at the well of Augustine that one would expect to meet no essential difference here : we therefore hear him declaring it as a Scripture doctrine, that "the whole world does not belong to the Creator ; only that grace delivers from the curse and wrath of God, and from eternal death, a few who would otherwise perish, but leaves the world in the destruction to which it has been destined ;" again he speaks of "the rejection of all mankind, and the election of the small number of the faithful." The excellent Rev. Christopher Love has a whole discourse, in which he discusses the question, "Whether shall most men be

tormented in hell, yea or no?" and resolves it, as he says, "in the affirmative, that the most men and women that God hath made, it shall be their portion and misery to be tormented in hell forevermore." Indeed, after looking the field over, he concludes that "of all sorts and ranks of men, the fewest will be saved." This pious man tells us that "God would show more mercy, if he saved but one man in the world, than he would show extreme justice in damning all the world. . . . And therefore for men to cavil against the mercies of a God, what is this but to be imperious with thy Maker?"

That President Edwards anticipated the salvation of relatively very few is obvious, not only from many particular expressions, but from the general tendency and drift of his theology. In a sermon, designed to show that Scripture warnings are best adapted to awaken and convert sinners, after saying that "if these means will not answer the end of awakening and leading sinners to repentance, no other will, neither the working of miracles, nor the hearing of God speak with an audible voice from heaven, nor anything else," he exclaims: "Yet how few are there who are effectually wrought upon by the word of God! They are very thinly sown; there is but here and there one." In another place he says: "There are but few, comparatively, who are ever converted. But few of those, who have been natural persons in time past, have been converted. Most of them have died uncon-

verted. So it has been in all ages, and hence we have reason to think that but few of them who are unconverted now will ever be converted ; that most of them will die unconverted, and go to hell."

It was the opinion of the pious Matthew Henry that "they that are going to heaven are but few compared to those that are going to hell ; a remnant, a little flock, like the grape-gleanings of the vintage, as the eight that were saved by water." Dr. Adam Clarke says : "There are *few* who find the way to heaven ; fewer yet who abide any time in it ; fewer still who *walk* in it ; and fewest of all who *persevere* unto the end." This reduces the number of the finally saved to a minimum. "What they will not believe," says Boston, "they will then see, that but *few are saved*."

Dr. Watts obviously adopts the same view of the future prospects of our race. He proposes an objection to the doctrine of endless punishment, which he expresses in the following words : "When we remember that Jesus Christ himself hath assured us that *but few shall be saved*, and that the broad way is full of sinners running down to destruction and death ; if we suppose these punishments to be endless, some will be ready to say, What ! shall the greater part of God's creatures be made miserable forever and ever ? Is this consistent with the wisdom and goodness of the blessed God to form such an immense multitude of souls, dwelling in bodies, to make them forever

miserable? What will a God of goodness have to prove his goodness to his creatures, if far the greater part of them are left in everlasting sorrows?"

In the same manner President Dwight, speaking of endless punishment, says very justly: "The subject is immeasurably awful, and beyond all others affecting." In this President Dwight differs from many, who see little awful and nothing affecting in it. "Few persons," he adds, "can behold it in near vision with a steady eye. The very preacher who teaches the doctrine to others cannot but know, unless certainly assured of his own salvation (a case undoubtedly very rare), that he may, at that very time, be alleging arguments which are to affect himself, and to evince his own final destruction as well as that of others. If his heart is not made of stone, he cannot contemplate the subject, as it respects his *fellow-men*, without overwhelming amazement. The destiny of one immortal mind is an object whose importance no finite thought can conceive, no numbers estimate. How vast must be this object when the number of such minds becomes so great as to reach the lowest limit to which the most enlarged charity will be compelled to extend it! How entirely overwhelmed must he be who contemplates it, when he remembers, and beholds a melancholy experience verify, the declaration of our Savior, that *Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go in thereat*"! As I have suggested above, Presi-

dent Dwight is singular in the treatment of this subject. I do not know that he was a better man or a better Christian than President Edwards, but he seems to have been far more humane, with greater sensibility and a better appreciation of the matter before him. He did not hesitate to confess that the subject was "*perplexing* as well as *distressing*;" and he had little patience with those who spoke of it otherwise.

"With our eyes open upon the Bible and the world," says Dr. Pond, "we cannot reasonably call in question the melancholy fact that great numbers of the human family have failed of salvation. So it was in the early history of mankind, when the earth became so filled with violence that almost its entire population was swept away in the deluge. So it was all along under the former dispensation, when the heathen world lay in gross wickedness, and when the frequent apostasies of God's chosen people called down upon them desolating judgments. So it was in the days of the Savior, when with deep concern he exhorted the surrounding multitude, 'Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth unto destruction, and *many there be who go in thereat*: Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and *few there be that find it*' (Matt. vii. 13). Such, in general, has been the state of the world from the times of the Savior to the present. Such it is now. None who believe that heaven is a holy

place, and that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, can resist the conviction, in view of the present moral aspect of the world, that a vast majority of its adult inhabitants are not saved. We are looking, indeed, for better days."

And these are but instances of the general current of orthodox thought upon the extent of salvation. Nothing is better settled, whether by positive declarations or the logical result of adopted principles, than the fact that relatively few of our race will be saved and the great majority lost. Fortunately, most of our orthodox neighbors entertain a comfortable hope, first, with respect to their own future, and then as to all whom they love and in whose welfare they are more deeply interested. It is an instance of those wonderful arrangements of divine Providence by which mortals are made happier than they deserve, and where some light breaks out of the darkest scene. Could they behold the reality "in near vision," according to their own theory of the divine government, there would hardly be a family in Christendom that would not live in perpetual and most distressing fear. "We are all Universalists," said an eminent orthodox lady, the wife of a Doctor of Divinity, "when we bury our friends !"

CHAPTER XXV.

THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

THE Four Last Things, in theological language, are Death, The Judgment, Heaven, and Hell. Death, as we have seen in a preceding chapter, not only closes man's probation, but, so far as the sinful are concerned, ends the divine goodness, converts the love of God into hatred, and his mercy into revenge. "As death leaves us, so judgment will find us," has grown into a maxim in orthodox circles, and is supposed to carry with it a most fearful import. To the unrepentant it is the knell of all hope, the unfailing prophecy of all forms of direst calamity. After death nothing remains to them but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment. Their day of probation is brought to a close, their dread accounts are made up, and they may well utter the lamentation of the prophet: "The harvest is passed, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." And if not saved before the termination of this present life, no salvation is possible! "It is only in the present state of trial and under the present proposals of grace," says Dr. Watts, "that sleep-

ing sinners can be awakened into spiritual and divine life." And this is the common opinion of the orthodox world. Here we are in a state of probation ; beyond the grave we enter at once upon a state of retribution that has no end. " Men," says Dr. Pond, " are on probation for judgment, and for the retributions of eternity. It is for their characters while on probation that they will hereafter be called into judgment, and for their deeds while in the body that they will be rewarded or punished beyond the grave. This being the case, the grand design of probation seems to be to furnish those who are placed upon it such opportunity for the *formation* and *development* of moral character as will best prepare them to stand in the judgment, and to meet its everlasting awards."

But plain and true as this appears to the religious world about me, it does not commend itself to my reason or my understanding of the Scriptures. It avails nothing, however, to suggest to the advocates of this doctrine that the time allotted, even the longest, is still very short for such a being as man to prepare for " everlasting awards." It is only a moment in comparison with the eternity whose character it is to shape, and whose infinite happiness or misery it is to determine. Nor is it more availing to urge that all the conditions of this very brief probation are as various and as unequal as it is possible to conceive, so that the destinies of immortal souls seem to be settled by accident or caprice rather than by any.

recognized principles of equity. As I have before taken occasion to say, our fate, according to the orthodox theory, is already determined, so far as any action of our own is concerned, by the very circumstances of our existence. We are born totally depraved, and under God's wrath and curse ; and we are as incapable of doing anything to improve our moral condition as we are to change the course of the planets. We are placed under probation, as it is called, for a few days, to prepare for the judgment, and to meet its everlasting awards. If God does not interpose by his irresistible grace, is there any doubt what the issue will be? Bound hand and foot, our salvation depends, we are told, on our rising and coming off victors in a race and a fight ; and yet it is certain that we can neither rise nor run. Still it avails nothing to say to our religious neighbors that in granting man the boon of this probation, and thus affording him, as Dr. Pond expresses it, "another opportunity of securing everlasting life," God must have foreseen what our religious friends now recognize so clearly, that it would prove a most disastrous failure, and result, as they are constrained to confess, in the damnation, under aggravated guilt, of vastly more than it would save. The scheme itself must have been a very bad one, or these theologians take a very bad view of it. A moral government that has been in operation these six thousand years, and yet is at the present time consigning fifty thousand heathen souls every day to

the endless torments of hell, to say nothing of the multitude of nominal Christians who suffer the same fate, obviously demands some important modifications before it can justify its claims to a divine origin.

