Man’s Constitution
and
Eternal,
Conscious Punishment
of the Wicked
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Preface

I have no doubt an annihilationist should be put away: it always really denies the atonement, responsibility, the immortality of the soul, and every just sense of sin (Letters of J. N. Darby 3:91).

. . . but I should gladly help you in this to the utmost of my power, for this doctrine is a deadly and demoralising heresy, or, rather, infidelity. I ever refuted it, but I never saw so much of it as latterly, at New York and Boston. It issues in denying responsibility and conscience, enfeebling in the most deadly way the sense of sin, the value consequently of the atonement, and ultimately the divinity of Christ. All do not go this length, and are unaware of it, but it has led thousands in America there (Letters of J. N. Darby 1:403).

Further, I understand an immortal soul that is at enmity with God and excluded from Him, though once formed to own Him, being for ever miserable. But why God, out of pure pleasure, should keep alive a soul to torment it for a time, only to burn it out at the end, for no possible effect, I cannot conceive. It does not alarm men now. For to tell them that they will simply perish in the end, and it is “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die” -- the infidel finds it a very comfortable and reasonable doctrine. It is in vain to say, it is not honest to say, that men fear total destruction and perishing more than anything; for its advocates resist eternal punishment because it is dreadful to think of. They know it is not the same thing. No doubt man does not like dying or perishing in itself as to this world, where he is alive, but to end in a future one, where there is only torment, he likes very well.

My horror of this doctrine is its weakening our sense of the nature of sin, of our responsibility, and of the atonement. If sin means eternal exclusion from God’s presence, it is dreadful enmity against God now, exclusion from God then. If death is the only wages of sin, Christ had no more to suffer for me. Nay, if I am a Christian, He had nothing to suffer, if I die before the Lord comes. I have paid the wages myself. If it be only some temporary punishment I had incurred, He had only that to bear. “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” has lost its force. It is in vain to say, He gives us life. He can, in itself, quicken without dying. If He died, He died for my sins, and bore them. If [physical] death be the [only] wages, millions of saints have paid them. And if a partial punishment be all I had to bear, it is all Christ had to bear. The sense I have of sin and its desert is not, being forsaken of God, shut out from Him when I can know what it is, but a temporary punishment, a quantum of offence, which is all I have to think of, and all Christ had to bear, if anything (Collected Writings of J. N. Darby 10:346-347).

Thus, with a pretended doctrine of eternal life and love and mercy, responsibility, repentance, and atonement disappears (Collected Writings of J. N. Darby 33:65).

Publishers note:
The above quotations are selected to underscore the seriousness of the denial of eternal, conscious punishment of the wicked as being a fundamentally evil teaching, undermining the faith of God’s elect.

An introductory article to the subject of eternal punishment by J. N. Darby is given first. This is followed by a letter of his on immortality of the soul and eternal punishment. Next, there are two of his letters that make clear the moral bearing of the evil teaching(s) on responsibility and on the atonement. This is followed by an abridgement of the book, Facts and Theories as to a Future State, by F. W. Grant, which was first published by S. W. Hallows, Toronto, in 1879. It was abridged by J. Bloore and named Man and the Future State. Several Appendices by J. N. Darby are added after that. Finally, a Scripture Index and a Subject Index have been prepared to make this volume a handy reference book.

Occasionally there may be found braces { } which contain added words to clarify a statement or point to additional material. Scripture references have been standardized, and in some cases added in braces, for the sake of facilitating indexing.

An article titled Annihilation, by J. N. Darby may be found in his Notes and Comments 1:292-297.
Brief Scriptural Evidence on the Doctrine of Eternal Punishment, for Plain People

by J. N. Darby

The doctrine of everlasting punishment having been much called in question, and the minds of the simple shaken, and the faith of some overthrown (though I have been occupied with the subject, more at large, for some time back, with the purpose of writing on it), I have thought it well to publish some brief pages meanwhile for plain people. And here to such I would suggest to distrust those who talk much about Greek to those who do not understand it. It is easy thus to impose on people. It is useful to know Greek, no doubt, in studying the New Testament, because it was written in Greek; and it is perfectly fair to refer to it with those who, knowing Greek, can judge of what is said; but it is very suspicious when much quoted to those who do not; for how can they judge about it? A man tells you “eternal” does not mean “eternal” in Greek. That sounds very conclusive; but how can you judge whether it does or not? Now in all those who talk much about Greek to plain people, I have generally found trickery; and that their Greek has not been worth much when put to the test by those who did understand it. Without pretending to be very learned, I know Greek, and I have studied the Greek Testament, and I have not been led to place any confidence in their statements about the Greek, but the contrary. The Spirit of God will guide more surely a plain man, if he be humble, in fundamental truths, than a little Greek will those who trust in it.

Now, to a plain man, the statements of his English Bible leave not a doubt on the mind that the punishment of the wicked is eternal.

These statements, I have no doubt whatever, are substantially right. No doubt, being a human work, translations are imperfect, and the translator’s views and feelings are apt to be transfused into them. But in the main, the doctrine presented by the English Bible, and the faith produced by it in a plain believer’s mind, is sound doctrine and divinely-taught faith, though it be possible some passages might be more exactly rendered. None, however, that I am aware, affecting this truth are misrepresented by the translation. And it is quite evident to me, and to any plain honest man, that God meant to produce on the mind of the reader the conviction that eternal misery is the portion of the wicked, and I do not believe that He meant to produce the conviction of a lie, nor frighten them with what was not true. Now I shall quote many plain passages, adding my unhesitating conviction that the attempts to undermine this doctrine of scripture (and I have been compelled to examine a good many) have entirely failed, and that the arguments used are either dishonest, some of them flagrantly so, or contradictory and fallacious, and that all of them subvert other fundamental truths. And I declare also my conviction that a sound knowledge of Greek confirms the plain man’s scriptural faith. I shall state why in a few plain words at the end.

I give a body of texts (some of which by themselves might not prove the point), that the effect the Holy Ghost meant to produce may be wrought according to the full testimony He has given. I beg the plain reader’s attention to these passages. Some refute the doctrine of the salvation of all; some, the notion that the wicked will perish, i.e., cease to exist. Some show that the human notion of divine love, which denies the vindication of God’s majesty and holiness against sin by wrath, and the eternal impossibility that light should have fellowship with darkness, is an unscriptural and an unholy notion. Some refute particular arguments used in favor of these errors. So that, if the mind be solidly imbued with these passages, the error is confuted; and, lastly, some of them show, that the doctrine of scripture is, that there is wrath, and that everlasting misery and punishment is the portion of unbelieving and rebellious sinners. Some show that it applies to all kinds of sinners, without law, under law, and unbelievers of the gospel.

I shall quote figurative as well as plain statements, because figures are meant by God to produce some conviction, the exact force being no doubt to be sought in exact expressions. Matt. 3:10, 12; ch. 5:22, 29, 30; ch. 6:15; ch. 7:13, 23; 1 ch. 8:12; ch. 10:28, 33; ch. 11:22; ch. 12:31, 32; ch. 13:40; 2 41, 49; ch. 18:8, 9; 3 ch. 22:13; ch. 23:33; ch. 25:46; 4 ch. 26:24. Mark 3:22; ch. 8:36; ch. 9:43; ch. 16:16. Luke 12:4, 5, 9, 10; ch. 16:19-31. John 3:3, 15, 36; ch. 5:29; 5 ch. 6:53; ch. 8:24. Acts 1:25. Rom. 1:18; ch.

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1. Mark this and Matt. 10:33, because it is impossible to believe that Christ could say these things of those who were redeemed and saved as much as others, though to be punished awhile.
2. In those two verses, 40 and 49, it will be said “world” means age or dispensation; be it so, I believe it does; but that does not affect the judgment pronounced as to that which is to follow.
3. Here everlasting fire or hell-fire is in contrast with life; if they go into one, they do not go into the other; nor is any particular word used which might, as they allege, make it apply to a peculiar period of happiness. Life and hell-fire are contrasted.
4. Now here in Greek “everlasting” and “eternal” are precisely the same word; and what one means for life, the other means for punishment.
5. Here, they will tell you, “damnation” means judgment. So it does; but it is in contrast with having life. And in judgment “no flesh living shall be justified.” The judgment is at the end of all.
Now no one can deny that the effect of these passages is, to lead men to believe that the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness, as well as His love in Christ; that, if this love be despised, and the gospel rejected, damnation is the consequence; that, as to those who come under wrath, their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched; that they have never forgiveness; that they are not saved, but perish; and that they are tormented for ever and ever in the lake of fire and brimstone; that having despised the sacrifice of the cross, there is no more sacrifice for sin. But men seek to evade these plain testimonies, and begin to reason, and to speak of Greek.

Now there are two systems by which men seek to set aside these plain passages. One is that all will be saved, all, even the devil himself, though some few of them do not like to say anything so plain as that.

The other is, that the wicked will not be saved (the soul not being immortal at all), and that the fire of hell will in time consume them.

Now these two systems quite destroy one another. It is the latter which most prevails here in England, the former in other countries. Those who hold the latter say that the former is monstrous and unscriptural: first, because of the passages which declare that some people are to be damned and others saved, and very many which speak of destroying body and soul in hell, or something of equal force; and also because, if they are saved, they are saved without the atonement and regeneration, for there are those who have rejected the one and despised the other, and for whom there remains no more sacrifice for sin. And indeed nothing can be plainer. And so as to the devil and his angels. For, to be consistent with their views, they must save them too. For they say God is to be all in all, and, being love, there can remain no misery. But if so, the devils must be saved too. But then, they have no Christ, no Savior; so that, according to this doctrine, if I tell a man he cannot be saved without Christ, I am not telling him true, for there are those who are, according to this system. That is, the whole gospel is subverted as to every one. But is it not plain to an honest mind that when it is said “he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned,” this does not mean “he that believeth not” shall be equally saved with him that believes — only he shall be punished for awhile first? For that is the doctrine of the first class, or Universalists, as they are called. And when it is said, they which believe on Him “should not perish, but have everlasting life,” is it not equally plain that it does not mean that, though they would not believe, they would still have it and not perish at all? And when it is said “whose end is destruction,” it does not mean that their end should be to be in happiness like others, though they waited a little longer? And when it is said “hath never forgiveness,” that it does not mean one will have it in the end? And when it says, “where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched,” that it does not mean they are to get out of it safe and sound and to be in glory like the saved? God has said, “these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.” Now, who would believe that this meant that the condemned were to go for a short time into punishment, but had or would have eternal life quite as much as the others? Eternal life and eternal or everlasting punishment answer to one another, and mean the same in either case. They argue that it means eternal in neither! But will any one believe that “eternal life” does not mean life for ever and ever? If its lasting for ever is only to be understood from the word “life,” because it is Christ’s life, why add the word eternal? The plain reader will hardly believe that they say eternal is added to confine it to the next age, or millennium! 8 But this is quite a fallacy; for we are said to have it now, before the millennium comes at all. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.”

The punishment of the wicked, then, is said to be of equal duration with the life of the blessed. But further it is said to be of equal duration with the life of God. In Rev. 5:14, it is said that they worship Him who liveth for ever and ever. And in Rev. 14:11, it is said, the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. Now if the punishment of the wicked is said to endure as long as the life of the blessed, and as the life of God Himself, I ask, how could God have expressed more strongly to living men its enduring everlasting? If He has said “it hath never forgiveness” — if He has said “their worm dieth not” — what could God have said more if He had meant to convey what eternal punishment was? And note here, that Rev. 20, where they are said to be in the lake of fire without, is after the millennium, and all is over, when it is said It is done, and God is all in all.

Hence the advocates of the second system of error have declared that the first has long been proved entirely absurd and untenable; and they have set up another, namely:

That the soul is not immortal at all, and that death means simply ceasing to exist, and therefore, that life is to be found only in Christ; and that, after a certain quantity of punishment, the wicked will be turned out of existence, or consumed by the fire of hell, and exist no more.

Such is the doctrine much in vogue, in this country, on this subject.

Now, upon the face of this doctrine the grossest inconsistency at once appears. For, if death means ceasing to exist, the soul not being immortal at all, and that anything

6. God is minded to show His wrath and make His power known. Though love, He is God, and His majesty must be maintained against rebellion and sin.

7. Now in this, as in Mark 16:16, perishing and being damned is contrasted with being saved, so that any plain person must conclude that they are not saved. Some are saved, and others perish because they reject the cross.

8. This they base on their Greek, of which a word just now.
But that death thus coming in was not ceasing to exist is evident, because

it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment.

Again,

Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But . . . fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell.

That is, we have the positive revelation of God, that their comment is a false one, that death is not the whole wages of sin, but that judgment comes after it. But then, to get out of this, they say that death was the wages of Adam’s sin, but that these punishments are the wages of our own. Now the apostle does not state the matter so. He says, “and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” That is, he connects the sin of all men and Adam’s sin together, as bringing in death itself on all; so that this will not do either.

But were it even not thus disproved by the apostle’s statement, there is another thing remains: if Adam’s sin brought in death on all his posterity, and man is not immortal (for that is their doctrine), where do sinners get the life from after death (that is, after ceasing to exist at all)? Their sins cannot give it them. They tell us that, death having been pronounced on man, there is no immortality, no life, but in Christ. Well then, see what it comes to: the wicked have life in Christ in order to be punished for their sins, and this life, which they have in Christ, is not eternal life: for if it be, they must be (if not eternally happy or saved) eternally miserable. And moreover, this life, which they have of Christ to be punished in, is to be consumed by the wrath and punishment of God! If it is not life in and from Christ, then death does not put an end to a man; death is not what they pretend it is; man is, in a word, an immortal being. And further, what was the worth of Christ’s death? Some of them say it was just simply death as the wages of sin. But “He bore our sins”; and if so, our sins being merely a measured quantity of punishment, it is not the wrath of God due to us as lost sinners, but merely a partial punishment He had to avert. But further, as regards the wicked, the death of Christ, they say, averted death from them so that they should be punished. He did not bear their sins — that is clear — for it is for them they are to be punished; so that Christ’s death was necessary to keep alive the wicked in order to punish and then consume them, and was applied to this purpose by God!

And now some general remarks. Note this, all kinds of expressions are used, beside eternal punishment, as their end is destruction — They shall not see life — They have never forgiveness — They have no life in them — Christ shall deny them — He never knew them. So that the argument as to the meaning of “eternal” in Greek, were it valid, leaves many other statements untouched; but it is not valid. They pretend that “eternal” means what belongs to the millennial glory of the dispensation that is coming. Now I believe in the glory of that dispensation; but I say “eternal” does not mean this in Greek, and I challenge any man who knows Greek to produce

9. And Christ’s death as bearing the sins of many is contrasted with this in its efficacy for the saved.
10. Others say he was conditionally immortal, for they do not agree in their systems.
me one passage where it does. It is used sixty-eight times (besides three which refer to past time), and not one can be brought to show that it means the millennial period. Many prove that it means “eternal” in all, and many prove that it does not apply to the millennial state when used in the connection in which they say it does. I shall quote some plain ones to both points.