The doctrine of a final judgment necessarily stands connected with that of probation, as that word is generally understood. If mortals are here on trial to see if they will serve the purpose for which they were created, there must, of course, come a time when this shall be determined, and the probation end. If I buy a horse on condition that the animal upon trial proves satisfactory to me, — and this is the popular notion of probation, — it is evident that I am not to use the horse indefinitely ; the probation must have a limit, and then I either pay the price or return the animal, according to contract.

Our theologians, without any ostensible reason, and certainly without any warrant of Scripture, have fixed upon the moment of death as the extreme limit of this period of human trial, and this, as I have before observed, without the slightest regard to its duration or the circumstances under which it is passed, — whether it lasts one hour, one month, a year, or a century ; or whether it is attended by the best opportunities for “securing everlasting life,” in different ones, or no opportunities at all ! In this cast-iron scheme it matters not, as we have seen, whether one is born under the light of the gospel or in pagan darkness ; if he dies unrepentant and without faith in Jesus Christ,

he is inevitably lost. It matters not whether one is brought up under the best domestic and social influences or the worst. Under this kind of probation there must occur many events at which angels as well as men would be somewhat surprised. An innocent girl — innocent, I mean, as the world speaks, not as theologians talk — is instantly killed by a hardened ruffian. She dies unrepentant and without that vital Christian faith deemed necessary for salvation, and goes to hell. Her murderer is arrested, tried, condemned, converted, and passes from the gallows to the eternal felicities of heaven ! There are very few men capitally punished who are not reported as dying good Christians. Indeed, if we may believe our religious neighbors, far more murderers, and others guilty of capital crimes, in proportion to their numbers, die “prepared for the judgment and the awards of eternity,” than of honest and reputable people who die in their beds ! And this startling fact, I remember, was years ago sometimes appealed to as an argument for capital punishment.

With the close of life, then, comes also the close of our probation ; and whatever may be the moral condition of the soul, or under whatever advantages or disadvantages formed, it is immediately “called to stand in the judgment and meet its everlasting awards.” President Dwight gives us a simple yet graphic account of this solemn and infinitely important transaction. “The soul after death,”

he says, "returns immediately to God to give an account of its conduct in the present life. . . . It will be furnished with a power of recollection sufficiently capacious to comprehend all that it has done, and will be compelled to declare it without disguise, enhancement, or evasion. Its secret chambers, and all which they contain or have ever contained, will be laid open to its own eye as well as to that of its Maker. In this manner, the motives by which it has been governed, and the moral character which it has sustained during its probation, will be so entirely developed as to satisfy even itself that the investigation has been just as well as complete. The sentence of God will be pronounced in perfect righteousness on all it has done. To those who have done the will of God, loved his character, believed on his Son, and turned away from their iniquities, he will say: 'Well done, good and faithful servants; ye have been faithful over a few things; I will make you rulers over many things; enter ye into the joy of your Lord.' Of those who have refused or neglected to do these things he will say: 'Take ye the unprofitable servants and cast them into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' In consequence of this sentence the soul will immediately enter upon a state of reward." Dr. Watts expresses this thought very neatly, so far as relates to the wicked, in his paraphrase of the words of the Preacher, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return to God who gave it," thus: —

The dust returns to dust again :
The soul in agonies of pain
Ascends to God ; not there to dwell,
She hears her doom, and sinks to hell.

What occasion there can be after this for a General Judgment I fail entirely to apprehend, nor do I remember ever to have seen any satisfactory reason assigned. This judgment immediately after death, though it may be regarded as personal and private, is perfectly righteous, founded, as we have seen, on a complete investigation of the case. All the facts have been brought into view and duly considered ; the sentence has been rendered, and execution taken place. Can any one suggest a reason for a rehearing or a new trial? The facts remain unchanged, the judge is the same, the law the same ; and can the sentence be different?

Yet upon no subject have orthodox divines dwelt more frequently or expatiated with greater freedom and effect than the General Judgment. And as the Scriptures certainly say very little upon it, so the larger scope is given to the imagination, and in consequence of this the scene has been filled with whatever each individual felt or fancied to be most impressive, alarming, or august. Hence it is hardly to be expected that where so much is left to mere conjecture or speculation there should be any very exact agreement in respect to details, and we ought to be content with the most general harmony in the great leading features, the merest outline, of so momentous a

transaction. That the General Judgment is immediately to succeed the resurrection of the dead seems to be the almost universal belief, as it also is that it is immediately to precede the end of the world. As generally described, this whole series of transactions is to be attended with amazing pomp. At the sound of the trumpet of the archangel the dead are to arise, that is, as is more commonly thought, the dead bodies ; the souls of all the dead are already in heaven or hell, but at the resurrection they will be reunited, that they may be rewarded or punished together, as it was together here in their lifetime that they did well or ill, and merited the retribution that awaits them. The Judgment is to take place here on the earth, where the whole human race will be assembled. The souls of the wicked will be summoned from hell, and those of the righteous will come with Christ from heaven, in company with all the holy angels, and with infinite glory. The righteous will be placed at the right hand of the Judge, and the wicked at the left, and the proceedings of the trial are to pass largely in the mass, those on the right hand being welcomed and blessed, while those upon the left will be pronounced accursed. The saints will ascend with Christ to the heavens and enter upon a state of unending felicities, and the damned will descend into hell, or, as President Edwards believed, will be swallowed up in the conflagration of the world and of these lower heavens, which will immediately follow the final

sentence. The whole scene is spectacular, or at most it is only exhibiting in the eye of the universe the final judgment of the righteous and the wicked, which had already been passed upon them individually as they died, but is now thus gloriously displayed. But, as I before said, it changes the destiny of no one,—it determines nothing, except with the few who chance to be living at this dread moment,—but merely calls the saints and sinners from their respective awards to be united with their long-lost bodies and return to their happiness or their misery again. According to President Edwards and Rev. Mr. Spurgeon, as we have already seen, the felicity of heaven and the misery of hell will now for the first time be complete.

But passing this and many other things directly or incidentally connected with this great subject, there is one point which I especially desire to emphasize and press upon the mind of the reader, namely, that the whole proceeding in this judgment, whether it is enacted once or twice, relates exclusively to human conduct in the present life. As Dr. Pond says: "It is for their deeds while in the body that they will be rewarded or punished beyond the grave;" or, to repeat the words of President Dwight, "the motives by which the soul has been governed, and the moral character it has sustained, during its probation," are the things to be investigated, and upon which judgment will be rendered. "The last great day is just at hand," says Dr. Watts; "then we must give an account

of all that has been done in the body, whether it has been good or evil." In a word, without quoting more authorities to a point so plain, and a fact so necessary to the harmony and completeness of the orthodox doctrine of probation, our eternal destiny is suspended wholly upon our conduct in the present life, the deeds done in the body, and the character we form in this world. This is the general statement ; though it would be more exact to say that our final destiny depends upon the attitude of the soul towards God and Christ at the moment of death. It matters little what one's life has been or what character he has formed ; a moment's action of the soul but an instant before death may annul or reverse it all. Let a man live ever so bad a life, and yet sincerely repent the moment before he dies, and believe on Christ, and is there any one who doubts his salvation ? On the other hand, let one live ever so good a life, filling his days with prayer and charities, and yet commit one sin, even in thought, the moment before he expires, and die with that sin unrepented and unforgiven, and if there is any truth in the doctrine of probation, he will, without doubt, be damned everlastingly. It is this circumstance that gives to death its vast importance and its most terrible and alarming features ; and hence the question commonly asked — the only question that really has any significance — is, not how a man has lived, but how he died. Under this theory of religion, "all is well that ends well." And as no one educated in the ortho-

dox faith intends or expects to die in his sins, but generously assumes that before he leaves the world he shall, by one means or another, "get religion," and thus be insured against the just punishment of his iniquities, he is enabled to avoid, for the present, what he has been taught to regard as the burdens and self-sacrifices of a religious life, and enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Death is generally distant to human view, and men have heard sung, and perhaps sung themselves, that

While the lamp holds out to burn,
The vilest sinner may return ;

and as there is time enough before them, they do not doubt that before the fatal hour arrives, they will, as they propose, have set their house in order, and thus gain both this world and the next.