That it means “eternal.”

2 Cor. 4:18: For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

2 Cor. 5:1: A house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

1 Tim. 6:16: To whom be honor and power everlasting.

1 Pet. 5:10: The God of all grace who hath called us to His eternal glory.

So in Heb. 5:9; ch 9: 12, 14.

These passages show that the natural meaning of the word is “eternal,” in contrast with temporal.

As to the second point, that it does not mean “millennial,” the reader will find that eternal life is quite as often said of our having Christ’s life in this world as in the next; because it is that divine life which is a real thing given us, as true in this world as in the next. Its full development is in the next, of course, and therefore we naturally speak of it as there; but scripture equally states that we have it here; so that it certainly does not mean a millennial condition, though we have it then as now. The word translated “for ever,” does sometimes mean, when used in other ways, what is not eternal. It is used for the duration of anything in uninterrupted continuance, though the thing in its nature may not last for ever, and hence for the whole of any particular period—as the whole of man’s life, sometimes the whole course of this evil world, the whole of a dispensation. But when it is used in connection with the subjects we are treating of, there is not the least doubt it means eternal, and indeed wherever it is not used with a particular subject which limits it; and when translated for ever, it never means the millennial age, as alleged.

Many other arguments from the use of it in Greek might be urged; but I do not go farther here, as I might only perplex those who do not understand that language. In a passage which relates to our subject we have plain proof, however, that “everlasting” does not mean millennial. For it is said, “depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” Now, on their own showing, the devil and his angels are not there till the millennium is over; so that it does not mean millennial. Further, they insist on the words “destroy” and “destruction.” Now we have already shown, it cannot here mean to put an end to the existence of what is destroyed; because it lasts as long as the life of the blessed, and even of God Himself. But that it does not mean so in many passages is plain. The very title given to the angel of the bottomless pit would show it. He is called Apollyon, i.e., the destroyer; now he ruins no doubt many, but he cannot destroy in the sense referred to. So “the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.” “The lost sheep of the house of Israel” is the same word; and it is the strongest used.

I have thus stated some of the strongest scriptural proofs of the doctrine, and I have met the main arguments of the systems which error has attempted to set up. The attentive Christian will find that both subvert the work of Christ and the claims of the holiness of God; for if men are saved who have died in the entire rejection of Christ and the Holy Ghost, and for whom there is no more sacrifice for sin, then salvation by these means is not needed for us. Or, if death is the whole wages of sin, and man is not immortal at all, the sufferings of the Son of God and His being forsaken of God in wrath are really set aside: it is not that which comes from the necessary majesty of God’s holiness, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. And at any rate, Christ merely set aside a certain temporary punishment for some, and secured its infliction on others, as without Him men would have ceased to exist, like a horse or a dog! He procured eternal life for some, and a temporary life for others, in order that they might be miserable! No Christian, I think, but must see that this is not what God teaches us. Nor is there the smallest ground for one doctrine or the other. It is alleged that in Colossians Christ is said to reconcile all things that He makes; but this is merely the visible creation, to the exclusion of a third class who are mentioned in Philippians as being obliged to bow the knee to Him, namely, those under the earth, strictly, the infernal things or beings, but who are not included in the reconciliation. So that, when compared with Phil. 2, it proves quite the contrary.

The result of our examination is to leave in its full force eternal punishment (the terrible consequence of the enmity of man’s heart against God), and eternal blessedness (the result of God’s free and blessed grace), in their plain scriptural sense, as commonly believed by simple-minded Christians. It is equally clear that the just divine vengeance which inflicts the punishment will know how to apportion the many stripes and the few stripes, to distinguish duly those who perish without law and those who are judged by law (though all be shut out from the presence of God, as in the judgment which devours the adversaries); and that the sovereign divine grace which has called any to glory will know how and when to place on the right hand and on the left in the kingdom, according as He has prepared it for them, while giving to each his reward according to his labor (eternal blessedness with Jesus, and like Jesus, being the common portion of all).

The thought is indeed solemn: but I can say that the

11. That is, the Greek word αἰωνίος.

12. Εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. It is used twenty-six times, of which twenty-three clearly mean “never” or “eternal.” Of the other three, one is obscure, namely, Abraham and his seed for ever; the two others cannot be used as a proof: one refers to the Comforter abiding with the disciples (John 14:16); the other, sinners being reserved for the blackness of darkness for ever. Not one can be brought to show that it refers to the millennial time of glory. We have the expressions THIS world, and the world TO COME, as to which men may reason, but never the words above used.
examination of scripture on the subject has not left a cloud on
my mind as to the truth taught in it; while the examination of
the systems opposed to it has satisfied me, that they are
fallacious and superficial, not taught by the Spirit of God, nor
the truth of the word; and that sound and full examination of
the Greek they plead confounds their statements.

And now, poor sinner, mark this: you may fancy that you
are to judge God, and that you are competent to say that He
ought to assign so much or so much punishment to so much
sin; but know that He is to judge you. The notion of His love,
which makes it an obligation incumbent on Him to act so and
so in it without His being able to help it, and so that eternal
punishment cannot be, is a false, unscriptural, and senseless
notion. He is love; but He is God, and acts freely and holily
in His love. God is love; but it is GOD that is so. Love is
what He is. But the first question is, who He is; and He is
God, and doeth what pleaseth Him. Now, mark this. If the
Spirit of God has touched your conscience, you know that you
deserve to be shut out of the presence of God for ever. You
are conscious that you have deserved eternal wrath and
punishment. If you are not, you do not know yet, by divine
teaching, what sin is. And I pray you to remark that, in this
question, it is not what may be, or what might be, which is
in question. You are a sinner:—What, in your own conscience,
does sin deserve? And further, if it is a question what sin
deserves, it is a question of what Christ bore, what His
atonement was; for He bore our sins and was made sin for us.

God speaks plainly of wrath, indignation, vengeance,
because of sin. What was the wrath due to sin, which Christ
bore when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree? It
is not a speculative question, of what might be, but of what
saves you! Do you believe, that what Christ bore, when He
made His soul an offering for sin, was merely the amount of
a certain temporary suffering? that this was what sin
amounted to in the presence of God? and that this too was
what God’s wrath amounted to? Do not be led astray by any
abuse of the blessed truth that it was Christ’s divine nature
that gave infinite value to His work. It did so, blessed be
God. But He

bore our sins in his own body on the tree.

And

it pleased the Lord to bruise him.
He was wounded for our transgressions.
The chastisement of our peace was upon him, with his
stripes we are healed.

Now was what He bore for us, for you, a mere amount of
temporary punishment, or the holy wrath of God, the
awfulness of God’s forsaking Him while He was alive, His
soul being made thus an offering for sin? That wrath which
shuts out from His presence, while the soul can know what it
is -- is not this what we have deserved? It is not merely
torment and then ceasing to exist; though Christ, as a divine
Person, gave infinite value to His work.

Some mightier creature might well have borne temporal
punishment due; but the wrath and judgment implied in
eternal punishment a divine eternal Person alone could bear.

Those who deny eternal punishment quote also sometimes
the scriptures of the Old Testament, such as the following --
Gen. 6:3,

My spirit shall not always strive with man”; (Isa. 57:16),

For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always
wrath; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls
which I have made;
and again, Psal. 49:12,

Man being in honor abideth not; he is like the beasts
which perish.

Now any plain godly reader can judge from such quotations
as these what such an argument is worth; for it is clear that
nothing but exceeding inattention, or positive dishonesty,
could apply such passages as having anything to say to it.
First, as to Genesis, it is most plain, that it is God’s patience
with man before the flood, while the ark was a preparing,
when, according to Peter’s comment, the long-suffering of
God waited in the days of Noah. Their spirits-being cast into
prison, when thus judged, is plain proof enough that they
subsisted after their death.

As to the second, Isa. 57:16, it is equally plain that the
Lord is speaking of men in the earth. If He contended with
them continually-did not cease and spare them, they would
perish as living men. The stumbling-blocks were to be taken
out of the way of His people. The high and holy One would
revive the hearts of the humble, and the heart of the contrite,
for He would not strive for ever, nor be always wroth. “For
the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth and smote him
. . . I have seen his ways and will heal him,” etc. Now what
has all this to do with hell! Just nothing at all. Let me advise
the simple reader, when a quotation is made, always to read
the context before he receives a new doctrine.

Lastly, Psal. 49. Again I say, read the Psalm, and it will
be at once seen that it applies to glory in this world.

For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the
brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others.
Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue
for ever . . . they call their lands after their own names.
Nevertheless, man being in honor abideth not: he is like
the beasts that perish.

What “man being in honor” has to say to his being in hell
would be hard to say. “Like sheep they are laid in the grave;
death shall feed on them.” Is it not evident that the doctrine
here taught is, that death blasts all the earthly glory of man?
“His glory shall not descend after him”; but even here, dark
as were the views of what was beyond death, there is no sign
of any final destruction or of final recovery.

I add a word for the reader who does understand Greek.
The etymology given as early as the time of Aristotle, and by
him, is ai/en on, always existing. The earliest use of the word
is in the sense of a man’s life. It is so used frequently by
Homer of the death of his heroes and in other ways. It is used
by Herodotus and the Attic poets, so far as to say anepneusen
ai/ona. Very much later it came to mean one whole
dispensational period or state of things; but, when used by itself in its own meaning, it had very clearly the sense of eternity. It is thus used by Philo in a passage which can leave no doubt, \textit{en aioni de outhe pareleluthen ouden outhe mellei alla monon uphesteke}. “In eternity, nothing is either past or to come but only subsists.”

In conclusion, I say (as has been remarked by others) that, if God had meant to convey the idea of eternal punishment, He would not have used expressions stronger than He has used; nor do any exist.

Letter on Immortality
and
Eternal Punishment
by J. N. Darby

My dear brother,

As this question, this evil heresy, is the one by which, most commonly just now, Satan seeks to pervert the minds of the simple, I write a line to you in connection with the tract sent to me. A great many human names are introduced, but Scripture is little inquired into. In this doctrine the great point of consequence to me is that the true character and import of sin, of atonement, of repentance, are overlooked, and the responsibility of man. Atonement is either denied or dropped out. Here it is entirely dropped out. Now it is evident, if temporary punishment is the whole desert of sin, Christ had only to suffer accordingly. Repentance is proportionate. And one of the chief teachers in the United States declared in his book, that the deep distress of conscience and terror about sin committed was a base servile fear and wrong. To one who found he had lost the atonement and the sense of responsibility out of his mind, and who asked him what he made of responsibility, he replied, it was impossible to reconcile it with his system, but he saw it in Scripture, and so did not deny it. They insist that souls of men and beasts are the same, and plead Genesis to this end -- all in whom was the breath of life perished in the flood -- that beasts have a living soul and so has man. If this be so (that we have more intelligence, but a living soul like a beast’s), you cannot charge a beast with sin, nor make Christ die to put away a beast’s sins. What did Christ do for us -- not as giving life, but in the way of atonement? That is the grave question. Again, they confound eternal life and immortality, which is not honest.

Save as to the immortality of God, where it declares death, of course, has no part, mortality and immortality as to men, are applied solely to the body and have nothing to do with eternal life. Eternal life is what we have in the Second Adam: the question is the condition of the first. Thus, “when this mortal shall have put on immortality,” “the life of Jesus in our mortal flesh.” The places are these --

Rom. 6:12, “mortal body”;
Rom. 8:11, “mortal bodies”;
1 Cor. 15:53, “this mortal”;
1 Cor. 15:54, where it is the resurrection, that is, the body (or change);
2 Cor. 4:11, “our mortal flesh”;
2 Cor. 4:4 “mortality swallowed up of life,” when he speaks of the tabernacle we are groaning in.

Mortality is always of the body; immortality is put in contrast with mortality (not mortality of the soul, but of your present mortal condition). 1 Cor. 15:53, 54, is the change from a mortal state. Otherwise it is used only of God. In 1 Tim. 6:16, He is undying in nature. Mortal is applied to our present state, but is not applied to the soul at all. That God only has immortality does not affect an undying existence conferred; for angels are not mortal, as all admit, and as Luke 20:36 shows. With these and the state of the fallen angels these teachers never trouble themselves. Men must not suffer; their love goes no farther than themselves. Now the everlasting punishment is prepared for the devil and his angels, and there the judged of Matt. 25 are sent; so Rev. 20:10, 15; Rev. 21:8.

As to the life we have naturally, beasts were formed by God’s word out of the ground, and there the ordinary creation ended, and then beasts were pronounced good; Gen. 1:25. And then God proceeds in solemn consultation to form man as His image, as lord of all that had been created, and in His likeness, and first makes him a frame out of the dust, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man by partaking of what came directly from God became a living soul (not at all as the beasts), God’s image on the earth. Hence he is called (Acts 17) His offspring. He has a spirit as well as a mere soul, when the distinction needs to be made, which death does not touch. We are not to fear them which kill the body and after that have no more that they can do -- that death does not touch what is beside bodily life. I will speak of “destroy” in good time; but death leaves the soul in existence, not merely the souls of saints.

When the resurrection was called into question by the Sadducees, it is not said of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob only, that they are alive, nor is this founded on their being saints, though they were such, but it is added, “for all live unto him.” Death does not affect the soul, All live, not for man indeed on the earth but, for God.

The case of Lazarus and Dives clearly teaches the same solemn truth; the sinner was as much alive as the saint. They allege that this is a Jewish figure. I admit it fully as to the form; but it is not a figure of a person’s not existing. The second death is the lake of fire -- is punishment. They allege that it burns man out in time, and that ceasing to exist is the second death; but Scripture says the punishment is itself the second death. Death never means ceasing to exist.

Then as to this word “everlasting.” It is incontrovertible that its proper sense is everlasting. It is defined carefully to mean it by Aristotle and Philo (the last a religious Jewish writer of the apostles’ age) and others. Scripture speaks of the eternal God, the eternal Spirit, the eternal inheritance, eternal redemption; and what makes it conclusively evident that the word in itself means it is the statement of the apostle in 2 Cor. 4: “The things which are seen are temporal, and the things
which are not seen are eternal,” where it is used in express contrast with temporal, without any subject (as they allege) which on other grounds shows what it means. So eternal life and eternal punishment are used in direct contrast -- eternal life is in Christ, the gift of God. It is only named twice in the Old Testament, and both refer to the millennium (Dan. 12; Psa. 133); for life and incorruptibility were brought to light by the gospel. In Rom. 2:7 it is incorruptibility, not immortality.