It is a little remarkable that the advocates of our popular doctrine of probation do not perceive that their favorite theory involves all the ill-consequences they so freely charge upon the larger and better faith. They think that if any opportunity for repentance and salvation were hoped for beyond the present life, no one would ever repent in this. But they do not seem to reflect that mere extension of the time does not affect the principle. On the same reasoning no man would repent this year who expected to live to the next, or to-day, if he hoped to survive till to-morrow. Hence it happens that the most earnest appeals to men to become Christians are made to

rest on the uncertainty of life and the danger of a sudden death ! President Edwards, as we have seen, often dwelt on this point, and endeavored to impress his hearers with the alarming fact that natural men never go to sleep but they are in danger of waking up in hell ! Yet, owing to the native depravity of the human heart, a great many who were constant attendants upon his ministry, and listened year after year to his powerful discourses, remained unconverted. Perhaps the very doctrine of their total depravity, and their utter inability to do anything well pleasing to God, or that could in any way contribute to their salvation, may have served as a counterpoise to his earnest exhortations to repentance and faith, and the good works becoming a Christian. The poor sinner often finds himself in most embarrassing circumstances when told that his welfare for eternity depends on his tempers and conduct in time, and is yet assured that he can no more regulate those tempers and conduct in a manner to meet the approbation of God than a blind man can open his own eyes, or a dead man raise himself from the grave.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CONCLUSION.

I HAVE thus exhibited somewhat at length, and in the very words of its friends and advocates, the formidable doctrine of endless punishment. The reader has seen, without disguise or modification, what it is, and how through many centuries it has been preached and believed. And the terrible conclusions to which this exposition brings us are : —

1. That the great majority of the human race will finally be damned. This is not only the logical inference from avowed orthodox principles, but has till recently been the acknowledged belief of the orthodox church in all its branches for the last twelve or fifteen centuries, and is undoubtedly the belief of far the greater part of it to-day.

2. That this damnation involves every form of possible torment, whether of body or mind, and that in the extremest degree. All orthodox writers unite, as we have seen, in pronouncing the torments of hell as beyond all the powers of human language to express, or thought to con-

ceive. As President Edwards says, "We have reason to suppose that after we have said our utmost and thought our utmost, all that we have said and thought is but a faint shadow of the reality." "This torment," says Jeremy Taylor, "is so great that it cannot be expressed, since it comprises as many torments as the body of man hath joints, sinews, arteries, etc., and especially being caused by that penetrating and real fire of which this temporal fire is but a painted fire in respect of that of hell." Augustine declares hell to be full of "unspeakable evils which can neither be expressed nor conceived."

3. That these various torments, unspeakable and inconceivable in severity as they are, are to continue without intermission or mitigation through all eternity. As Minucius Felix expressed it, to these torments of hell "there is neither measure nor end." As long as God exists, so long are the damned to remain under his infinite wrath and suffer all the tortures it is possible for them to endure or God to inflict. On this point the whole orthodox church, Catholic and Protestant, is, with rare exceptions, fixed and immovable.

4. The destiny of every human soul is irrevocably determined by its condition at the moment of death in regard to repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ; and this without reference to its age, its outward condition, or its past opportunities for securing salvation. If to this there is any exception, it pertains only to "elect infants

dying in infancy," or other elect persons, who live beyond the reach of the preached word, whom the Calvinist graciously permits to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit, "who worketh when and where and how he pleaseth." To allow that ignorant souls may be enlightened and sinful souls converted and saved beyond the present life, would require a reconstruction of the whole scheme of their religion, and presently work a revolution in their theology.

5. It is unnecessary to add that a punishment which contemplates no termination cannot be designed to reform the punished, or accomplish, so far as any mortal can see or rationally conjecture, any benevolent purpose whatever; and it therefore becomes a problem for orthodoxy to solve, what object worthy of the divine government such an immeasurable mass of human suffering is to subserve, and how this suffering can at all consist with either the goodness or justice of God.

That the doctrine here presented, whose portrait I have faithfully sketched, is not beautiful or attractive, no intelligent Christian of this generation pretends. On the contrary, it is, and is everywhere coming to be acknowledged to be, a simple, unmitigated, nameless horror, which no language can express, no thought can reach. And it is not unworthy of remark that it loses nothing of its awful and revolting character under careful study and the most thoughtful contemplation. So far from this, it only becomes the more abhorrent and astounding the

more seriously it is considered and the better it is understood. As Niagara grows in grandeur and majesty upon the beholder the more he gazes upon it and takes in the awful proportions of the scene, so the doctrine before us grows in its terribleness and atrocity the more it is properly studied and its dreadful nature recognized. No one can think of it as he ought without seeing and feeling that in every aspect it is most extraordinary and amazing. Indeed, it stands infinitely apart from all the other doctrines of religion, whether natural or revealed, and is emphatically *sui generis*. It has no analogue in the universe. Nothing can equal it; there is nothing that resembles it. In the whole realm of human thought it stands alone and unapproachable in its solitary ugliness, its sublime horror.

Now, how is such a tremendous doctrine to be proved? And till it is proved, no one certainly should either ask his neighbor to believe it, or believe it himself. It is clearly not a matter to be taken for granted. It is too awful, too shocking, for that. To accept it without proof, or upon inadequate reasons, would be an offence against one's own soul, and still more against one's Maker, and no proof should be admissible upon a doctrine so exceptional and astounding that is not direct and clear, conclusive and irrefragable. To convince me of confessedly the worst thing that can possibly occur in relation to any human soul, I demand the fullest and most positive evidence. Can such evidence be produced?

Next to the doctrine itself, the most amazing thing, it seems to me, is the ease, the flippancy, the nonchalance with which grave divines, men of learning and logic, men of human sympathies and Christian charity, profess to prove it to their own satisfaction, and, as they would have us think, to the rational conviction of all others. Now, in the first place, have these good men considered the subject in such a manner as to understand and appreciate what it is they are attempting to prove? Have they formed any conception, I might almost say the faintest, of what the doctrine of endless punishment is in itself, and the various implications it necessarily carries along with it? From the manner in which the subject is generally treated, it is obvious that, how much soever they may talk and argue upon it, they have really thought and felt very little. They give no evidence of entertaining any just notions of the gravity and solemnity of the thing to be proved. To this remark President Dwight is a rare exception. He seems to have confronted the doctrine, and for a moment to have seen it face to face. "The subject," says he, and I am glad to repeat his words, "is immeasurably awful, and beyond all others affecting. Few persons can behold it in near vision with a steady eye. . . . The destiny of one immortal mind is an object whose importance no finite thought can conceive, no numbers estimate." What, then, shall we say when the question is not about the destiny of one human soul, but

about the endless torment of countless millions of such souls, nay, the great majority of the human race? Cannot men see, and must they not confess, that the subject is too solemn and too awful to be handled lightly? Can they not see that it assumes proportions that quite take it out of all ordinary fields of even grave inquiry, and invest it with an importance that transcends all our conceptions and makes it simply infinite? President Dwight seems to have been shocked by the manner in which orthodox divines treat this terrible subject, and calls attention and administers reproof to the two classes into which they are naturally divided. One class, we know, regard the doctrine as plain as the multiplication-table, and think it commends itself to the reason and conscience of mankind as naturally as does the duty of speaking the truth, or loving one's family and friends. This was not precisely the view he took of it. On the contrary, he confessed that it was "undoubtedly perplexing," and declared that there is "a prejudice against it,—the strongest, perhaps, cherished by the human mind. . . . There are, I know, persons," he added, "who speak concerning it with an air of cool self-complacency, as being, in their view, easy of investigation and free from embarrassment. I am inclined, perhaps uncharitably, to give them little credit for candor, clearness of intellect, or soundness of character, and greatly doubt whether the doctrine has been investigated by them either to such an extent or with such a

spirit as might furnish them with just views of its nature." That this severe censure was deserved any one may satisfy himself, who will take the trouble to read the published sermons and other writings of his time in maintenance of endless punishment. Those gentlemen who think the doctrine so easy and defensible, are here told that they have studied it neither sufficiently nor in such a temper as to enable them to understand and appreciate it. The subject is too grave for them to grasp. There is, in the second place, another class, who, without apprehending the matter better than their neighbors, go about its defence or advocacy in a different way. They are our thunderers. "They discourse of it," says President Dwight, "in the phraseology, the style, and the utterance belonging to vehement eloquence, such as we often find attached to a strain of powerful invective or vigorous controversy." With this kind of preaching the country is only too familiar. President Dwight thinks it unfortunate, as it is apt to "terminate in awakening mere horror concerning the subject, and mere disgust at the preacher." But it is a question whether this style of preaching does not best befit the subject. The doctrine of endless torments is not amiable, let it be preached as it may ; and it naturally expresses itself in a manner that accords with its own spirit.

There is one fact, quite worthy of remark, which can hardly have escaped the observation of any one familiar

with religious affairs. I allude to the delightful sense of personal security manifested by almost every preacher of the doctrine under consideration. They seem annoyed by no misgivings about their own salvation ; and, this being satisfactorily adjusted, they have nothing to do but preach it the more vigorously to others. In all the passages which flame with descriptions of hell and its torments in the pages of President Edwards, I do not recall a single word that would suggest a suspicion on his part of having any personal interest in the matter, or being in any way exposed to the slightest of these miseries. It was his to proclaim the approaching "deluge of wrath" while he was here, and to witness it with satisfaction and joy hereafter. This comfortable state of things was admirably fitted to encourage that "cool self-complacency" of which President Dwight speaks, and to relieve the whole subject of several rather impressive difficulties. In the view of President Dwight the case wore a very different aspect. He did not regard himself, or other preachers, as exempted from the dangers that threaten the race. "Were such preachers to remember," says he, "that at this very time they may be pronouncing the final doom of their own parents, brothers, sisters, wives, children, and even of themselves, I cannot but believe that their mode of address would be essentially changed, would lose all its violence and exaggeration, and would become deeply humble, solemn, and affectionate." Indeed, he does not hesitate

to say that if the preacher's "heart is not made of stone, he cannot contemplate the subject, as it respects his *fellow-men*, without overwhelming amazement."

It must occur to every one that preaching the doctrine of hell-torments, under the conditions here prescribed by President Dwight, must be as novel an experience to the preachers as it would be to the world. Instead of the cool self-complacency so generally exhibited, the preacher would confess himself overwhelmed with amazement at the very thought of the final damnation of any single human soul. Then he would remember that, in these burning words he is uttering, he may be pronouncing the final doom of those nearest and dearest to his heart. And, as if this were not enough to tone down his spirit, he must at last know that what he is saying, these arguments he alleges with so much confidence and zeal, are to affect himself, and perhaps evince his own final destruction as well as that of others.

Now, I need not say that preaching this terrible doctrine, under such circumstances as these, would not only demand a change in the popular mode of address, but would inevitably lead to a reconsideration of the whole subject. It seems very easy to preach endless punishment to the world at large, but when it comes to our own household and our own souls, it must be a very different thing; and if I do not mistake, this is what our orthodox friends need more than almost anything else to understand

and feel. It would bring the doctrine home to them as they seldom permit it to be brought, and give it a profound personal interest. One hour's serious contemplation of endless torments, as it were face to face, would doubtless give them an impression of it such as they never experienced before, and would suggest a host of questions which they have never suffered to enter their minds. They would see that this doctrine, popular as it is, and important as it is deemed, is, after all, the most improbable doctrine in the world ; that it is the very last hypothesis any man in his senses ought to admit, since nothing worse is possible than what it teaches ; and they would naturally be led to inquire whether God, whose hand they have seen in his works, and who has revealed himself in his Word, can be such a Being as this awful doctrine represents him, and whether human existence — his benevolent gift — can be hedged round by such infinite hazards.

And this leads to a practical reflection which I cannot allow myself to pass unnoticed. It has been well said by the late Archdeacon Hardwick that "the moral force and grandeur of religion are, in every case, to be determined by the worthiness of their ideas of God, his nature and attributes. It has been frequently remarked that as man is, so is the divinity he worships ; but the converse is more rigorously correct, — What God is, such his worshipper becomes." All history is full of illustrations of this observation. Describe the salient features, the distinctive

characteristics, of the God or gods of any people, and, except in strangely anomalous cases, it is not a difficult task to say what the people themselves will be.

What, then, ought to be the moral influence and effect of acknowledging and worshipping such a God as the doctrine of endless punishment, as now portrayed, makes the Almighty, — a God of infinite wrath, who punishes the sins of this brief life with torments which have neither measure nor end ; whose anger never cools ; whom no repentance, no prayers, no tears, can placate ; whose vengeance no lapse of time, no amount of suffering, can appease ; who holds the objects of his displeasure in existence only to torture them, and whom he can never torture enough ; and who finds a large part of his “glory” in these exhibitions of his power, in making wretched, through all eternity, a portion of his intelligent creation ? If the gods of the pagan world impressed their image upon the character of their worshippers, might we not expect to see in Christendom some instances of a like influence from the “God of vengeance” ? And perhaps a careful student of history might trace something of this influence in the unholy wars, in the bitter hatreds, the relentless persecutions, the horrors of the Inquisition, and often in the sternness, coldness, and indifference of private life. Fortunately, the evil, great as it has been, has been mitigated in some instances in which the native impulses of the human heart have been better and more

potent than these lessons of religion ; and in other cases it has been counteracted by the prevailing spirit of love which permeates the New Testament, and which no system of theology, however false and cruel, can entirely overcome ; and, finally, may we not thank God that in innumerable instances the very badness of the doctrine in question, the sheer diabolism of its temper and purpose, has shocked reverent minds, and thus counterworked itself? The Rev. Dr. Milner, formerly at the head of Queens College, Cambridge, said : “ Now, whatever we may pretend, there are few who thoroughly believe God’s threatenings of eternal punishment to the wicked. It is not that men do positively deny this to be so ; but they put off the thought, they start difficulties respecting it, they are prejudiced and selfish in forming their judgments, they half believe and half reject the awful denunciations. . . . In effect, the belief of the loss of the soul in hell is usually a motive that has laid very slight hold of the mind, and by consequence very little affects the practice.” This is the testimony of a professedly earnest believer in the doctrine of endless torments, and many others bear unwilling and melancholy witness to the same wide-spread scepticism. But Dr. Milner’s explanation of the fact is wholly unsatisfactory. Men do not need to “ start difficulties ” about it, for more difficulties start of themselves than they can solve ; nor is it necessary that men should be “ prejudiced and selfish ” in forming their

judgments upon it : the enormity of the doctrine ; its utter inconsistency with the character of God, as made known in creation and providence, and revealed in the Scriptures ; and the malignant influence it cannot fail to exert, as far as it has any influence at all, are more potent against it than any prejudice, or even selfishness, that the mind of man can summon. In the eye of reason and conscience the doctrine is incredible ; it is only by appealing to one's fears that he can be brought to believe it ; and observation shows that then he presently excuses himself from all interest in it, and henceforth only believes it for his neighbors. As the learned Dr. Lightfoot says of the Jews, "that all those curses and dreadful judgments which God in his Holy Writ threatens against wicked men, they post off wholly from themselves and their nation, devolving all upon the Gentiles." It is one of the ill-features of the doctrine of endless punishment that few believe it for themselves, while many accept it quite too readily for others.

And thus I bring the task I proposed to a close. The reader will have observed that it did not enter into my design to refute the doctrine so much as to exhibit it, and enable him to see what it is and what it implies. As I took occasion to say in the earlier part of the work, some doctrines are best refuted by being fairly stated ; and if this is true in any case, it is pre-eminently so with the doctrine under consideration, the character of which is

confessedly so bad that no language can express it. With the arguments by which this doctrine is supposed to be maintained, I have had little or nothing to do, though a work of great interest and value might easily be prepared, whose object should be to examine the various proofs adduced in its support from the domains of reason, history, and Scripture.

Trusting that this volume may lead the candid reader to a more earnest consideration of the subject to which it is devoted, and so serve the interests of truth, promote the welfare of mankind, and contribute to the glory of God, I cheerfully submit it to the hands of my fellow-men and to the Divine providence.

APPENDIX.