None of the quotations following, apply to the subject at all. I have eternal life now; yet I am as mortal as ever. That life is not touched in any way when I die; 2 Cor. 5:6-8. It is in full glory, when I get a glorious body; mortality or immortality it has nothing to do with, nor they with it. It is “life and incorruptibility” which are brought to light by the gospel. There is a resurrection of the unjust as of the just. They subsist meanwhile, or there is no one to raise; their judgment comes after their death. At any rate eternal life does not touch or take away mortality -- has nothing to do with it, nor does it give immortality. It is only the darkness of common doctrine that has given rise to these statements, which have no real foundation at all. “All live unto him.” Destroying the body does not touch the soul. “Who only hath immortality” does not apply to created existence. The angels are not mortal as we are, but they have no existence independent of God any more than we have.

Dr. Whately is wrong altogether -- 13 “of those only,” he says, “who shall,” etc. Now it is not so. Immortality is only used twice, applied only to the body, and when it has ceased to be mortal.

Another thing important to remark here is the abuse of the word “die.” We may be quite right in seeing, as spiritual persons, that men may be dead while they live; and that we may be dead in sin, as towards God, when alive; and that the judgment of death implies estrangement from God, as the gift of life is bringing us, in principle, in blessedness to Him. But dying in its positive sense is never applied to the soul. Thus Ezek. 18, constantly quoted for this, and used by good people with good intentions, speaks only of death in this world-present judgment here; not for a father’s, but for our own sins.

Quoting such a passage as “He that hath not the Son of God hath not life” proves utter confusion of mind; for if I were a living sinner, I have not life in that sense, yet am alive all the same; and if I never died at all, was not mortal as to the body, I should not have it a bit more. What lost life has the sinner no power to regain? Not the fact of life (namely, conscious existence); he has it as much as ever. It does not touch the question; and I know from Christ’s word that death to which I am sentenced does not affect the soul. Why so diligently confound spiritual life and actual existence? And this is the whole secret of the way they puzzle people -- poor work! Death as judgment on man may intimate a great deal more, just as life does. But “thou shalt surely die” was bringing in mortality; and hence man was not allowed to touch the tree of life lest he should eat and live for ever-ever for ever as a sinner in the world. Here, as a matter of fact, God was not precluding him from getting spiritual life; and if when actually alive, as he was, he had eaten of the other tree, he would not have died at all. Immortality in his then state, before or after the fall, would have been immortality as a living man as he then was. The death threatened we have plainly declared to us -- “till thou return unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” Did the spirit God breathed into Adam come out of the dust? It returns to God who gave it; and the body will be raised, and then judgment come, and only then the award of sin by judgment. The corruption of the body is only an intermediate state. common alike to saints and sinners, just as death itself is, save by special intervention of God’s power.

As to union with the Savior giving life, it is all a blunder. It has no such effect. None but already quickened ones are united, and that by the Holy Ghost. I need not say that all he speaks of the end of all things at a common resurrection is no part of our belief; but it is one of the acts of Satan to take fresh light and use it, where it has not been, to pour in his darkness.

The statement of everlasting punishment to a simple soul is as plain as possible in Scripture: “These shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into everlasting life.” To a simple soul it would be monstrous to say that “everlasting” was not meant to mean the same thing. They are “tormented for ever and ever.” Death gives up all it held, into the lake of fire that is, for ever and ever; the same word always used in that book for God’s existence. “They are punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.” Now everlasting destruction has no sense if non-existence be meant by destruction. Total destruction I understand; but everlasting destruction in such a sense, is nonsense. And in this case, on their own theory, it is no destruction then at all; for 2 Thess. 1 is at the beginning of the millennium, when, according to their own system, and my own full conviction, they are not destroyed at all.

This leads me to the word “destroy.” It is, like death, used for the ruin of a present state of things, even moral ruin, not for cessation of existence. “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help.” “I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” -- the same word. “He that loseth [destroyleth] his life for my sake, shall save it.” “Carest thou not that we perish?” Zacharias “perished between the temple and the altar.” Take an English-Greek Concordance, and you will easily see. So destruction; waste of the ointment; the son of perdition; damnable heresies -- heresies which ruin people. Moral ruin is meant, as well as destruction of existence, if that is ever meant. The world of the flood perished -- the flood came and destroyed them all; Yet they are spirits in prison after that another proof that death destroys no soul; does not mean it. Abaddon and Appolyon are the Hebrew and Greek for destroyer: are they able to make to cease to exist finally? Take “abadd” (Englishman’s Hebrew Concordance p. 8); I do not think “destroy” is ever used for finally ceasing to exist, but totally ruining as to the state anything has been in. When men are everlastingly destroyed from the presence of the Lord, it confessedly is not so; they then go into punishment; but that is final. And when it is said, “their fire is not quenched,” to assert that it means that they do not exist at all is a miserable come-off, not more. It is

13. “It is certain that the words, ‘life,’ ‘eternal life,’ ‘immortality,’ etc., are always applied to the condition of those, and of those only, who shall at the last day be approved as ‘good and faithful servants,’ who are to ‘enter into the joy of their Lord.’” Dr. Whately.
a figure no one denies, and refers, as is stated, to Isaiah; but the figure is one of the continuous existence of the objects of punishment.

From one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord; and they shall go forth and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me, for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

It is continuing abiding objects of punishment which are now before the eyes of those who come up. It was not a supply of fresh material, etc. All this is false. The opposite is what God is teaching. It is of continued existence; it is the carcases that were indestructible-at any rate undestroyed: an external matter, no doubt, in Isaiah, and used by the Lord as a figure, but a figure of continued shame and misery, and no fresh supply. And what is the meaning of everlasting supply hell, where body and soul are, with fresh materials? "Destroyed for ever." Psa. 92:7, applied to this world; so Psa. 104:35, "consumed out of the earth." You may take it as a general rule, that in the Old Testament, judgment, destruction, etc., refer to this world, though a future state is referred to in the Psalms.

Again, the passage "seek for glory, honor, and immortality," immortality is incorruptibility. God is immortal in His present existence- cannot die. Man is looked at, when spoken of as such, as body and soul, and now mortal in that condition; and mortality is used only in respect of his existence in the body, and immortality too, only in another state. In Rom. 2:7 and 2 Tim. 1:10, it is incorruptibility; but it is always a state in the body, now mortal, then immortal (i.e., the soul separable from the body or inseparable). It does not touch the question, though habit uses it for it. Ignorance or dishonesty can alone quote the word. Angels are acknowledged to be immortal-and what we have to do is to learn from Scripture what becomes of that which was directly communicated from God when He breathed into man's nostrils, and which, most certainly from Scripture, death does not touch.

I have already said eternal life has nothing to do with it; I am as mortal when I have it as before. Now Scripture is positive that death does not touch the soul. It subsists after death and apart from the body. There could not in their use of it be a second death, if it meant ceasing to exist. Death does not mean for men ceasing to exist; neither does the second death. That is going into the lake of fire, not getting out of it. And this driving out of the presence of the Lord is for ever; punishment is everlasting. When dead, all live for God; when raised, they are cast into the lake of fire, and that is the second death, and the final state spoken of. They shall then have their part in it. This is "for ever and ever" -- the term used for the duration of God's own life, and the duration of His glory; Rev. 4:9; Rev. 5:13, 14. It is exclusion from the presence and dwelling-place of God: "Without are dogs," etc. The time when God is all in all, and no more death, sorrow, etc., is the time when the evil are cast into the lake of fire. For death is separation of soul and body, which will never take place again. There will be no more dying, but just punishment on the raised wicked, but no more death; that and hades are over. But that judgment is destruction from the presence of the Lord.

What they specially insist on is that, till we get eternal life, we have, though more intelligent, life like any other animal. Now the falseness of this is evident. So we have seen, we are God's offspring, but I speak of it for another purpose now. I have a conscience; I have a soul that can hate God and did-formed to have to say to Him -- that can be rebellious and disobedient, and enter into appeals to my conscience. In a word, I am a moral being. When I am converted, I feel how I have failed as to my previous responsibility: I repent, I feel I am guilty -- liable to judgment from God: what has this to do with animal life? If I get eternal life, it makes me look backward on all my previous course as guilt, as subjecting me to divine punishment. When I know myself, I know that the mind of the flesh is enmity against God. God claims moral authority over the unconverted man. For these sins Christ, I find, has died. I was dead in sins. With Him I have died to sin. If I am a mere nephesh chayah, "as they speak (and we are that physically), I cannot repent nor think of atonement for what I did as such. The idea of sin is lowered. All there is, is merely a temporary punishment for certain faults which takes place now and also hereafter. For Scripture, it is enmity against God, and the remaining so is infinite misery, when the veil of sense is taken away and final judgment pronounced. The atonement, responsibility, the true sense of sin, repentance, all go when this fatal falsehood and device of Satan gets into the mind. It is a soul as to its nature capable of hatred and love of God. Would you put the cleverest elephant into this place of responsibility? or could it have a need for its sins to be borne?

If you deal with a simple soul, show it the plain language of Scripture: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." Conscience will tell what that means, and if they have been dealt with to prove eternal does not mean eternal, show them what is said in 2 Cor. 4:18; and simple souls, souls where Satan's wiles have not polluted them, will bow to the plain word of God. I have nothing to do with popular statements (though better, if essentially sound, than these immoral deceits); but the conscious subsistence of the soul after death, and eternal judgment and punishment of the wicked, are as plainly taught in Scripture as possible. Men have spoken of it (though sound in intentions) in a way designing people can lay hold of, specially from the Lord's coming not having been seen. But the word of God is clear. It does not detail the misery as it does the blessing, and this is its perfection; but it declares it, and this is right. "I am" is essential existence. No other word is used for the duration of God's existence which is not used for that of the punishment and torment of the wicked. And while a few persons have been scandalized who seek their own thoughts and take their own feelings, when there is no just sense of what their sins have deserved (for this is the secret of it), how many thousands of thousands have been awakened by the just terror of judgment!

I write thus to you because you will have to say to it. I have not entered into all, nor could in this letter. Save a few misapplied texts, there is no serious investigation of Scripture, as bearing on a responsible soul, the offspring of God -- no sense of what sin is; and that is the evil of the matter.


14. Living soul (Hebrew).
My dear brother,

The denial of the immortality of the soul upsets the atonement entirely. If I have only an animal soul, where is responsibility? I put the case to them, Could God give eternal life to a dog They said, Yes. Then I said, It is a new creation, but be it so. But could the dog feel responsible for what he had done as a dog, as sin Would Christ have to die for his sins when he was such. If not, He has not to do it for mine when at best, if more intelligent, I had only an animal soul. I repent for the same reason of all my past life out of the question if I have no such spiritual responsible soul. And even if my sins only deserved a temporary punishment as particular acts, Christ’s sorrows and sufferings must be proportionally small. If it be a spiritual nature which is at enmity against God, as the apostle states, then I understand the extent of the evil, and a misery which no mere quantum of infliction could reach. The atonement must be measured by the extend and nature of the guilt, taking in Him against whom we have sinned. If a person were merely puzzled by some clever person I might have patience in hope of restoration, but when a man is a heretic, that is, holds it so that it is the expression of sin in the flesh, he is to be rejected. I never met a person who held it deliberately who did not lose the atonement; as it indeed cannot be otherwise, for when there is not an immortal soul, a spiritual soul, how can you make an animal morally responsible?

As regards the Person of Christ, it is thus I have seen it work in America. They teach that death is ceasing to exist. If it be, either Christ has not died for us, or He ceased to exist. Thus His person was speedily lost; but all have not gone thus far. Some did distinctly state it to me. If it has practically taken the form of a heresy, we are told to reject them; and certainly what destroys the atonement is not the portion of a happy worshiper. They are not on Christian ground: the Lord’s supper has not the same sense as it has for me...

Affectionately yours in the Lord.

April, 1870.

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One great cause of error on this subject is, that the saints do not make the difference which scripture does between the government of God exercised over this earth and the necessary rejection of sin by God’s nature -- His wrath from heaven. The evangelical world does not make the difference, and hence is liable to be misled, and unable to answer, though God may preserve souls by the instinctive sense of what is in scripture. Israel may be carried to Babylon, but Daniel finds it his sure path to heaven. All above twenty years old fall, save two, in the desert, but Moses and Aaron, and very likely many others, find their place in heaven too.

These dealings of God must be in connection with God’s character, and immediately flow from it; but they are not the expression of it: they are His ways in and through men. Life and incorruptibility were brought to light by the gospel. Just judgment was expressed in these ways, but not the judgment of the secrets of men’s hearts, but of men on the earth, for their conduct on the earth. This is so true that, though there are passages which lead the spiritual mind to see the loss and ruin of man (“He drove out the man”: that God was lost to man: that man had left God, the way back to the tree of life being barred), yet the express positive judgment as pronounced does not go beyond this world, even when it reaches death. Man was made out of the dust, and returns to the dust: but that is man, the object of our senses here; nor was more openly revealed. But the breath of God was not dust nor made out of the dust. Hence death, and destruction, and the like, in the Old Testament, though they may imply that displeasure which is the sign of what is connected with eternal misery, yet mean habitually, in the Old Testament, death and destruction by judgment in this world: a solemn and dreadful thing as God’s displeasure, but which is not in itself eternal misery. The state of the soul afterwards may be learned from other truths, but what is expressed is present judgment without the smallest hint of what comes of the soul afterwards. It is judgment here.

The New Testament recognizes this even to death, as judgment here too, but passes on to the revelation of what follows because life and incorruptibility are brought to light, and that the absolute incompatibility of God’s nature and sin (not merely His governmental approbation of righteousness) is plainly revealed. But these, those who deny the immortality of the soul confound; and for the most part evangelicals too. The latter hold the truth in effect, but they accept the application of terms and passages to what is eternal, which puts a weapon in the hands of those who teach error, against which it is logically hard to defend themselves, though their faith may be right. Universalists are in the same error, but it does not so immediately affect the question on the surface of the matter; but it does as really, because the nature of sin and wrath is in question.

Another source of error for the Universalist, allied to this, is the not perceiving that an entirely new life is given in Christ. The evil of the flesh of the old man is unaltered. They confound and forget, in looking only at the practical effect on our state, the real gift of life, and suppose that a process after death can form the soul for God. Where eternal life is, punishment can break the will, give seriousness, restrain under the sense of God’s hand, and so work effects; but no punishment can ever give life, nor does grace alter the old man. I only speak of general principles, which lead to these errors here, because in universalism either Satan and the evil
angels, to be more precise, can be saved without propitiation (and so can we then too), or their plea of God all in all is false, and mere human selfishness; and the evil spirits remain unsaved, for Christ did not take up the cause of angels.