WERE this little volume to be sent out to the public without any notice of some of the various ameliorations to which, during the last hundred years, or even the last fifty years, the doctrine of endless punishment has been subjected, I might justly expose myself to the censure of my orthodox friends as not unwilling to leave the impression upon the mind of my reader, that all who profess faith in that doctrine to-day hold it with all its circumstances of horror essentially as it has now been described. Such an impression, I am sure, would be quite erroneous, and consequently unjust. The doctrine has obviously undergone many modifications and improvements, or rather, perhaps, has been stripped of many of its most offensive characteristics, and, as now held by intelligent and pious people, is in many of its aspects a very different thing from what it formerly was. There are many, I am gratified in believing, who, without at all ceasing to be orthodox, still entertain that doctrine in such a manner as to be, as they honestly think, obnoxious to few objections, and in the main consistent with the broadest humanity as well as with the acknowledged

benevolence and mercy of God. Thus contemplated, it is, in their view, deprived of all excessive severity, and whatever would render it abhorrent to the finest moral sensibilities, at least beyond what we sometimes witness in the retributions of the present life. God, in the conception of this class of thinkers, is not a being who finds his chief glory in the greatness and persistence of his wrath ; he is not the implacable enemy of any of his creatures, nor are their miseries, whatever they may be, to be ascribed to any disposition in him that finds pleasure in their pain. On the contrary, they are self-wrought. The sinner himself pulls retribution down upon his own head, and richly deserves before he suffers it. If men will persist in evil-doing ; if, instead of drawing nearer to God, they alienate themselves more and more from the fountain of life and peace ; if they willingly and wilfully place themselves in opposition to divine truth, and engage in open rebellion against the holiness and love of God, — what can they expect, what ought they to meet, but disappointment and disaster? There is a settled moral order in the universe, let men think or say what they will. It is inwrought in the very nature of things, if I may so express myself, and is as fixed and unalterable as any law in the material universe. Can a man smite a granite rock with his naked fist and not be hurt? You may say the rock is impassive, but it at least resists the force which he hurls against it, and seems to return the blow he first delivered. “Can a man take fire in his bosom,” asks the wise man, “and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals and his feet not be burned?” That the transgressor suffers is not because God is revengeful or unfriendly or indifferent, but

because the sinner himself is at war with the moral laws ordained in infinite wisdom and benevolence for the welfare of all, and so of him ; and so long as he persists in fighting against truth and righteousness, truth and righteousness will oppose him, and will give him no peace ; nor is it possible for him to attain it, unless the whole moral economy of the universe is first destroyed or inverted.

These milder and juster views, now entertained by many orthodox people, clearly taking up the line of long-cherished Universalist thought, are finely expressed in the following paragraph from the pen of Dr. Porter, President of Yale College, who may well be regarded as a representative of the best form of New England orthodoxy, and of the best orthodoxy of the country : "Whatever representations we find [in the Scriptures] of man's weakness or depravity and danger, whatever high-wrought pictures of God's anger or its continuance, we must hold fast to the primal truths which make God dear to our affections as our pitying Father, or venerable as our holy Judge. It is because we believe that God is morally perfect, that we assert that he would delight to receive honor and love from all his creatures ; that he uses all the means for the triumph of goodness and the deliverance of all that he wisely can do ; that he will never cast off a soul that truly loves him, in any part of his dominion, or in any period of his administration ; and that he cannot possibly be displeased with, or effectively punish, any being who loves him in the present, or who repents of not having loved and obeyed him in the past."

It needs no words of mine to indicate to the careful reader the transformation orthodoxy has undergone, when

it can express itself in language like this. It is obviously no longer what it was a hundred years ago. Its very grounds seem to have been changed. The Calvinistic doctrine of eternal election and reprobation has wholly disappeared. As God is the Creator, so is he the lover of all souls made in his image. His government is at once moral and beneficent, designed to promote the happiness of his creatures; even his punishments are no longer revengeful. In all parts of his dominion, and in all periods of eternity, God is the same, desiring nothing so much as to receive the love and service of all human souls, and ready to welcome the most abandoned and lost, if they will but return in penitence to seek his grace. In short, God is now doing, and will forever continue to do, all that infinite wisdom can suggest for the complete triumph of good over evil, and the moral improvement and salvation of his intelligent creation; and nothing will prevent his final success but the persistent wickedness of men themselves. The only question is whether the human will is stronger than the divine, and man's obstinacy and rebellion can forever resist all the resources of infinite wisdom and love. This narrows the difference between Universalism and orthodoxy almost to a line. But let us briefly consider some of these modifications of orthodoxy a little more in detail.

I. In the first place, I remark that in Protestant Christendom, at least in all the better portions of it if not universally, the ancient doctrine of infant damnation is now wholly disavowed and rejected. No intelligent Protestant, clerical or lay, now believes that infants dying in infancy are in danger of being lost, whatever the Confessions may say or imply to the contrary. The day for

such an opinion has passed forever. At the same time it is but weakness or ignorance on the part of our orthodox friends, to deny as some of them have done, that the doctrine was ever held by the Protestant churches. The fact is capable of the most abundant proof, as both Dr. Chambré and Dr. Krauth have fully shown. It was one of the unhappy heirlooms which Protestants received from the Roman Church, and it is no little honor to them to have rid themselves of it, while the Roman Church with its pretension to infallibility is obliged to bear it as a burden and a curse, which, however, it manages to make profitable. But even the Church of Rome cannot altogether prevent the introduction of modifications and improvements here, as elsewhere ; and we have seen how among the educated, this doctrine of infant damnation is softened down to accommodate it to a more advanced stage of civilization, a certain presage of its ultimate rejection in spite of the authority of Augustine and papal infallibility.

There is, however no little difficulty, even among Protestants, as I have endeavored to show, in providing for the salvation of all infants dying in infancy. Neither regenerating baptism nor electing grace is sufficient to save more than a small portion of the millions who annually perish at this tender age, and I know of no device yet suggested that has the breadth necessary to meet the emergency of the case. If all are born sinners, and if, to be saved, sinners must repent and believe the gospel ; and finally, if this faith and repentance must be exercised in this life, — the problem how any infant can be saved becomes perplexing indeed. If we can persuade ourselves, as many seem to do, that an external rite applied

to an unconscious or resisting subject will accomplish so momentous a change as converting a sinner into a Christian, even that does not reach a quarter of the infants dying in infancy, and makes no provision for the thousand accidents liable to occur in the most rigid Christian community. Meanwhile the Calvinistic device of election was never designed to affect but a very small part of the human race at large, and the very principle on which it is founded forbids that it can be extended to all infants dying in infancy. Dr. Hodge tells us that "according to the common doctrine of Evangelical Protestants, all who die in infancy are saved. . . . The Scriptures nowhere exclude any class of infants, baptized or unbaptized, born in Christian or in heathen lands, of believing or unbelieving parents, from the benefits of the redemption of Christ. All the descendants of Adam, except Christ, are under condemnation; all the descendants of Adam, except those of whom it is expressly revealed that they cannot inherit the kingdom of God, are saved." I am not disposed to call in question the principle here avowed, but I fail entirely to see how it can be made to consist with the established principles of orthodoxy. But let us thank God for this noble declaration of Dr. Hodge. So far, then, as the doctrine of infant damnation is concerned, the Protestant churches have outgrown it.

It cannot be disguised that this doctrine of the salvation of all infants dying in infancy is attended by one serious inconvenience. It makes the death of infants an unspeakable blessing, an event over which orthodox parents ought to rejoice instead of weeping; and if there is any occasion in human life when the people of God should dance and sing, it is when in the Divine providence they

are called to lay their infant children in the grave. They at least are safe. Had they lived, who can estimate the danger they would have incurred? Of adults even Dr. Hodge believed the great majority will be lost. For so he interpreted Matthew vii. 14, where the Savior says many enter the wide gate and walk the broad way which leads to destruction, while few find the strait gate and pursue the narrow way that leads to life. "This is to be understood of adults," he said. To die in infancy is, then, far better than to live, and grow up to manhood; and the present condition of society, especially in our large cities, where by the most culpable ignorance or neglect the laws of health are persistently trampled underfoot, and the life of infants in great numbers annually sacrificed, should be regarded as one of God's wise and beneficent ordinances. Does not a theology that not only admits, but directly leads to, such inferences as these demand still further modification and improvement?

II. There has been a most remarkable modification of orthodox opinion, amounting indeed to a revolution, in respect to the relative number of the finally saved and lost. Formerly, as I have shown, it was a settled doctrine in the orthodox world that the number of the damned would vastly exceed that of the saved. The words of Christ: "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go in thereat; because strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth to life, and few there be that find it," were uniformly interpreted of the final destiny of mankind; and it necessarily followed that the flock of Christ was to be a very little one, while the hosts of Satan were to be innumerable!

But at the present time this opinion is no longer enter-

tained in any of the Protestant churches, at least in none of the better educated and influential. If formerly the great majority of mankind was believed to be heirs of damnation, now the great majority, it is believed, will be saved. In fact, there is in many quarters a disposition to reduce the number of the damned to the minimum, under the impression that this would relieve the doctrine of endless punishment of some of the greatest difficulties under which its advocates feel it to be laboring.

The honor of introducing this amelioration in this country belongs, I believe, to the late Dr. Lyman Beecher. As early as 1808, in a sermon preached in Newark, N. J., he said: "It seems to be the imagination of some that the kingdom of darkness will be as populous and vast as the kingdom of light, and that happiness and misery of equal dimensions will expand, side by side, to all eternity. But blessed be God, it is mere imagination, totally unsupported by reason or revelation. Who ever heard of a prison that occupied one *half* the territories of a kingdom; or who can believe that the universe, which was called into being and is upheld and governed to express the goodness of God, will contain as much misery as happiness? How could the government of God be celebrated with such raptures in heaven if it filled with dismay half the universe? How vast soever, therefore, the kingdom of darkness may be, in itself considered, it is certainly nothing but the prison of the universe, and small compared with the realms of light and glory. The world of misery shrinks into a point, and the wailings of the damned die away and are lost in the song of praise."

This was a novel doctrine in that early day, and must have been peculiarly so in New Jersey. It is difficult to

believe that at that time the New Jersey orthodoxy had advanced so far as to entertain the amazing hope that one half the human race would finally reach heaven. But be this as it may, the language of Dr. Beecher was as eloquent as the thought was grand. The seed, however, seems to have fallen on unreceptive hearts, for we hear nothing more of it for near a quarter of a century. In 1827 this sermon was republished in Boston, where the Doctor was then a preacher, and presently produced good fruit. It touched the heart of many New England divines, and called forth a ready response. It was felt to relieve the doctrine of endless punishment from a portion of the embarrassments under which it was then staggering, and the government of God from a corresponding portion of its fatuity or its diabolism. For what could one say in defence of the wisdom or goodness of the Creator, whose work ended in more evil than good, more misery than happiness?

Professor Stuart, who was at that time engaged in some controversy with Universalism, eagerly seized the inspiring thought of Dr. Beecher, and though the present seemed dark and unpromising, found the means of nourishing the grateful hope in the language of the prophets. Looking forward he saw a good time coming, when the grace of God would prove more efficacious in winning souls, and the gospel gain victories unknown before. In the latter days of the kingdom of God he believed "the triumph of redeeming love will bring home to glory such multitudes of our ruined race that the number who may finally perish will scarcely be thought of in comparison with the countless myriads of those who will come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." There is

no doubt that this cheering prospect was peculiarly grateful to the heart of Professor Stuart, and it is not at all improbable that he was pleased to urge it as far as possible under his convictions of truth.

At about the same time or a little later, Dr. Pond, of the Bangor Theological Seminary, whose theory of religion is even now far enough from being hopeful, found it difficult to content himself with the meagre salvation he saw in near vision, nor could he bear to have the history of the universe close in such a gloom as he saw spreading about him, and, apparently catching something of the spirit of Dr. Beecher, and something of the distant view of Professor Stuart, he said : " We are looking indeed for better days. We are expecting a long season of rest and peace to this agitated world, when its remotest ends shall teem with inhabitants, and when, in the strong language of prophecy, ' all shall be righteous.' "

We may all well hope, I trust, that the world is improving ; that the gospel is being diffused more and more widely ; and that the time is certainly coming when " from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, the name of God shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered to his name and a pure offering." But it would be a bitter reflection upon our gracious Creator to suppose, as Professor Stuart and Dr. Pond and many others seem to do, that under the divine government all the earlier generations of men were damned and all the later ones saved. Is God a respecter of persons? Are not his ways equal? And must it not be that in the end all men will see that to every human soul, no matter when or where born, he has proved himself the same gracious God, the same loving Father?

Christ certainly did not come to die for and save any special race or generation ; he gave himself a ransom for all, and tasted death for every man ; those who lived in the darkness before the flood were as much the objects of his mission as those who shall fill the earth in its latter-day glory. To reason, therefore, as Professor Stuart and Dr. Pond seem to do, is only to solve one difficulty by creating another. I would as soon believe that God will damn the great majority of mankind, as that he will damn the whole or even the great majority of the pagan world.

The declaration of Dr. Beecher that hell is only "the prison of the universe" appears to have struck many minds with the force of a revelation. It was no longer half the universe, and no longer embraced half of God's intelligent creation. All the associations of a prison in a state or kingdom made it something small in comparison with the kingdom itself. Hence the Rev. Albert Barnes, so well known for his Notes on the New Testament, notwithstanding all the perplexities in which an unhappy creed involved him, tells us, as the conclusion of the whole matter, that, "taking the race as a whole, there is no reason to think that the number of those who should be lost, compared with the immense multitudes that shall be saved by Christ, will be more than the prisoners in our community now, compared with the number of peaceful and virtuous citizens." No one can fail to see what an immense remove this implies from the doctrine as formerly held, and clearly indicates the vast majority of the saved. But Dr. Joel Parker, formerly President of the Union Theological Seminary, of New York City, carried the disparity still further. "We know not," said he, in a course of lectures against Universalism, "the comparative

magnitude of the prison of hell. It may bear a proportion to all the moral intelligences of Jehovah's empire, not unlike a country jail to the inhabitants of the world at the present time." The estimate is simply hypothetical, it will be observed, but we can hardly suppose he would have suggested it, had he not inclined to entertain it. Reduced to numbers it would probably give about a hundred million souls to heaven where it would consign one to hell. If the reader thinks this disparity too large, he may reduce it to a million to one. The population of our globe is now estimated to be twelve or fourteen hundred millions, and a common country jail would hardly have more than a dozen prisoners within its walls. If Dr. Parker intended to include in the term "all the moral intelligences of Jehovah's empire," the angels in their various orders, it probably would not alter the conditions of the statement, since without doubt he believed that a corresponding proportion of them were in that prison of the universe. Now, to say that only one in a hundred million, or, to make the matter less striking, one in a million, will finally be damned, must be confessed to change essentially the phase of the doctrine from what it was when our grandfathers and grandmothers used to sing, —

Broad is the road that leads to death,
And thousands walk together there,
While wisdom shows a narrow path,
With here and there a traveller.

Without quoting many utterances that have more recently been called out from the orthodox pulpit or press on the relative numbers of the saved and damned, all confirming the advanced views of Dr. Beecher and Dr. Parker, I must not omit the declaration of the late

Dr. Hodge, of the Princeton Theological Seminary, well styled "the Nestor of the Presbyterian Church," who was distinguished alike by his long service as professor in that institution, by large learning, eminent abilities, and the most robust orthodoxy. If anywhere in the United States, or indeed in the Protestant world, not excepting Scotland itself, one might reasonably expect to find the old doctrine of a narrow heaven and a spacious hell, it would be at Princeton, and with Dr. Hodge. But with the whole Protestant Church, both Dr. Hodge and Princeton were swept along by a moral force which no sturdiness of conservatism could resist. In closing his great work on Systematic Theology, Dr. Hodge bravely says: "We have reason to believe, as urged in the first volume of this work, and as often urged elsewhere, that the number of the finally lost, in comparison with the whole number of the saved, will be very inconsiderable. Our blessed Lord, when surrounded by the innumerable company of the redeemed, will be hailed as the 'Salvator Hominum,' the Savior of men, as the Lamb of God that bore the sins of the world."

This, then, is the doctrine of the Protestant Church, and is orthodox. The number of the saved is to be very large, and the number of the damned very small. As a certain orthodox preacher said, whose name I am sorry to have forgotten: "The Devil will not, at the conclusion of the judgment, go down to hell with flying colors at the head of a large portion of mankind, as some supposed, but, on the contrary, a very small part of Adam's race will descend with him." The world of misery shrinks into a point, as Dr. Beecher says, "and the wailings of the damned die away and are lost in the song of praise."

This is not Universalism certainly, but it approaches it as nearly as thought can go and yet be orthodox. It preserves the principle, it keeps an example, and that is all. Reduced to a practical view, the danger of your being finally damned is not a thousandth part as great as that of your being killed by lightning, which, if duly considered, must somewhat lessen the tremendous force usually ascribed to the doctrine as a moral power.