But I return to general principles. The Old Testament passages which furnish the vast majority of alleged proofs of the destruction of the wicked, speak of judgment and destruction in this world only. All beyond, save glimmers which traversed the gloom for faith, was dark and invisible. That system was the government of God, not salvation for God’s presence and eternal life, though these were saved and quickened. Destructionism holds that eternal life is given in Christ alone, but confounds eternal life and the immortality of the soul, two entirely distinct things. As regards spiritual divine life, we have no life in us at all; we are dead. It is not merely that it is not immortal life; we have none. It denies that we are alive—not that the soul is immortal but that we have life in us. They might as well, and more truly, use it to prove we are not alive at all—for that is what is said—than that the soul is not immortal. It does not apply to the question.

As regards destructionism, another false assumption, which formed the basis of thought in most minds affected by it, is that death is ceasing to exist. This is wholly groundless. Indeed it beg the whole question. It may or may not be, as far as man can say from what he sees; for beyond death he sees nothing. He may reason that the cessation of outward organisation does not and cannot affect that of which he has the consciousness, and have the strongest ground for rejecting the supposition when “to be or not to be,” that is the question. He may speculate with Plato, or reason closely with Butler; but he knows nothing. As far as the intimations of the Old Testament go for faith, they furnish the thought which Pharisees had thus acquired of the subsistence of the soul after death. Thus Samuel is brought up: David says, “I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.” Enoch and Elijah gave yet brighter hopes in the darkness, though darkness still was there. So that the Lord could rebuke the Sadducees as not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God in rejecting the resurrection; and the resurrection involved the necessary truth expressed in Luke 20:37, 38, that “all live unto him.” Nor did scripture know in this respect any difference between saints and sinners: not only was He the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (“not the God of the dead, but of the living”), but the ground of this was not their piety, but that for God all lived, even when for man they died. Sadducees are no new race; but they “err, not knowing the scriptures.” The Old and New Testaments alike forbid the thought that in man’s case death is ceasing to exist: believers die. (Christ died just as much and as really as sinners. If death as such means ceasing to exist, then the saints and Christ ceased to exist. Nor can what has ceased to exist ever be raised again.

But there is another vital point in this question. The atonement is lost, and the responsibility in us to which it applies. If I have no more soul than a beast, though a more intelligent animal nature in degree, responsibility is gone. You cannot make a dog or an elephant responsible for sins. When I am converted, I repent, I judge my past sins; I feel I have failed in my responsibility; I learn that through infinite grace Christ has died for my sins. It is not merely that He becomes life -- new life to my soul. Thank God that is true; but He died and has made atonement for my guilt, my sins, when I had not yet that life. He died for our sins; and this that I might live. If eternal life were given to an animal, it could not repent of previous guilt; the Lord, with reverence be it spoken, could not make atonement for its previous sins: He has, blessed be His name, for mine.

Responsibility and atonement disappear with this doctrine, and in its value with universalism too; because, in the latter system, sin does not bring exclusion from God, but merely a measure of torment: the nature and character of sin is denied -- by some, indeed, expressly. And in the destructionist system, even the punishment of sin, temporary punishment after death has no ground. If I have only animal life, and can no more really sin than a dog or an elephant, what am I tortured for afterwards, and so destroyed?

It is well to remark, that not only do the two systems of destructionism and universalism denounce each other as utterly unscriptural, but there are two parties among Destructionists. One holds death to be death, and the end of man as of a beast. They are consistent, at any rate; for if we cease to exist, we cease to exist. But then, if scripture be owned at all, we read “after this the judgment”; and so the other party bring them up again, though saying death is ceasing to exist, and then destroy them gradually in the fire: though, as I have said what for, it is hard to tell if they have only animal life; or who is raised, is hard to tell if they have ceased to exist. But there is the judgment after death; that is, they have not ceased to exist at all. The soul is a distinct thing; it survives the body: “All live unto him.”

I only seek here to review the bearing of the question, not to enter into detailed proofs.

1870.
Man and the Future State

an abridgement by John Bloore of

Facts and Theories as to a Future State, by F. W. Grant, first published in 1879.

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Foreword

In preparing what may be called an abridged edition of "Facts and Theories as to a Future State," the purpose in view has been to collate and present the positive teaching of Scripture contained in the larger volume, which reviews the various systems of error being taught upon the subject of man’s constitution and destiny.

The present volume is, therefore, the result of eliminating as much as possible the references to the theories and erroneous teaching which, of necessity, Mr. Grant very copiously quoted so that the case might be fully presented. This being done, we have simply the scriptural teaching before us. We trust this will enable many, who may find some difficulty in reading the larger volume, to more easily grasp and be established in the truth.

We send it forth with prayer to God that this end may be attained, and that also it may be a book which in this form will prove a great help to many who may be inquiring or perplexed as to the matters involved.

John Bloore.
Part 1:
Man As He is

Chapter 1

Is The Body All?

In the language of materialists the body is the whole man. It may need breath or “spirit” to make it capable of fulfilling its functions, but in materialistic language, thought, reason, mind, are properties pertaining to “brain in human form.” The man, they say, was such before the breath of life was breathed into him. “Dust thou art” expresses what he is in his whole being, and the spirit is either the breath of life itself, or a principle contained in it, a kind of vitalizing energy. The man himself is the body -- the dust that lies in the grave.

The answer to these assertions is that they are only quoting one side of Scripture, with their eyes shut to all that is inconsistent with their theory. There are passages which seem to make the body all, and many that equally seem to make the body nothing. Thus we read:

The life that I now live in the flesh (Gal. 2:20);
If I live in the flesh (Phil. 1:22);
Whilst we are at home in the body (2 Cor. 5:6);
Willing rather to be absent from the body (2 Cor. 5:8);
Whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell (2 Cor. 12:3);
As being yourselves also in the body (Heb. 13:3);
In my flesh shall I see God (Job 19:26);
Knowing that I must put off this my tabernacle (2 Pet. 1:14).

On the materialistic supposition the language used in these passages never could have been written. It is not a question of the interpretation of any special text, but of the use of words which contradict at the outset the whole materialistic philosophy.

Men have sought to evade it by interpreting the phrase “in the body” to mean “in this body,” as if it were in contrast with the glorious body of the resurrection. But the fact that they have to change the expression, in order to make it suit them, is a clear evidence that it does not suit them as it is. For in the resurrection man will still be “in the body,” though raised glorious as it will be; and in point of fact, it is to the resurrection-body that Job refers in the passage just quoted: “In my flesh shall I see God.” They may perhaps quote against this that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God”; but it will not avail them; for the Lord’s own expression as to His own body in resurrection is, that He had flesh and bones (Luke 24:39), though not “flesh and blood,” and it is the combination of the two of which the text cited speaks. And the Lord was raised from the dead, the “firstfruits” and pattern of our resurrection from the beginning, not raised and changed afterwards, even as they that sleep in Him are “raised in glory.” There is no escape, for Job is plainly speaking of that which is “raised in glory.” This alone is positive proof that “in the flesh,” or “in the body” does not, as a phrase, speak of a present corruptible body in contrast with an incorruptible one.

Other texts still establish this position, even if the passage in Job were gone. For when the apostle says of his vision of the third heaven, that he could not tell whether he was “in the body or out of the body,” no words are needed to assure us that it is not here a question of the resurrection body. For it was not when he was up in the third heaven, that he did not know if he were “out of the body”; had it been so, there might have been some doubt whether he might not have fancied, in the entramcement of the vision, that the resurrection had already come. But his words are precise, and prohibit absolutely such a supposition. He could not, at the time he wrote, question whether he had been clothed with the
resurrection body, and again lost it on his return to earth. Yet here “in the body,” and “out of the body” are just as much in contrast as “at home in the body” and “absent from the body” in 2 Cor. 5:6-8. And as “out of the body” cannot in this case mean “in the resurrection state,” so “in the body” cannot mean, as they would make it, “in this corruptible state.”

The terms then abide in all their simplicity, full of the meaning which from their simplicity they possess. Nay, if the comments of Annihilationalists were just, their force would be little affected. For, be it in contrast with a resurrection body or not (as certainly in these last places it is not), still the man himself is looked at as “in the body”; not the soul is in it, or the spirit is in it merely, but the man. That which lies in the body (and that is the force of the expression in 2 Cor. 5:6) is the man. So much so that the body is looked at as the “tabernacle” (2 Pet. 1:14), which the man “puts off.”

Now let us inquire who or what the inhabitant of the body is. Be it spirit or soul, or both together, the phraseology of Scripture in these texts asserts that the body has such an inhabitant. Paul sees visions, and has so little thought that the body is all, that he does not know whether he was in it or not, at the time he saw them. Plainly, therefore, he supposes he might be a conscious, intelligent witness of unutterable things while “out of the body.” Then, at least, we may take for granted that that which Paul thought might be “out of the body” is not “dust.” If it were, it would be dust which is not the body, and exists consciously in separation from it.

The question is thus a long way toward settlement. If it be still asked, What about the texts which, on their side, Annihilationalists lay stress upon? Is not “Dust thou art!” Scripture? And is it not equally written that “The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground”? and that “devout men carried Stephen” -- not his body merely -- “to his burial”?

I answer, It is just as plain that in these texts man is identified with his body, as he is in the former ones with his spirit or his soul. It would be wrong to argue exclusively from either class of passages: as wrong to say man is all soul, upon the authority of one, as to say he is all body, upon the authority of the other. Neither body, nor soul, nor spirit, is the man exclusively, but

spirit and soul and body (1 Thess. 5:23)

make up the man; insomuch that he may be, and is, identified with either, according to the line of thought which is in the mind of the speaker; his identification with the body, which man sees and touches, being in general the language of sense, while faith identifies him with the unseen “spirit.” Our poor Annihilationalists see and confess what sense recognizes, and are blind to the other. It is a sad evidence of their condition.

Of the Lord Jesus Himself, we read in the account of His burial,

There lay they Jesus (John 19:42),

and that Joseph

took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen, and laid Him in the sepulchre (Mark 15:46).

Is this, therefore, conclusive that the Lord was “all body,” as similar words about Stephen seem for some to mean that he was? If the body is all, and the body is the man, the person, then it is not anywhere else but in the grave. Then, this must be the conclusion: If spirit is but the impersonal breath of life, and soul but the life resultant, when these had departed there was nothing of Christ but what was laid in the grave! If it be said that the words apply only to the humanity of the Lord, and not to His divinity, this argument will not hold. The Lord, divine and human, was in life but one person. If the PERSON is the body that lay in the tomb, then Deity, soul and spirit go for nothing; and the Lord in the grave was nowhere else! Such must be the logical, but blasphemous conclusion.

Now, let me ask, was there a true and personal Christ who survived death, or not? If so, “the Lord,” in the whole force of that expression, did not lie in Joseph’s tomb; the words are only an example of the language of sense which applies to the material part which we see and touch, and we are manifestly precluded from carrying them further. Now, if the Lord lay in the grave, and yet the higher part did not lie there, so, plainly, might David, or Stephen, or Moses, lie in the grave, and yet have another and higher part of them which did not lie there.

Some with fearless self-consistency in error, and shameless denial of the glory of Christ’s person, do not shrink from the extreme result. They are strangers to the One who, walking on earth, could yet say, “The Son of Man who is in heaven.” If their horrible thoughts were true, how could He who had

power to lay down His life, have

power to take it again?

If the dead are nothing, and know nothing, as they teach, how could a dead body have power to take its life back? (John 10:18). If How could He say,

Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up?

He spake of the temple of His body (John 2:19-22).

Here it is scarcely possible even to equivocate. For it was one who spake of His own body, who said He would raise it up. They cannot say it was the Father speaking of “His own body,” and therefore their constant manoeuvre fails them here. If Jesus, then, raised up His own body, there must have been One not buried in that tomb of Joseph, One surviving death, to raise it up. Death is not, then, extinction, for Jesus truly “died.” That “the Lord lay” in Joseph’s tomb is truth, but not the whole truth. Insisted on as such, it becomes fatal and soul-destroying error.

The language of Scripture, then, lays the foundation stone of the soul’s mortality in its assertion that the man dwells

15. The word translated “power” is εξουσία, which it is true, is “delegated authority.” It adds to the thought of power that of right. It is the word used in Matt. 10:1; Mark 2:10; 3:15; 6:7; Luke 4:32; 10:19; 12:5; John 19:10, etc., in all which it is quite impossible to exclude the idea of competency to perform whatever there was authority for. You could not clothe a mere corpse with “authority.” It would be mockery. And, therefore, λαβεῖν, must be “take” and not “receive” life back.
in the body, and this is not denied by its speaking elsewhere as if the body were the man. From its own point of view, each of these things is true.

Chapter 2

Man A Triune Being

We are now prepared for the question, What is this part of man which dwells in the body? Or, What is the physical constitution of man as defined by the Scriptures?

The answer from 1 Thess. 5:23 is, that he is “spirit and soul and body”:

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God that your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The prayer is, manifestly, for the sanctification of the whole man to God, and to emphasize it, man is divided into his three constituent parts, and the sanctification of the whole man is the preservation of “spirit, soul and body” “blameless before God.

Of course this is denied on the part of those who hold that the body is the whole man; but it is also denied by many others who are far enough from holding their views. It is a point, therefore, which must be seriously weighed, and as satisfactorily as possible decided, before we are entitled to take it as a settled thing.

This scripture is variously explained by uncertain and contradictory statements which expose the inconsistency of materialistic error. They try to paraphrase the three words in the text by “mind,” “life,” and “body,” or escape its plain teaching by supposing, in defiance of all criticism, that it has been “amended by some officious copyists.” But with them, after all, mind is only a power inherent in the flesh, so that they speak of “flesh that thinks”; and life can hardly be the equivalent of “soul,” since for them soul is nothing but the body, and the body cannot be the life of the body. Soul is the body’s life; therefore in a secondary sense, is used for it in Scripture.

Again, they teach that life is simply the result of the breath of life upon the body, and this breath of life is the spirit, so that mind cannot after all be the equivalent of spirit in our text. For them, the combination of body and breath of life (spirit) produces life (soul). The apostle prays that these three may be sanctified or preserved blameless. Does he pray for the sanctification of the body, the breath of life, and the vitality produced by it?

Again some interpret “spirit” here of a new and spiritual nature: “That which is born of the Spirit” being a new and spiritual constituent of personal being; so that he who is born of the Spirit is constituted of a spirit and soul and body. That the new nature of the children of God is “spirit,” according to our Lord’s words, is what none can with any appearance of truth deny; but the “flesh” (from which nothing good can come) is soul and body according to this theory, and is put side by side with the new and spiritual nature that they may be sanctified together! I would refer them to Rom. 8:6-8 --

The mind, or minding, of the flesh is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be,

and that is why they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

Even the one who in the seventh chapter could say,

With the mind I myself serve the law of God, had to add,

But with the flesh the law of sin {Rom. 7:25};

and if soul and body have this character, poor hope would there be of their being preserved blameless to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ {1 Thess. 5:23}!

Now it is plain that in 1 Thess. 5:23 the terms “soul” and “body” speak of the physical constitution of man; and it must be equally plain that “spirit,” therefore, also refers to his physical constitution. It will not avail to say that the body needs spirit and soul to make it capable of sanctification, for that still leaves it true that the body is the only part that can be sanctified, and there would be no sense in talking of the sanctification of the mere agency in giving it life. The passage cannot be intelligently interpreted apart from admitting the
tripartite constitution of man, distinct in its elements, yet united in his present mode of being.

But still -- and this is the only question we need further ask at present -- may not the "spirit" here refer to the new and spiritual nature, which, confessedly, the child of God has? I answer that, as far as this passage is concerned, the fact that the apostle prays for the sanctification of the spirit, is proof positive that the new nature is not meant. 16 For the Scripture doctrine is that, inasmuch as "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." I am well aware that I touch here upon ground not familiar to many a Christian; nor can I do more than touch upon it either. I would only say that the one born of God is here looked at simply in his character as so born. The flesh is indeed in the believer, but as a foreign thing:

Sin that dwelleth in me (Rom. 7:17),
in that sense, not myself. The new nature owns no brotherhood with it. As born of God the believer does not sin -- cannot. The new nature thus, as proceeding from God, is altogether according to God. He could not communicate a half-evil thing: "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit" -- partakes of the nature of Him from whom it came. If so, sin cannot come from it, because it is of God; and, as born of God, we cannot sin. Therefore you cannot talk of sanctifying it. It is of God: therefore already wholly good.

And "spirit" is not here the "motion" of the soul, for the soul is mentioned apart, and there would be no sense in speaking of the sanctifying of the soul and of its motions. Sanctify it, and its motions will be sanctified.

We return then with confidence to our first conclusion: "Spirit and soul and body" are the man. The ample confirmation of this by every part of Scripture will come out as we now take up in detail these constituent parts.

16. The new nature is "spirit," but never called "the spirit."
Chapter 3

The Spirit Of God

The word which stands for “spirit” in the Old Testament is ruach, in the New Testament pneuma. They are words precisely of the same significance. Both are derived from words which mean “to breathe” and in their primary sense therefore signify “breath,” or what is a kindred thought, air in motion, “wind.” From this as the type of viewless activity, its meaning of “spirit” is most evidently and easily derived.

The comparison between the two is what the Lord makes in John 3:8, where the same word pneuma is both “wind” and “Spirit”: “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” Here manifestly the thought is of invisible activity beyond man’s control; the effects are manifest; the power which produces them is unseen and uncontrollable. In the formation of language, that which is conceived of gets its name from what is recognized by the senses; what more simple than that pneuma, originally breath or wind, should give its name to the power that, omnipresent in its activity, acts unseen and uncontrolled? Hence “God is Spirit,” and the third Person of the Trinity, whom Scripture represents as the immediate mover, both in creation and in new creation, is pre-eminently the “Spirit of God.”

Materialists have not shrunk from assailing, along with the Godhead of the Son, the personality of the Holy Ghost. Their interpretation of “spirit” makes it a mere influence. One of them has formulated the doctrine that the Spirit of God is electricity, or, combined with nitrogen and oxygen, the atmosphere, which Job calls the “breath of God,” or that which is “as much on the list of material forces as light, heat or electricity.” (!)

This denial of the personality of the Spirit of God is the legitimate fruit of materialistic teaching, is essential to its self-consistency. Once get rid of Him as a Person, put Him upon the list of material forces -- let it be electricity or anything else you please -- and plainly you have at once reduced the spirit of man also to something just as unintelligent, and as well suited to the purpose they desire to accomplish. Man has no wisdom apart from the word of truth, and, once astray from that, the apostolic declaration is fulfilled, “Professing to be wise, they became fools.” And how like that which is now occupying us is what he goes on to say --

And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an
that the expression refers to Gen. 2:7, \(^{17}\) where the word for "breath of life" is a word which is never applied to the Spirit of God at all. And, moreover, so far is Scripture from asserting that the Spirit of God is in all men, that it speaks of Christians expressly as those

who have received the Spirit which is of God  
{1 Cor. 2:12}.

The proof is indeed abundant and decisive as to this, which is alone subversive of their whole theory. For it is no work of the Spirit that is in question, but the reception of the Spirit Himself. Nor was the teaching of the Spirit ever called the Spirit. The Lord's words indeed were "spirit," but not the Spirit of God; and "the Spirit is truth" surely, characteristically, just as is the Lord Jesus (John 14:6); but in neither case does that destroy personality.

All the way through Scripture we find language which defies accommodation to this lowest depth of materialism. If I begin with Genesis (41:38) I find Joseph spoken of as a "man in whom [distinctively] the Spirit of God is." In Jude 19, some, even of professing Christians are described as sensual, having not the Spirit.

So I find in Gal. 4:6, that

because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father!

And again,

Ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you;

and then it is added,

Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His (Rom. 8:9).

Solemn utterance, indeed, for men who have to confess that they have no “Holy Spirit”: for only by the Holy Ghost given to us is

the love of God shed abroad in our hearts (Rom. 5:5);

and

The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17).

If that be withdrawn, there is no more

communion of the Holy Ghost (2 Cor. 13:14);

no more

sealing (Eph. 4:30)

to the day of redemption; no more

renewing of the Holy Ghost (Titus 3:5).

Sad work indeed, if this be true! and barren days indeed! But what an account for men to give of themselves, that they have no communion, no renewing, no sealing, no peace, no joy, no love of God in their hearts! They have pronounced their condemnation with their own lips, when they say that the only Spirit of God they know is one subject to men's wills, and "used up" by animals "in the mere process of existence."

What a strange impersonality is this Spirit -- creating, teaching, searching, hearing, knowing, and yet not a person! \(^{18}\)

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\(^{17}\) No one will deny that the ruach Eloah of Job, and the nishmath chayim of Genesis are “doctrinally identical." The real question is, Can the “breath of God in the nostrils," which Job speaks of, be the same as that Spirit of God who (to quote the same book) made man (Job 33:4)? To assert this because it is the same word, ruach, in each case, is equivalent to asserting that in John 3:8, because the same word pneuma is used for “wind” and “spirit," therefore to be born of the Spirit is to be born of the wind!

\(^{18}\) If the Spirit is not a person how speak of "the mind of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:6); “the love of the Spirit” (Rom. 15:30); the intercession and witness of the Spirit (Rom. 8:16, 26); the joy of the Spirit and grieving the Spirit (1 Thess. 1:6; Eph. 4:30)? Again, it is the Spirit that says “Separate to Me” (Acts 13:2).
Chapter 4

The Spirit Of Man

The second application of the word “spirit” is to angelic beings, whether “holy” or “unclean.”

The application of the word in this way is again denied. It will suffice for our present purpose that there are spirits whose existence as separate personalities cannot be denied. And if this be so, there is no reason, at least beforehand, why man’s spirit also should not be an individuality, a real and living entity, though in him united to a body which is of dust.

And this is the third application of the word to which we must now devote particular attention.

A cloud of dust is here endeavoured to be raised by the assertion of the wonderful variety of meanings given to the word. Yet, if we take the language of our common English version as a guide, and refer to the passages in which it relates to man, we find, as the translation of the Old Testament Hebrew word, but five words used: “breath,” “spirit,” “anger,” “courage,” “mind.” And of the New Testament Greek word corresponding to it, nothing but “ghost” or “spirit” (which everybody knows to be intended for the same thing), and once “life,” wrongly, in Rev. 13:15, where it ought to be rather “breath.” This looks more like uniformity in the matter, and a common idea running throughout. I do not deny that there are various secondary applications of the word “spirit” itself. This concerns us the less because there is no doubt of the primary meaning of the English word. But the greater the variety of meaning, the more needful to look for the key (which is somewhere), the possession of which will enable us to find harmony in these various uses of the word, instead of discord.

The fact is that the only key to this hidden harmony is in an application of the word to a real intelligent entity in the compound nature of man, of all men as such, “The spirit of man, which is in him,” placed at the head of, as well as in connection with, his other constituent parts by the apostle, where he speaks to the Thessalonians of the sanctification of their “whole spirit and soul and body.” Let us take up the proofs of this, examining them carefully as the importance of the subject demands, and submit the separate points to be examined, one by one, to the test to which Annihilationists themselves appeal -- the judgment of the inspired Word.

We are but quoting Scripture in speaking of the spirit of man which is in him (1 Cor. 2:11), and of the spirits of men (Heb. 12:23).

Observe this fact, Scripture says “the spirit of man.” It does not say “the spirit” but “the spirits of men.” Annihilationists tell us (many of them) that “spirit” is a universal principle of life, lent to man indeed in common with the beast, but forming no real part of himself, like the air he breathes. Now, if this be so, we might as well talk about the breasts of men as of their spirits. Yet every one would perceive the incongruity of the former expression. We say “the breath of men,” just because it is one common breath they all breathe, but it is not one common spirit they all have, and therefore we speak of their “spirits,” because each has his own, and it is a separate entity in each one.

Now Scripture speaks of the spirit of man being not only, as we have seen, a separate entity in each individual, but a thing formed within him (as the breath of life clearly is not):

The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel, saith the Lord, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him (Zech. 12:1).

Thus, along with the formation of the heavens and the earth, as of equal importance with these (the body being moreover passed over in the matter), there is put by the inspired writer this formation of the spirit of man. And this is the complete upsetting of the materialistic theory. The spirit of man is formed within him. It is a separate entity then in each individual man, not (like the breath of life) a common principle shared by all.

Moreover the possession of a spirit by the beast is not asserted in Scripture, except in one passage by the writer of Ecclesiastes (ch. 3:19-21):

For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath (ruach); so that a man hath no preeminence over a beast, for all is vanity. All go unto one place: all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?

This passage has been seized upon by materialists, of course, and is constantly put forth as the stronghold of their doctrine. They quote verse 19 triumphantly. They argue that man in his very highest attribute, has no preeminence above a beast. Mind, conscience, responsibility, moral qualities, either he has not, or the beast has, or else these are, after all, inferior things, “not of the highest kind.”
Man being in honour and understanding not, is like the beasts that perish {Psa. 49:12, 20}, says the Psalmist. But they declare he has no preëminence over them anyhow, and as for “beasts that perish,” why, one and all perish alike: when the breath leaves them they but lie down in the dust, being alike but dust.

The argument proves too much, and so proves nothing. If the verse before is weighed, reason is found to question this conclusion. The whole passage is what, Solomon tells us, he said in his heart (Eccl. 3:18) at a certain time. It is not divine revelation, but human doubt: the questioning of man’s mind when speculating upon the mystery of existence:

Who knoweth the spirit of man? etc. {Eccl. 3:21}

It is the language of a man who had given his heart to search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven {Eccl. 1:13}; who had said in his heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, and who had sought in his heart to give himself to wine, and to lay hold on folly, that he might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under heaven all the days of their life (Eccl. 2:1-3).

This is no Spirit-taught man. In no such path does the Spirit of God lead; and the result is that, searching out by human wisdom, the grave into which all go is an impenetrable mystery: men die as the beast dies, they have one breath, one ruach, they go to the dust alike; as to what is beyond, no mere human knowledge can penetrate it: who knoweth the ruach of man that goeth upward, or the ruach of the beast that goeth downward to the earth? That word, ruach, with its various meaning of breath or spirit, suits well the doubtful questioning of the passage. But this is the uncertainty of mere human knowledge. The Spirit of God could not doubt or question. It is by the Spirit, surely, that we are given this history of human searching after wisdom and after good; but the lesson is, that by human searching he could attain neither the one nor the other. Listen to Solomon’s own exposition of this as he comes out into the light:

As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child, even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all (Eccl. 11:5).

But he has something to say now about his former thoughts: for he says finally and conclusively, that the spirit of man does not “go downward to the earth”:

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, but the spirit shall return to God who gave it {Eccl. 12:7}.

The objection is raised that this ignores the fact of Solomon’s God-given wisdom. But it is just the point of Ecclesiastes to show how the wisdom of the wisest failed here, as in the book of Job the perfection of human goodness. The perfect man has to own hisileness before God, and the wisest man the incompetence of mere human wisdom.

For Solomon’s wisdom was evidently of that kind which fitted him for the kingly office which he filled, and for which he sought it (2 Chron. 1:9, 10). It is compared with that of other kings, and with the wisdom of the East and of Egypt, surpassing all these. He was the naturalist of his day; his proverbs a storehouse of practical wisdom for the path on earth. But he is not the sweet psalmist of Israel, and his numerous songs are mostly forgotten. The Song of Songs is an allegory, and he was evidently in it the unconscious singer of spiritual things of which he knew but little. Who could compare him with David for spiritual insight? And who but must lament his manifest departure from the path in which his father walked? -- a departure which, if it be admitted (as it must be) spite of Solomon’s wisdom, so simply accounts for the book of Ecclesiastes being not the record of a path in which the Spirit of God led, however much He might make the one who walked there the preacher of the vanity of a world which he had ransacked in vain for satisfaction.

Now, beside this exceptional passage in Ecclesiastes, there are none that assert or imply the beast’s possession of a spirit. The passages quoted from elsewhere are plainly inadequate. The “breath of life” in Gen. 6:17 is not the spirit, as a comparison with Gen. 7:22 may show. Nor in Psa. 104:29, though ruach is translated “breath,” it cannot be so in verse 30:

Thou sendest forth thy breath (ruach); they are created {Psa. 104:30}.

Here the “sending forth” necessitates the other rendering. God forms the spirit in man. He does not form the breath of life in him.

I return, then, with confidence to my former position that, so far from the spirit of man being a principle of life held in common with the beast, the Spirit of God never asserts the beast’s possession of it. There is complete and absolute silence as to such a thing. And the silence of Scripture is authoritative against the materialistic assumption.

These few Scripture facts set aside the theories that spirit in man is the new nature in the believer, or the “motions and emotions of the soul” in men at large. Zech. 12:1 will not bend to either supposition. It speaks definitely of the spirit of man, not of the believer, and says God formed it, surely not the motions or emotions of the soul! To this “spirit of man, which is in him,” the apostle (in 1 Cor. 2:11) refers all human knowledge:

What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man, which is in him? Could we say, the “motions” or “emotions” of the soul know? If man has the same spirit, and no preëminence over a beast as to that, then the beast must “know the things of a man,” and be wiser than man, who does not know the things of a beast!

My object, so far, has been but to establish the doctrine of the distinct existence of the spirit as a separate entity in man. The various uses of the word, and the relationship of the spirit to the soul, will come up more naturally after we have examined in a similar manner the Scripture doctrine of the soul itself.
Chapter 5

The Soul

The Hebrew word for “soul” is nephesh, the equivalent of which in Greek is psuche. A fact, significant enough in view of what has already come before us when speaking of the word for spirit, is that both nephesh and psuche are, equally with ruach and pneuma, derived from words which signify “to breathe.” The same idea of viewless activity enters into them.