This growing faith in the goodness of God and the extent of the Redeemer's kingdom necessarily marks a corresponding change in the popular thought upon the salvation of the heathen. Half a century ago all Christendom was agreed that no heathen could be saved, and as we have seen, they were believed to be daily sinking into hell in such numbers as should have shocked, if it did not shame, the Church to action. Now the strictest, the most conservative orthodox divines are unable to confront that opinion without a shudder. Faith in the ancient dogma falters. Even Dr. Bartlett, now President of Dartmouth College, and one of the sturdiest defenders of the doctrine of endless punishment, is obliged to confess a feeble and reluctant assent to the belief that some of the heathen will be saved. After quoting some passages of Scripture about the terms of salvation, he asks : "Does this involve the actual perdition of all the heathen ? I have not so understood the Scriptures. Two extreme views have been held ; one which would make their condition quite hopeless ; the other, against all appearances, singularly hopeful." He then proceeds to say, what is so obvious, and what the New Testament says or clearly implies on every page, that "there is no Savior but Christ ;" and, hampered by his creed, which teaches that

the salvation of Christ can be attained only in this little world and during this short life, he goes on to say: "But it would seem that men *willing to be saved* may be saved by him, who know little or very confusedly about him, it may be personally nothing."

Is not this a most amazing statement to be made by a learned Christian divine in this nineteenth century of grace? Men, it seems, may be saved by Christ who know little or nothing personally of him, and who of course believe as little as they know! "Abraham," we are told, "believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness;" and under the gospel it is by grace that men are saved, yet only "through faith." St. Paul always preached "repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," and thus alone expected to make Christians or save souls. But Dr. Bartlett, and the orthodox world generally now, has contrived an easier way, which was revealed to St. Bridget, as we learn from Rev. Mr. Oxenham; for she with her own ears heard Christ say to a heathen man: "O pagan, I receive all who would have walked in the way of my commandments, if they had only known how, and did good works as far as they were informed and were able." And Sister Emmerich, another candidate for Catholic sainthood, I presume, being one day in hell, as these saints seem often to have been, saw "poor pagans cast themselves at the feet of Jesus and adored him with inexpressible joy." I am glad to hear that Christ visits sinners even in that prison of the universe, and am morally certain that he does not go there except on an errand of mercy. But it is a little odd to see Dr. Bartlett in his sober senses in such charming sympathy with these female dreamers and visionaries of the Catholic Church.

And speaking of the Catholic Church reminds me to say that in quite recent times some of her most popular sons have caught the spirit of improvement that seems abroad in the very air of Christendom, and begin to talk of a salvation vastly beyond its ancient limits. The Rev. Mr. Oxenham has no faith at all in the old doctrine that the majority of mankind is finally to be damned, and intimates that the Rev. Dr. Faber was of the same opinion; and further says that Lacordaire, "the very model of priesthood in the modern church," after devoting a volume of his *Conférences* to a discussion of the subject as to the extent of salvation, "comes to the conclusion that the great majority of mankind will be saved." This conclusion, as will be seen, is precisely the reverse of that to which Massillon, who was not less a model of priesthood, and had the advantage of being a bishop, came to only a century and a half ago. The doctrine of Lacordaire must sound very strange in the ears of that venerable church, for it has not been heard before for many hundred years; and yet I doubt not that, as in our Protestant churches, it is as pleasing as it is novel. And as time goes on, and the world becomes wiser and better, that church and all churches will hear more and more of such preaching, and enter into its faith and its joy.

I am sorry to be obliged to add one reflection, where I could wish to express nothing but my most cordial sympathy with this better tone of thinking and feeling, and that is the sad one that this whole doctrine of the salvation of the heathen and of the vast majority of mankind, true as it is and noble as it is, stands in no harmony with the creeds, whether Catholic or Protestant,

with which it is now united and made to do service. On the contrary, it contradicts both the letter and spirit of the creeds. If two cannot walk together except they be agreed, it becomes a very serious question which in this case is to be converted, the old thought or the new. The fact that the world seldom turns back, and that the broader light cannot be narrowed again, make the solution of the problem easy, and at once satisfy the loftiest hope and aspiration of the Christian soul.

III. There is one point more on which, during the last century, the ameliorating hand of the age has been notably laid. Not only are all infants dying in infancy redeemed and saved ; not only are some of the heathen to be rescued from endless perdition ; not only is the great majority of mankind finally to be brought to glory ; but the very torments of the few unfortunate persons who are finally damned have been greatly modified and softened down. We have seen what a variety and what dreadful forms of torture the Orthodox Church through long ages described as awaiting the wicked. Hell was a lake of literal fire and brimstone, and fire vastly more intense and penetrating, some said, than any known on earth or even conceivable by us, surrounded by the thickest darkness, and filled with all possible means of physical torture, as well as whatever could alarm and terrify the soul and make it suffer. Neither body nor mind possessed a power or faculty for which God had not prepared a special instrument of torment. All the resources of Omnipotence were called forth to make the existence of the damned an intolerable curse. All the figures of speech in which the Oriental mind luxuriated, and which preachers and prophets had applied to the punishments of men here

in this world, were seized by the Western and especially by the Roman mind, and transmuted at once into the most sober matters of fact, and applied to a hell of which the Bible never speaks, and prophets and apostles never dreamed. And so for twelve or fifteen centuries, the Church went on multiplying and aggravating horrors, till it made the Father of mercies a monster of cruelty and hate and revenge, and immortality an infinite curse.

Fortunately, in the widening of thought, in the progress of civilization, and the better apprehension both of the spirit and meaning of the gospel, these unworthy and barbarous views have gradually become obsolescent, and finally have, with the more enlightened Christians, wholly fallen away. Even Dr. Bartlett proposes the question, "*How* will God punish sinners?" and he answers: "Literalist, or rather materialist, notions have passed away, and ought never to have arisen. The variety and *incompatibility* of the physical images whereby the doom of the wicked is described, would almost seem purposely intended to prevent any such literal issue. Outer darkness, a lake of fire, cutting asunder, and then receiving one's portion, the wine of wrath, undying worms, cannot all be literal, for they cannot go together; but they can all shadow forth something terrific. Just the same reason (and no more) existed for taking them literally, as for understanding heaven as a feast, a wedding, a supping with Abraham, and the like, — an error which no one commits. These images all *represent* great realities, but are not the realities. This is now universally admitted."

Here, then, is swept away almost by the turn of a pen the whole magazine of materials out of which the older divines managed to frame the horrors of hell. But for

this mass of figurative language to work into substantial facts, what would much of the preaching of President Edwards, Jeremy Taylor, and multitudes of others have amounted to? But how far this recognition of the figurative language of the New Testament really modifies the views of Dr. Bartlett in respect to the torments of hell, he does not stop to inform us. He only dissolves the illusion which makes them physical. Calvin seems to have acknowledged that these expressions were figurative, but in his opinion this only made them the more terrible. The reality far transcended the figure, and hell was worse than a lake of fire and brimstone. But Dr. Bartlett happily lives three hundred years later than Calvin, and so much farther also from the barbarism of the dark ages. That Dr. Porter does not sympathize with what he calls "fearful and even horrible pictures" of hell, is evident from his declaration that "whatever high-wrought pictures we find of God's anger or its continuance, we must hold fast to the primal truths which make God dear to our hearts as our pitying Father, or venerable as our holy Judge." The horrors which our old preachers gathered around the damned were as unworthy of God, whether pitying Father or holy Judge, as they were becoming Moloch.

The late Dr. Bushnell, though verging upon the line of heresy, and as some think overstepping it, was still quite orthodox, sometimes, in regard to endless punishment. "I have been through all the questions," said he, "taken all the turns of doubt, suffered all the struggles of feeling in respect to this confessedly hard-looking doctrine of future punishment. I have even learned in these struggles to pity the meagreness of any soul that has encoun-

tered no troubles and painful misgivings concerning it. Neither is this pity at all diminished, but increased rather, by the fact that I am brought back finally to acquiesce in it myself, and even to look upon it as being probably a necessary factor of the Christian salvation. What else can we infer when we find, as we shall by a little search, that our merciful Christ — he that comes in love, and saves by the sacrifice of his life — is the first distinctly responsible promulgator of it himself?" Since Dr. Bushnell has so bravely disciplined himself on this subject, let us see what it is he has to say about it. There is a pleasure in sitting at the feet of an able master. After giving his conception of a soul suffering punishment under "an abject continuity of consciousness, that is only the more desolate that it cannot die," he says: "Holding this conception, we go clear, it will be seen, of that very shocking extravagance which maintains the infinity of future punishment. Mere infinity of duration does not make the quantity infinite, as many so hastily assume; for if there be a diminution of degree as there is an extension of time, the quantity will never exceed a certain amount. So, too, if the continuance be endless, not on the score of old sins long ago committed, — the sins of the previous lifetime, — but as being ordered to match the new sins freely committed and persistently adhered to, the eternal punishment, so-called, may be only a stream of temporal retributions appointed to match the stream of eternally recurring transgressions." This seems at bottom the precise theory of President Dwight half or three quarters of a century before. Having abandoned Edwards's argument for the infinity of sin, and thus his justification of infinite or endless punishment, Dr. Dwight lays down

the proposition that "God may punish sin as long as it exists, and it may exist for ever. He who sins through this life may evidently sin through another such period, and another, and another, without end. That while we continue to sin, God may justly punish us, if he can justly punish us at all, is equally evident. No reason can be given why sin may not be punished at any future time with as much justice and propriety as at present. That it may justly be punished at the present time cannot be denied, any more than that it is in fact punished."