From the admitted derivation of the word from the verb to breathe, the primary meaning would be “breath,” one would think, and so life or soul. In point of fact, nephesh is only once suggested as breath in the margin of Job 11:20, and without necessity, and for “life” only as the principle or source of life -- a meaning easily derived from the soul being strictly that source of life to the body. So that “soul” (in the common acception of the word) is properly the primary Scriptural meaning, and the other meanings are derived from it.

To those who contend that soul and body are one, I would ask if they could understand such an expression as, “Everything wherein there was a living body.” We find in Gen. 1:30,

Everything wherein there was a living soul. 19

Now if the soul be in the body, it cannot be the body, and the fact that it is called a “living” soul precludes the possibility of translating it “life,” as materialists love to do. A “living life” would make no sense; a “living breath” would be no better; and the passage shuts us up to the necessity of allowing that something is alive within the “breathing-frame,” so that the soul and it are distinct from each other.

Now, note that it is even of “the beast of the earth,” and from that down to every creeping thing of which this is said. It is not said that the beast has a spirit; it is said that it has a soul. So much so, that all the lower animals are called “souls,” just as much as men are. This is to be observed, for it is in itself an answer to the materialistic theories of organization of the most complete kind. It cuts off at once all those arguments as to the faculties of the brutes, which men ground so much upon. Scripture leads us to account for these, not by reason of their organization, but their possession of a living soul, as even in man, while it refers the understanding of all human things to the spirit (1 Cor. 2:11) which only man possesses: his sensual faculties, appetites, nay, his affections, etc., are ascribed to the “living soul” -- a soul so distinct from the life of the body, that they that kill the body cannot kill the soul (Matt. 10:28).

Man has, then, a living soul; nay, he is one. How he became so Gen. 2:7 informs us:

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

Now, upon the most cursory glance at this, it is evident that something more took place in man’s creation than in the creation of the brute. It is plain that God breathed into man’s nostrils the breath of life, and that He did not into the brute’s.

No one denies that God giveth unto all life and breath and all things (Acts 17:25).

The question is, Why was the gift given in this especial way to man alone? The point is, Did God in this special way give the same gift after all? The language is phenomenal, as Old Testament language largely is, and that makes one the more ready to ask, Is this breathing of God not a form of expression pointing to the communication of something from Himself, and more akin to Himself, than is implied in water or earth simply producing?

Surely it is so. For although what is communicated may not be yet fully shown -- and it is quite the character of an initial revelation that it should not be -- it is plain that man has a link here with God Himself, which the beast has not.

And this is not by a higher bodily organization. His body has been before perfected. It is by the way he receives life. Now, if the breath of life alone were communicated (and every beast has it as much), there is no real difference answering to this difference of communication: the phenomenal language has no corresponding meaning. But thus it is that man -- only dust before -- becomes a living soul. And that purports that he is now characterized, as we have seen before in the beast, by something now living within that man who was just now but dust. He is a living soul; not by the completion of his bodily organization, but by the addition of a new constituent of being. He is now not a mere body; he

19. NONE of such meanings given by materialists to the soul, as living “body,” living “creature,” living “life,” living “breath” -- none of them will do here.
is become a “living soul.”

Still, why is man called a living soul, a title which is his in common with all the animate creation, rather than a “living spirit,” which would distinguish him from them? The answer seems to be that the point of contrast is not with the lower animals, but with the class of God’s creatures to which, as a moral being, man belongs. The angels are spirits, never souls. The distinction between them and man, “made a little lower than the angels,” is thus that man is a soul. That which links him with the inferior creatures, is that which distinguishes him from pure “spirits,” such as angels are.

The fact here manifest is that the soul is thus put for the whole man himself, as what characterizes him, or gives him his place among God’s rational creatures; it serves to explain many passages which would otherwise present difficulty. We have in our ordinary language similar uses of the word “soul,” which certainly have not grown up from a materialistic idea of it. Thus we talk of “so many souls on board a ship,” “every soul was lost,” and no one is deceived by it. There are, however, other renderings of the word nephesh, and other uses of soul, which we shall look at in their place.

Now I would say that nothing is more common than various renderings of the same word in our ordinary translation. Good as it is, and in most cases giving the sense with sufficient accuracy, it often varies from literal exactness. With all this variation there is far less difference than would at first sight appear.

As usual, the deniers of the Scripture doctrine make a great display of various meanings given to the word. Yet even so these meanings reduce essentially to four, “creature, person, life, and desire.” “Soul,” of course, disappears out of this catalogue, although it is the translation of nephesh 475 times out of 752. And we are, therefore, to translate Gen. 1:30, “Everything that creepeth upon the earth wherein there is a living creature,” or “wherein there is a living person,” or “wherein there is a living life,” or “wherein there is a living desire.” Choose which you will, reader, so that you give no currency to the supposition of an immaterial soul in man! Then test your choice in the following specimen passages in which the word nephesh occurs, and see what sense you get.

Gen. 42:21: When we saw the anguish of his soul.
Num. 21:4: The soul of the people was much discouraged.
Deut. 11:18: Ye shall lay up these my words in your soul.
1 Sam. 18:1: The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David.
1 Sam. 30:6: The soul of all the people was grieved.
2 Sam. 5:8: The blind that are hated of David’s soul.
Job 14:22: The soul within him shall mourn.
Job 23:13: What his soul desireth, even that he doeth.
Psa. 13:2: How long shall I take counsel in my soul.
Psa. 106:15: He sent leanness into their soul.
Psa. 107:26: Their soul is melted because of trouble.
Psa. 119:20: My soul breaketh for the longing it hath.
Isa. 10:18: And shall consume from the soul even to the flesh.
Isa. 53:11: The travail of his soul.
Micah 6:7: The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul.

Now, in these examples, the soul is distinguished from both body and flesh. It longs, it grieves, it hates, it loves. It is indeed a living thing, as Gen. 1:30 declares.

Take, again, the New Testament psyche, the equivalent of nephesh:

Matt. 10:28: Fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul.
Matt. 11:29: Ye shall find rest unto your souls.
Matt. 12:18: In whom my soul is well pleased.
Matt. 26:38: My soul is exceeding sorrowful.
John 12:27: Now is my soul troubled.
Acts 2:27: Thou will not leave my soul in hell (hades).
Acts 14:22: Confirming the souls of the disciples.

How impossible would it be to translate in these passages “creature,” “life,” “person,” “body,” “desire,” or “inner organs” (as even one of these materialists suggests the soul to be). Take, for instance, the very first example, and try upon it any or all of these various renderings. Is it not plain that not one of them will make even the smallest sense?

Nor can the plain meaning of Matt. 10:28 be frittered away. The Lord contrasts killing the body here with destruction of body and soul in hell. Now man can only kill even the body for a season: he cannot prevent the resurrection even of that. What he can do as to the body he can do just as much (or as little) to the life, and therefore there would be no ground for the distinction between the one and the other which the passage manifestly makes. The Lord says man can kill the body, not the soul.

But again, how could one even talk of “killing the life”? and more, of “killing the body and the life”? What is killing the body but destroying its life? I must plead ignorance as to killing the body and the life being different things at all. Nay, further, since “killing” is already taking life, I must confess I fail to see how you can talk of taking the life of life or “killing life.” Thus we may assure ourselves that the Lord speaks of a true soul in man, which man cannot kill even for a moment. They can, the body, but God will raise it up. Not even for a moment can they kill the soul.
Chapter 6

Functions And Relationships
Of Soul And Spirit

With these facts before us, the way is prepared to see a new and beautiful harmony in the Scripture teaching as to soul and spirit. That these are quite distinct from one another, though so nearly related, the word of God bears abundant witness. “Your whole spirit and soul and body,” and “Piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit,” are passages sufficiently plain. But the question naturally arises, How, then, are they distinguished, and what are their relationships to one another? In the answer to this which the inspired writings furnish, we find also the fullest confirmation of the fact of the existence of these two separate entities in the compound nature of man.

“Spirit and soul and body,” which I have taken as the key to the discovery of man’s nature, gives us, I believe, very clearly the order of relationship. The soul is here the connecting link between the spirit and the body. The spirit is the higher part. Hence, although it be true that the body without the spirit is dead (James 2:26), yet the spirit is never looked at as the life of the body. The word for “life,” as we have seen, is ἀ νεφής, in its secondary or derived meaning.

And to soul or spirit, not merely the moral qualities, but also the senses, and the emotional and intellectual faculties are ascribed. Striking fact for materialists, the brain (to which they ascribe everything) is not so much as once mentioned from Genesis to Revelation. Nor has the head, which contains the brain, any mental or moral faculties ascribed to it. “Visions of the head” are mentioned (Dan. 4:10, etc.), plainly because the eyes are in it. But no mental or moral qualities, no faculties beside, are ever attributed to it.

I do not say this as doubting the result of men’s researches in this respect. But, as fully allowing that the brain is the instrument of the intellect, it makes only the more striking the way in which the Spirit of God goes back of the mere fleshly organ to that of which it is merely the organ. Still more so, because feelings and faculties are attributed figuratively to the heart, the belly, the bowels, the kidneys (reins), the womb, and the flesh in general, but never to the head.

But moreover in proclaiming these attributes or functions of the spirit and the soul, there is no looseness of language, much less confusion. The mental faculties, emotions, sensual appetites, etc., are ascribed to soul or to spirit with the utmost exactness and the most unvarying harmony. It is to this point I would call most earnest and special attention. We shall find in every case that intelligence and judgment belong to the spirit; the affections, desires, appetites, etc., to the soul. I place before my readers the passages, or all the varieties of them, upon which the judgment may be formed.

And first, with regard to spirit (ruach or pneuma):

Gen. 41:8: (Pharaoh’s) spirit was troubled.
Judg. 8:3: Their spirit was abated towards him.
Psa. 106:33: They provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly.
Prov. 14:29: He that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.
Isa. 29:24: They that erred in spirit shall come to understanding.
Ezek. 1:21: The spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.
Mark 8:12: He sighed deeply in his spirit.
Acts 17:16: His spirit was stirred within him.
1 Cor. 2:11: What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?

Rendered in our version, “mind”:

Prov. 29:11: A fool uttereth all his mind.
Ezek. 11:5: I know the things that come into your mind.
Ezek. 20:32: That which cometh into your mind.
Dan. 5:20: His mind hardened in pride.

“Understanding”: Isa. 11:3.
“Courage”: Josh. 2:11.

Now here it will require no lengthened examination to see that the spirit is presented in Scripture as the seat of the mind or understanding, as we have just seen it to be sometimes even translated. The passage from 1 Cor. 2:11, is indeed the most positive assertion of it that can well be:

What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?

Here the spirit of man is the part of him to which all intelligence is referred. It says most definitely and distinctly, that the “man” which knows the “things of a man” is “the spirit of man, which is in him.” There is no escape from its plain speaking.

This “spirit of man,” then, cannot be either an “influence” or “a state of feeling,” or the “atmosphere or breath of life.” It
cannot be new nature (or else all unconverted men are born idiots), or "motions and emotions of the soul." No, it is simply what the words declare, a conscious intelligent existence in the man, and that to which all his intelligence of human things is due. "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?"

Passages which also identify the spirit as the seat of the mind or understanding, I have already quoted. It needs not to examine them here, except to show how other uses of the word are derived from this one. Thus, in Josh. 2:11 and 5:1, it is used for "courage," the connection of which with "presence of mind" is familiar to all. And in Judg. 8:3 it is used for "anger," which is again the judgment of the mind, true or false, upon what presents itself to it as evil. Another use of the word, which also we have in English, for the prevailing temper or disposition, as "a meek and quiet spirit," a "spirit of pride," etc., seems derived from the fact of the spirit being in man the higher part, and the rightful governor of the man -- what, in short, characterizes him.

Now let us gather, in a similar way, some passages as to the soul, and the difference will be at once apparent.

It is the seat of the affections:

Gen. 34:8: The soul of my son longeth for your daughter.
1 Sam. 18:1: The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David.
Psa. 42:1: So panteth my soul after thee, O God.
Psa. 63:1: O God, my soul thirsteth for Thee.
Psa. 84:2: My soul longeth for the courts of the Lord.
Psa. 119:20: My soul breaketh for the longings it hath.
S of S 1:7: O Thou whom my soul loveth.
Isa. 26:9: With my soul have I desired thee in the night.
Luke 2:35: A sword shall pierce through thine own soul.
Heb. 10:38: My soul shall have no pleasure in him.

As it loves, so it hates:

Lev. 26:15: If your soul abhor my judgments.
2 Sam. 5:8: The blind, that are hated of David's soul.
Zech. 11:8: My soul loathed them.

It compassionates:

Judges 11:16: His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel.
Job 30:25: Was not my soul grieved for the poor?
Ezek. 24:21: What your soul pitieth shall fall by the sword.

It is the seat of lusts:

Job 23:13: What his soul desireth, even that he doeth.
Psa. 10:3: The wicked boasteth of his soul's desire.
1 Pet. 2:11: Fleshly lusts which war against the soul.

Of the appetites, even, of the body:

Psa. 107:18: Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat.
Prov. 19:15: An idle soul shall suffer hunger.
Prov. 25:25: As cold waters to a thirsty soul.
Prov. 27:7: The full soul loatheth a honeycomb.

Isa. 29:8: His soul hath appetite.
Lam. 1:11: Meat to relieve the soul.

So its derived meanings are:

"Appetite": Prov. 23:2; Eccl. 6:7.
"Pleasure": Deut. 23:24; Psa. 105:22; Jer. 34:16.
"Desire": Jer. 44:14; Micah 7:3; Hab. 2:5.
"Mind," in the sense of will or intention, not of the understanding: 1 Sam. 2:35; 2 Kings 9:15.

A slight examination of these passages will serve to demonstrate the truth of my former assertion as to the soul's place and functions. It is here seen plainly as the link between the spirit and the body: that which is indeed the life of the latter. The sense of "life" so often given to it in Scripture is plainly a meaning derived from this very fact. In all this the difference between soul and spirit is preserved in the most marked way, and the most thorough consistency maintained everywhere throughout the Bible.

We are not, however, to infer from this "two surviving personali ties, when the body has mouldered to dust." Spirit, soul and body are during life but one "personality," and death does not make them more than one. At death the body drops, for the time being, out of this tri-unity. Spirit and soul, on the other hand, are never sundered. In life or in death the mysterious links of connection are preserved, and if the spirit thinks, and the soul feels, these are not independent of each other -- are not two personalities, but one. The knowledge of the spirit becomes the portion of the soul; the affections of the soul the possession of the spirit. This interdependence may find illustration in one of the texts quoted above. "He sighed deeply in his spirit." Now "sighing" is a bodily, not a mental phenomenon. The language does not confound soul and spirit any more than it does body and spirit, if rigidly (and unnaturally) construed. But it was mental trouble that produced the sigh; His spirit discerning the moral character of the expressed desire to see a sign from heaven. Pharaoh's spirit was in like manner troubled: in his case because he could not interpret his dream. In these cases, suppose the spirit was mind, why could we not speak of trouble of mind? In each case, the mind or spirit which discerns the things of a man is rightly named as the seat of the trouble. The soul in Pharaoh's case, soul and body in the Lord's, might be involved; but the expressions are perfectly appropriate, and the distinction between soul and spirit gives them a real significance, which for materialism does not exist.

So I have shown above how the spirit is connected with "anger" (as in Judg. 8:3). Psa. 106:33, and Prov. 14:29 are really to be classed with this, as is evident; and Acts 17:6 is nearly related and easily intelligible.

I repeat, then, without fear of successful opposition, that while the spirit is in Scripture identified with the mind, the soul is the seat of the affections, right or wrong, of love, hate, lusts, and even of the appetites of the body.
Chapter 7

Soul And Self

We may now proceed still further in proof of the distinct meaning and harmonious use of these words in Scripture: each added harmony discovered being new proof of the reality of man’s spiritual being, and of the complete scriptural recognition of the fact.

We have seen the intimate alliance of soul and body, the very appetites (as we speak) of the body being ascribed to the soul. This makes it little wonder that “soul” and “life” should be so far identified as to be expressed even by the same word. What ground have we from Scripture, indeed, for speaking of any “vital principle” apart from the soul? It seems plain that there is no such thing; and that “life” is but the permeation of the body with the soul. The soul is the life while it abides in connection with the body. The life is (so to speak) the phenomenal soul. It is no wonder, then, if these two meanings should easily in Scripture run into one another, and be both covered by the same Greek or Hebrew word.

That they do so is seen in Luke 12:19-23, where to uniformly render psuche, “life,” would appear impossible and absurd. Fancy a man represented as apostrophizing his life thus: “Life, thou hast much goods, etc., . . . take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry!” Yet, on the other hand, who can avoid the connection with the moral of this very story, “Take no thought for your life”? It shows how near akin in Scripture, although impossible to be confounded, soul and life are.

Nor only this. The word for “natural body” -- the body we now inhabit -- is a word taken from this word psuche (its adjective, psuchic), one for which we have no equivalent in English, but which speaks of the body in its present state, as related in a special way to soul rather than spirit, for it is contrasted with the “spiritual” body of the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:44).

This leads to a third use of the word “soul” in Scripture, which has been already glanced at, but which it will be of use now to consider more at length. As pervading and vitalizing the body, the soul, it is evident, connects itself with the practical life which we live in the flesh in a special way. We have seen that man’s distinctive title, as united with the rest of moral beings, is that he is a “soul.” It is, accordingly, the word used for the “person,” the “self,” while thus in the body. It is, indeed, the only true word in Hebrew for either, while in the New Testament psuche is used correspondingly in several places. It is thus the emphatic I or he. “My soul” is but myself: the soul of a person is but the person himself.

Even in our own language, we speak of “souls” in a manner which should convict one disbelieving the immortality of the soul. We speak of so many “souls” being on board a ship; nay, of these “souls” perishing in the waters. Think how impossible for those who believe in an immortal soul, to speak of souls perishing in the waters! Yet we do believe in the immortality of the soul in spite of that. Somehow to us, as to the writers of Scripture, the man who dwells in this “natural” body is preëminently a “soul.” “Soul” characterizes him, while in the flesh at least, in some sense beyond spirit or body. The body he possesses is a soul-body; the life he lives a soul-life; the man himself is a “living soul.”

Can we explain this identification, while yet the body is what is most evident to the senses, and the spirit the higher and intellectual part, and which really separates man from the beast? I believe we can very intelligibly explain it. For what is the body, apart from that which animates and connects it with the scene around, nay, which holds even together its very component parts in one organic whole? It is the soul with which we have practically to do; our intercourse is of soul with soul; when the soul is gone, the body is but the relic of what we once knew.

And even as to the spirit, its connection with the outer world is also by the soul. The aperture of knowledge is by the senses. The word we have before seen, in 1 Cor. 15, to be translated “natural,” is twice elsewhere translated “sensual” (James 3:15; Jude 19), and is really “psychic,” from psuche, soul. The soul is thus really the life here, the man himself as part of this creation. Soul, life, self, are so near akin to one another as almost to merge in one; but the key to the harmony is in no wise the materialistic conception, but the reverse.

And this is confirmed in a remarkable way by the use of Scripture, which, when speaking of the disembodied state, identifies man with his spirit rather than with his soul. Not that which kills the body kills the soul. Scripture emphatically denies it. But if the present life be emphatically the soul-life -- the living man the living soul -- death is the end of this form of existence. The soul, though not extinct in death, may well be said, according to the true phrase in Lev. 24:17, 18, to be “smitten” by it. And, while in death the “soul departs” from the body (Gen. 35:18), and in the case of one raised from death “comes into” it again (1 Kings 17:21), man in the disembodied state simply is constantly and consistently a
spirit, not a soul, with two exceptions only which limit this in a way which serves to show only more convincingly the reality of the distinction we are making.

The two exceptions are Acts 2:27 (which is only the quotation of Psa. 16:10) and Rev. 6:9. Both of these evidently refer to death and the connection with the body. The souls under the altar are the “souls of them that were slain for the word of God” -- “smitten” souls which cry for vengeance. While “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell” (or hades) no less is connected with the thought of the partner-body from which it had been sundered, but which is not allowed to see “corruption” in the tomb.

Ordinarily, the common language of the day, which speaks of departed spirits, and of ghosts (which is but the Saxon equivalent of the same word), is based upon the older and scriptural usage. A “spirit,” as in Acts 23:8, 9, was the common term for one passed into the unseen state. The Pharisees confessed their belief in “spirits,” carefully distinguished from “angels,” and in opposition to Sadducean infidelity. So the disciples thought the risen Lord a “spirit,” and the Lord answers them, “A spirit hath not flesh and bones.” So the departed saints are

spirits of just men (Heb. 12:23),
while the unrighteous on the other hand are
spirits in prison (1 Pet. 3:19).

So

the spirit departs to God that gave it (Eccl. 12:7);

and the Lord commends His spirit to the Father (Luke 23:46),
Stephen his to Him who has the keys of death and hades (Acts 7:59).

Again, the “spiritual” body of the resurrection argues the new condition upon which the saint enters then. “Flesh and blood” -- the two combined -- “cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 15:50).

We are anticipating here what may seem rather to belong to a future stage of our inquiry, but it seemed needful in order that we might have a full view of the Scripture teaching as to what man is. There is surely a consistency in all this which is the consistency of truth itself.
Chapter 8

The Fall

There remain yet some things to point out before the harmony of Scripture doctrine as to spirit and soul is properly before us. Indeed, types of the difference and relationship between these two essential parts of man’s being are to be found, I doubt not, in the human race at large. Man and woman, in their characteristic differences, seem to present very much the peculiar features of spirit and soul: the one predominant in mental activity, the other in emotional; the woman formed for the man, and each the complement of the other, made for mutual support and relationship.

The analogy may be traced further than this, however, and grows in significance as we contemplate it. The man was seduced through the woman, his judgment not astray, but led captive by his affections.

Adam was not deceived, says the apostle, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression (1 Tim. 2:14).

The serpent beguiled me, says the woman.

The woman gave me of the tree (not beguiled me) {Gen. 3:13, 12}, says Adam. Thus, as the man was led by the woman and fell by her, so was he, it is plain, led by the affections of the soul, and with the soul the spirit fell.

It is always so. To use the language of the day, though not of Scripture -- the head is seduced by the heart.

How can ye believe, asks the Lord Himself, who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from God only? {John 5:44}. And again --

That they all might be damned, which believed not the truth, but [mark the reason] had pleasure in unrighteousness (2 Thess. 2:12).

And so again, when there is real turning to God, with the heart, not the head, man believeth unto righteousness (Rom. 10:10).

Thus, though the spirit be as much astray as the soul, it is through the soul, as well as with it, it is seduced and is fallen. And the word of God, in its own perfect and wonderful way, ever keeps in mind the distinction. It proclaims the fact that in fallen man the spirit has yielded its supremacy to the soul, and that the” natural” man is “sensual” (psuxikos), or soul-led (1 Cor. 2:14). In the believer, especially in the blameless state of such, the spirit again recovers its supremacy. “Spirit and soul and body” are again in the divine order.

Nor are these by any means solitary expressions. The same thing is expressed in various ways in the language of Scripture. Thus the will, in the now natural state, is identified or connected with the soul. This is translated three times “will” in our common version (Psa. 27:12; 41:2; Ezek. 16:27). “Let her go whither she will,” is (in Deut. 21:14) “Let her go to her soul.” “Aha, so would we have it” (Psa. 35:25), is “Aha, our soul!” And the expression, “Binding the soul with a bond,” i.e., with a vow, repeated ten times in Num. 30, shows how intimately will and soul are connected together. Thus it is even so that “The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” characterizes the world for God, and man, alas! is but the creature of fleshly impulse -- “sensual,” if not having the Spirit (Jude 19).

On the other hand, that the spirit should have supremacy, and so give the will (I say not, in independence of the soul, but as enlightening and guiding it), is evident from the chief place it gets. Indeed the old nature has its synonym of “flesh,” from the opposite tendency of being guided by the soul, which is so nearly connected with the body. But into this it is not my province now to enter.

Still I would point out how, in perfect accordance with all this, that sin is in a special sense “the sin of the soul” (Micah 6:7), so atonement is said to be made, in the same way, “for the soul.” The expression is three times found (Ex. 30:15; Lev. 17:11; Num. 31:50). And I speak of it to show the blessed harmony of Scripture on this as on every other point. Moreover, as for the soul atonement is needed, so by it atonement was made.

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief; when Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, He shall see his seed, He shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied” (Isa. 53:10, 11). So complete, so uniform, is the testimony of the Word.
Chapter 9

Man’s Relationship To God

One last consideration before we close this section. It is very plain that, as distinguished from the beasts, man is in Scripture recognized as in a place of relationship with God; and this by creation, not redemption only. Adam, as the work of God’s hands, is in some sort, as the genealogy in Luke bears witness, “the son of God.” 20 The apostle confirms it by quoting from the heathen poet,

We are also His offspring (Acts 17:28).

Now, although sin has so far destroyed the meaning of this as to make it an unavailing plea in the lips of carnal and ungodly men, yet the basis of relationship exists spite of the fall, as these and other words assure us. And this is a relationship which plainly no beast could have. Its very nature denies it; and this is a distinction of the greatest importance.

Man is fitted for acquaintance and intercourse with God, and in this shows himself, I may say in this alone, a moral and accountable being. He may “not understand,” and so he may become like the beasts that perish, but he is not one. Even in his manifest degradation he is a witness of his nobler origin, for a beast cannot degrade itself. And with all this perilous capacity for evil, nay, with all the actuality of evil itself, he has the witness in himself of relationship to the Infinite and Eternal, which, spite of himself, warns him of his responsibility, and links him by his hopes or by his fears, or both, with that life beyond death, in which, notwithstanding the seeming protest of all his senses, he almost universally believes.

In thus asserting with the inspired historian, and with the apostle, man’s distinct place in nature as a “son of God,” I do not at all forget the Lord’s words to those who made this very thing their plea. When they had put forth their claim,

We be not born of fornication: we have one Father, even God,

I perfectly remember that His answer is,

If God were your Father, ye would love Me . . . ye are of your father the devil (John 8:42, 44).

But this language is in no wise contradictory of the other, as of course it could not be. For the Lord says the same as to their being Abraham’s children, and that certainly they were by natural generation, however little they were morally such. It is of their moral condition that He speaks. The devil was not their father physically, of course. The Lord’s words then do not touch the question of their being physically God’s offspring, as the apostle asserts.

But we are not only said to be the offspring of God, it is precisely pointed out that He is the Father (in contrast with the flesh) of our spirits.

Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh, who corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? (Heb. 12:9).

Who can deny with any appearance of success, that we have here the development, by an inspired writer, of what the creation of man, as given in Gen. 2, implies? We have seen the bodily frame formed of the dust of the ground, and though God wrought in a special way to fashion it, as He did not with the beast, yet He does not claim to be the Father of our flesh. But we have seen also that man became a “living soul,” not in that way, nor as brought forth of the earth at all, but by the in-breathing of God into him. This is not said of the beast; and, phenomenal as the language is, it is only therefore the more, instead of the less, significant. If God did not want to convey to us an idea of what would be literally expressed by it, He must have intended to convey the thought of some corresponding spiritual reality. And what can this be, but that the spiritual part which animates and controls the bodily organism is something from Himself and akin to Himself in a way that the body is not?

Here then the apostle develops this thought. He is not the Father, though the Creator, of our flesh. It is not the bare fact of our creaturehood that constitutes us His children. The beasts are His creatures also, but are not this. He is the Father of our spirits, not of our flesh; nay, not merely of our spirits, but of spirits -- of all this class of beings. Creatures though these are, they are yet in a relationship to Him that no lower creatures can be. Thus we see why the angels are “sons of God” (Job 1:6; 38:7), as “spirits”; and man too, he is a “spirit” and a “son.”

20. Luke 3:38: where it is futile to object, as some do, that “the son” is not in the original. That it must be understood is plain from its being equally left out all through after the first time, and evidently merely to avoid repetition. Its occurrence in the first instance (Luke 3:23) is a perfect guide to the ellipse afterwards, and people might as well question “Seth” being “(the son) of Adam,” as “Adam” being here “(the son) of God.”
Note too how careful the language is. Man has a living soul, and is one: and this too by the inbreathing of God. Yet God is not said to be the Father of his soul but of his spirit. How this harmonizes with the spirit being the distinct speciality of man alone in all this lower world! Had it said, “Father of souls,” or had the beast, as men contend, a spirit, God would have been represented as Father of the beasts of the field. But the language is precise, as all Scripture is, and in harmony with Scripture and with nature too.

But this is not the whole of what the Word states. As He is the Father, so is He the God of the spirits of all flesh (Num. 16:22; 27:16); “all flesh” being of course here what it is in many other places “all men,” but characterized by what in him is only his lowest part. So we find (Gen. 6:12) that before the flood all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth, and in Luke 3:6,

All flesh shall see the salvation of God:

of course in either case it is all mankind and only these.

In this expression then, “The God of the spirits of all flesh,” we see again God in relationship with the spirit of man. The beast has no God that can he called his God; and man, forgetting God and living to himself, becomes like a beast. The outward presentation of this you may find in Nebuchadnezzar finding his portion with the beasts (Dan. 4); the moral of it is in Psa. 49:20,

Man being in honour and understanding not is like the beasts that perish.