This is probably the best form in which the doctrine of endless punishment can be stated, and be best defended. That the sinner can be justly punished as long as he continues to sin is an old Universalist doctrine, and never called in question. On this ground the Universalist, President Dwight, and Dr. Bushnell can stand side by side. If now it can be proved that men will continue to sin through all eternity, the Universalist must give up his cause as indefensible and lost. To say that the wicked *may* thus persist in sinning forever amounts to nothing. So the saints, who, I hope, are not less moral beings, and therefore not less free in heaven than they were here, or less free than the damned in hell, *may* fall from grace and become sinners again. But who maintains that they will do this, because it is possible? It is my hope that in heaven the saints, though as free as ever, will so love God and goodness that they will have no wish to sin, but every desire to act in perfect conformity with the will of God, the law of infinite love; though Dr. Hopkins had so ill an opinion of the saints in heaven that he thought "the everlasting punishment of the wicked, the smoke of whose punishment will rise up in their sight forever and ever," would be necessary to keep them from sin.

It is easily seen that this doctrine of President Dwight and Dr. Bushnell on the sinner's continuing to sin on and on forever, presents that subject in a way most natural, and in a form most readily defended. But if adopted, it must completely revolutionize the whole orthodox system, and it is a marvel that these learned and far-seeing men did not perceive this consequence. If sinners are to sin on forever, it needs no argument to show that they must continue free moral beings as they are here. They must be this in order to be responsible, and the proper subjects of continued punishment. Then it follows that if the damned can continue to sin, they must be able to *cease* sinning ; and both these learned doctors leave us to infer that punishment would soon end when men cease to sin. It is possible, therefore, that sinners in hell may be converted, and so be saved. It was the doctrine of Luther that if the Devil would stop sinning and love God, he would be in heaven. Of course, the old doctrine of probation as confined to this life falls away entirely ; and with it goes the great doctrine of the general or final judgment. There can be no *final* judgment while men or angels are acting freely, and so the proper subjects of reward and punishment. With this view of the future the whole orthodox system is disintegrated and falls to pieces.

It is a singular, and indeed a very remarkable fact, that the finest description of hell under our new school of orthodox thought, with all its improvements and ameliorations, which I have yet seen, is furnished by an ardent member of the Roman Catholic Church, which I gladly introduce here in full. "What, then, is meant by the dogma of eternal damnation?" asks Rev. Mr. Oxenham,

and answers : " It means, in one word, leaving the sinner to himself. ' Ephraim is joined to his idols ; *let him alone.*' It is no arbitrary infliction of ' a vengeful Deity,' as scoffers, and others who should know better, are fond of phrasing it ; it is simply that God has at length withdrawn from his rebellious creature the care and gracious aid it had pertinaciously despised. The blessing comes from God, the curse from the sinner himself. Man is neither a self-existent nor a self-dependent being, he is not *αὐτάρκης*. His being depends on the will of his Creator, his happiness or well-being on union with him and with those creatures who are given to be his fellows, and on whom he is constrained to lean for support. But man was created a moral and immortal being, placed in a state of probation, and endowed with excellent gifts both of nature and of grace ; and on his use of those gifts depends the favor of his Maker. There is no injustice in withdrawing it from those who deliberately abuse those graces and opportunities ; and when the abuse becomes final and complete, the isolation from God and all good must become complete and final also. The soul has missed the final end of its creation through its own fault ; it has chosen self instead of God, and it remains forever miserable. The worm of remorse that dieth not, the flame of burning thirst that is not quenched, the great gulf or chasm firmly fixed, express different aspects of the same hopeless, irremediable woe, — the conscious loss of God and all which that loss involves."

This, then, is the Catholic doctrine of endless punishment, as set forth by a learned and philosophic divine of that venerable church. I suppose, however, that no one can be more fully aware than Mr. Oxenham himself,

that it resembles the real doctrine of the Catholic Church, as that church has held and taught it for the last fifteen hundred years, and still holds and teaches it, no more than it does the ancient Egyptian metempsychosis. It is the doctrine of the Rev. Mr. Oxenham and perhaps a few learned gentlemen like himself, who are ashamed of parading the old doctrine of the church before educated readers. But Mr. Oxenham has another object in view. It is his aim to exhibit the Catholic Church—to which, if I mistake not, he has recently become a convert—in a very amiable light, as singularly liberal in her spirit and mild in all her judgments, and so recommend her most favorably to his countrymen, and perhaps all English-speaking people.

But, ingenious as this device may be, it is faulty on many accounts. Where does Mr. Oxenham learn that God abandons the sinner and leaves him to himself? It does not seem, from the history of his dealings with mankind which is given in the Scriptures, that this is his way. Nor have I discovered that God is ashamed to acknowledge himself the author of the judgments he inflicts. In short, this whole theory is but a refined speculation, quite destitute of all ground in fact, false in its philosophy, and contradictory of the clearest teaching of revelation. But in common with our best orthodox theologians, Mr. Oxenham obviously rejects the vulgar notion of literal fire and all merely physical torments in the retributions of the future world, and so may be hailed as a coworker in a field where such labor is very much needed, in improving the opinions of the Christian world.

In these several respects—and many others might be recited, were it necessary—it cannot be denied that great

progress has, during the last hundred years, been effected in the domain of religious thought. Much that was superstitious has been thrown aside, much that was obscure has been cleared up, much that was crude has been remoulded, and much that was false and mischievous has been replaced by the true and the good.

Yet with all these modifications and improvements in the orthodox world, it cannot be concealed that essentially the same great difficulty remains. The ugly fact remains that sin still holds its place in the universe forever, and with sin inevitable misery. Let the punishment of sin be as mild as it may, it is endless; and this, were it but a toothache, would at last grow intolerable, and, known to be without end, would lead to despair. Few men, it is to be feared, have ever seriously reflected what it would be to make sin and its consequent wretchedness absolutely interminable. The conceit of Archbishop Whately, Mansel, and many others, that the continuance and amount of moral evil does not at all affect the problem of the existence of sin, seems to me singularly inconsiderate and unphilosophical. If it has any force, it should apply to the whole human race as well as to a few or many individuals. If God in his infinite wisdom and goodness can create one moral being with the foreknowledge that he will sin and suffer forever, why not two, why not all? But what, under this supposition, do men mean by wisdom and goodness? I can understand how God can be wise and good in giving existence to man, knowing that he would sin and suffer for a time, and then be saved from this condition; but make the sin and suffering endless, and it is sheer folly or madness to pretend that the creative act is either wise or good. And this is pre-

cisely the problem which orthodoxy in all its forms and phases has to confront.

Give evil but an end — and all is clear
Make it eternal — all things are obscured.

But let no man despair of the future ; it is not in the realm of science alone that progress is being made and ignorance and error dissipated. In the domain of theology the past century has marked an advance which for beneficent influences and effects has not been surpassed if equalled in any department of science. Men's views of God and his moral government — of his rewards and punishments ; of man's nature, relations, duties, and destiny — have all undergone a great change, making them juster and more cheerful and more moral in their influence. The mother no longer fears lest her dead babe is in hell with the damned ; and Christians of every sect and party are looking more and more upon God as a friend instead of an enemy, and a father rather than a great and terrible king ; and all are coming to regard the Divine goodness as broad enough and rich enough to embrace the whole world ; and though clouds and darkness may sometimes encompass his ways, yet justice and judgment, wisdom and love, are forever and ever the habitation of his throne.

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