Their perishing is the fruit of there being no proper link with God, such as man has.

Thus then we have in a very striking way, and as confirming all that has gone before, man’s link with God to be his spirit -- relationship, moral character, responsibility, and even his perpetuity of being, all bound up with this.

Let us now gather up the Scripture statements upon the subject we have been examining: --

(1) The body is not the whole man, for he is often said to be in it or absent from it, clothed with it or unclothed. Thus for faith the body is the clothing of the man, his “tabernacle,” which supposes an inhabitant. Paul has a vision of unutterable things, and does not know whether he was in the body or out of the body at the time he saw them.

(2) In the language of sense man is identified with the body; for faith, with what dwells in it. The Lord lay in Joseph’s tomb, yet confessedly His divine nature did not lie there.

(3) Man is spirit and soul and body.

(4) Spirit is not a universal principle floating in the atmosphere, but a separate entity in every individual, “spirit of man,” “spirits of men.” It was formed within him by the Lord, and all his knowledge is ascribed to it. This spirit the beast has not.

(5) The soul is not the body, but in the body. Beasts have and are living souls, and man is called a soul to distinguish him from the rest of intelligent creatures, who are called “spirits.” The soul is the link also between the spirit and the body, the life of the latter while in connection with it; the seat of affection, nay, of appetite, lusts, etc.

(6) It thus characterizes the man himself, so as to be identified with him; soul and person being used as the same thing; while in the intermediate disembodied state the general term for him is that he is a spirit.

(7) Again the soul is that through which man was seduced and fell, and which characterizes the natural man as led by it. It is thus specially connected in Scripture with will and lust, with sin, and with atonement.

(8) By the possession of a spirit, distinguishing him from the beast, man is in relationship with God, the Father and God of spirits, and is a moral, responsible being, made for eternity in contrast with the “beasts that perish.”
Part 2:
Death And
The Intermediate State

Chapter 10

Death

We have already got a long way towards the settlement of the question as to what death is according to Scripture. I say according to Scripture, for if the body is the whole man, you need no revelation to tell you what death is. As regards the body, death is plainly the cessation of all practical existence. And if the body be the whole man, the dust that lies in the tomb, death is of course the extinction of being. Revelation there is no need of: we have only to apply the knowledge we already have.

We have already seen reason to believe that death is not extinction; that the living soul in man is not extinct when it ceases to be any longer life to the body. We cannot therefore argue from the effect of death upon the body, as to what it is upon the spirit or the soul. We have seen that the word of God does on the one side use the popular language, the language of sense, and identify man with his body. This is seen in the class of texts of which Annihilationists are so fond. The man is the flesh and blood we see and touch. A dead body is a dead man. We all speak so, unconscious wholly of being exposed to the charge of materialism for doing so. Our daily speech in this way might convict us in the profounder wisdom of another generation, of disbelieving equally with Annihilationists themselves in the existence of an immortal soul. Yet we really do believe it in spite of that, and even the attacks of Annihilationists have not made us a whit more cautious. We quote even “Dust thou art,” and believe it, and yet do not believe that we are all dust. And we find on the other side, and use as freely, a number of texts which Annihilationism knows not how to use, which speak of man being “in the body,” “in the flesh,” “at home in the body,” “absent from the body,” “out of” it, and yet believe that the body is the man too, in spite of that.

Let us now fairly put the question apart from any partial answer it may have gotten in this way: Is the Scripture teaching of death extinction? -- Is it “ceasing to exist,” or, as they delight to quote from Job 10:19, to “be as though we had not been.”

You put seed into the ground, and, in the Scripture language, “it is not quickened except it die” (1 Cor. 15:36). Does the living germ become extinct in order to bring forth the harvest? Are the organic processes extinguished in it? Where would the harvest be if they were? Yet this is in Scripture twice over spoken of as “death.” And, if you reflect a little, the analogy to the death of man is nearer than it seems. There is that of the seed which is cast off as refuse, and decays. The germ within “puts off its tabernacle,” but, so far from becoming extinguished in the process, springs up into the plant thereon. Is there no lesson in that? no type? no analogy commending the use of the strong word “death” in this case? Would it ever have occurred to these annihilationists that “except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit”? Does the grain of wheat become extinct in order to bring forth fruit? They have never (at least, that I can find) attempted to illustrate their doctrine by it, that death is the cessation of existence, the extinction of organic processes.

The death of man is spoken of, moreover, in language which is not doubtful. I have fully admitted already, and without hesitation, that there are a large class of passages which (identifying man with his body) speak in the ordinary popular phraseology about it. Passages too there are, which will be examined in the sequel, which may present difficulty
in harmonizing them with the language of other parts. But, on the other hand, the clear full light of the New Testament affords us, in many simple and intelligible statements, abundant satisfaction as to what death is. Some of these I shall now proceed to examine.

(1) As we have seen, the apostle Peter styles death the putting off of his tabernacle (2 Pet. 1:14).

The language of Paul is similar, and if comment be needed, may supply it:

If the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved (2 Cor. 5:1).

Plainly, the apostle distinguishes between the tabernacle and the one who dwells in it: “For we which are in this tabernacle,” he says a little further on. The tabernacle was to be dissolved, not the inhabitant; and the man is identified with the latter rather than the former.

(2) Another expression for death in the same passage (2 Cor. 5:4) is “being unclothed”:

Not that we would be unclothed.

I would ask, If there be not something to be disembodied, how can you use the expression at all? Can one talk of “disembodied breath” or “disembodied life”?

The putting off of clothing, if that is a figure of disembodiment, as it is, is simple enough, but only when we recognize a part, and that the higher part, of man, to be something that is not the body, but is in it, as the living soul is.

Here plainly, then, death is not cessation of existence, whatever becomes of soul or spirit afterwards, which for the present I leave open.

(3) In the text in 2 Pet. 1:15, before referred to, death is called “decease,” literally, exodus, “departure”: “After my departure.”

Now here the man departs; where, is not the question yet. The man departs -- he leaves the earthly house of this tabernacle. Can you gather from the Bible that after dying he becomes extinct or unconscious? Death is not it: does not infer or imply it. It is my “departure.”

(4) And to this agrees the expression used again in 2 Cor. 5:8, “absent from the body,” --

willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

People contend, I know (and it is their only hope), that this does not refer to death at all, but to resurrection. To make “absent from the body” to apply just to the time when the body will have its fulness of bliss, is only to make incomprehensible what is very simple. Certainly the “willing rather” must include the intermediate state, if only as the way to the other, “Willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.” And that these two things are not successive, but contemporaneous conditions, is manifest also. For, when he says,

Whilst we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord (2 Cor. 5:6),

these states must go together: how then can it be doubted that the two things he desires, being the opposite of these conditions, go together also?

It is vain to oppose the apostle’s “Not that we would be unclothed” to the simple and natural interpretation of this desire to be absent from the body, as if the two were contradictory. This is by no means the case. He does say that what he groaned for was, not to be unclothed, but clothed upon. He groaned for resurrection, true, and the unclothed state was not in itself what he or any man desired. Still, knowing that to be absent from the body was to be present with the Lord, he was after all “willing rather” to be absent. Death had no terror for him, but the reverse. Death, then, is that disembodiment -- the putting off the tabernacle of the body, being unclothed, departing, and being absent from it.

Moreover, we have already seen that Matt. 10:28 asserts that the death of the body is not the death of the soul. Our Lord bids us,

Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Soul cannot be life merely, else those who kill the body would destroy it. Such a phrase moreover as “killing life” does not, and could not, exist at all, as I have before said: because “killing” is in itself “taking life,” and you could not speak of taking the life of the life. Proof is conclusive, that when man dies his soul is not touched by it. If it is conscious is another thing, and presently to be examined. And what destruction of body and soul in hell is, I do not inquire yet. Suffice it just now, that when we put off the body at death, the soul still lives.
Chapter 11

Consciousness After Death (1)

The question of consciousness may now be taken up. Of course every proof of it is proof also of existence. But many who allow that the soul exists after death, will not allow that it is conscious. Such contend for what is unknown to Scripture (while professedly based on it) -- “the sleep of the soul.”

But you never find in Scripture the soul sleeping. The man sleeps, but always as identified with the body. It is a mode of speech found in later Greek, outside the New Testament. It is never the soul that is in question.

So Matt. 27:52,

Many bodies of the saints which slept arose.

Again John 11:11,

Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep

-- i.e., by raising the dead. So Stephen fell asleep, and devout men carried him to burial -- i.e., his body. So

David fell asleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption [Acts 13:36].

Again in 1 Cor. 7:39,

If her husband be dead (asleep) she is at liberty to be married to whom she will.

There it is no question of soul or spirit. Again, 1 Cor. 11:30,

Many sleep;

he is thinking of it as chastening, not the joy of presence with the Lord, which the soul had. Again, 1 Cor. 15:6,

Some are fallen asleep

-- fallen out of the rank of witnesses.

Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ are perished (1 Cor. 15:18).

Christ is risen from the dead and become the first-fruits of them that slept (1 Cor. 15:20).

There again the resurrection of the body is in question.

So always, if death be looked at as chastening, sorrowed over as we do over the breathless corpse, if it be simple history of the outward fact, or if resurrection be in question, it is here that we find the phrase which people have blundered over, perfectly simple, intelligible and beautiful, as we gaze upon the inanimate form, and brush away our tears at the thought,

Our brother shall rise again. {See John 11:23, 24.}

Abundance of inspired testimony there is that death is not, for the soul, a state of unconsciousness. The passages are well known, and need only to be cleared from the objections which have been raised to their apparently very simple meaning.

The conceptions of the Pharisees upon this point are acknowledged on all hands, and the familiar story of Lazarus and the rich man in the 16th of Luke is confessedly in full accordance with them; yet they would forbid us to believe this to be anything more than accommodation to the superstitions of those whom the Lord addressed! But that the object of it is really to lift the veil from the other world will be plain if we consider the connection with the rest of the chapter. For the Lord had been speaking in the first part of it of man as an unfaithful steward under sentence of dismissal, but with the goods of his Divine Master yet in his hand. He had thereupon exhorted them:

Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations {Luke 16:9}.

Thereupon the Pharisees, who were covetous, derided Him, and to them He preaches this (parable, if you please) to show how what was highly esteemed among men was abomination in the sight of God. The point is here:

Thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and now

thou art tormented {Luke 16:25}.

No crime is charged but this, his failure as to the unrighteous mammon. He could not serve God and mammon. He had served mammon and not God. And, while the beggar he had neglected was borne from his gate into Abraham’s bosom, he was tormented. How this addressed itself to covetous Pharisees is easily seen. And the state described is that of a man immediately after death, in torment, before the resurrection and the judgment, with brethren still on earth to be preached to.

You may call it parable, if you will. The state of the dead is the very thing it is designed to enforce; and this representation of it is acknowledged to be based on Pharisaic sentiments.

It is singular, however, how the terms used by our Lord are quarreled with, as if, because the language is figurative,
we cannot use it to teach the reality of the death state. That it is meant to be so used is evident: first, because it is addressed to Pharisees, and founded (as acknowledged) on their belief, which the Lord thus takes up and adopts without a word of protest, without one hint of its being the gross and heathenish delusion materialists would have it.

Secondly, because figures, as it would seem, must necessarily be used in speaking of a state so far removed from anything of which we have experience. That is, words, phrases, and ideas, borrowed from things around us must be taken and adapted to these unseen things.

Thirdly, if the object were only to represent a final award in resurrection, no reason can be given for not picturing that award directly, as is done elsewhere, instead of representing it under the figure of a fabulous death state. The perfection of the representation would surely suffer by so unnatural a proceeding.

The figures are not difficult to read intelligently, for one who is as to this point of doctrine a Pharisee, as we shall see Paul the apostle was, and as we may confess ourselves without shame to be. And thus are conveyed to us thoughts that it seems in no other way could we have so vividly presented. The meaning is only so clear, that those who oppose it are driven to the wildest expedients to escape from its plain speaking.

Now here, if the consciousness of the dead is error, the Lord does teach it, and without the least warning of its being such; while it is impossible to deny the fact that He adopts (and, the argument is, sanctions) the belief of the Pharisees. But certainly He never adopted the superstitions He condemned, nor made the traditions of men the basis of His own authoritative teaching. This plain distinction seems never to be thought of. In reality it takes the ground from underneath the feet of our opponents. Not only is the argument quite unanswerable, that the Lord could not have employed falsehood as the vehicle of truth (and without even a hint as to its being false), but that also the very moral of the tale is this,

And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness: that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations {Luke 16:9}.

This is the rich man’s condemnation: his riches were his accusers now, and not his friends. He had received his good things, taken his portion in a world that passeth away. Now he was tormented. And observe how precisely the language accords with this: it is “when ye fail” -- that is, of course, die; not when you are raised, as some would read it; no, but that

When ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

The precise doctrine is there, given in plain words and not parable at all, and illustrating and confirming the parable.

This shows that at death we are received, and that there is no antedating. Doubtless it is after the judgment of works, and therefore after resurrection, that the exact recompense is given, the exact measure of punishment is meted out. But in the meanwhile the spirits of the lost are spirits in prison (1 Pet. 3:19), with no uncertainty as to their being lost, any more than he who, absent from the body, is present with the Lord {2 Cor. 5:8}, is uncertain of his own salvation.

Again, the Lord does say that there is torment in Gehenna; but he does not say that in hades there is none. The plain and simple impression which any one would receive from the first hearing of the parable, becomes only the more indisputably correct, the more we examine it. In it there is the harmony and consistency of truth.
Chapter 12

Consciousness After Death (2)

We have seen the Lord affirming the doctrine of the Pharisees as to conscious existence in happiness or misery in the intermediate state. We shall now pass on to a passage which shows how far the disciples of the Lord had imbibed the Pharisaic, or let us rather say, the Scripture doctrine, with which the Pharisaic was identical. For we read that when, after His resurrection, they were gathered together,

Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And He said unto them, Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle Me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have (Luke 24:36-39).

Now, here it is plain they recognized the form of the Lord, for in none of the appearances to them do we find anything spectral to make them think that it was a spirit they saw. Mary Magdalene had supposed Him the gardener. The two on the way to Emmaus just before had taken Him for an ordinary man. Moreover, they had just come among the other disciples and found them saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon {Luke 24:34}.

Then, while they were giving their own account,

Jesus Himself stood in the midst.

It was this sudden appearance, the door being shut, that staggered them. They did not doubt who it was, nor would handling Him have given them that knowledge. The Lord does not need to name Himself. He does not say, “It is I, Jesus,” but it is I, Myself,

using that common language which I have spoken of, the language of sense, which identifies man with his body:

HANDLE ME and see: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have.

Thus, it was not a question of its being Jesus or another, but as to its being Jesus in the body or as a spirit only. This the Lord’s answer shows:

It was not with them then a question of illusion or reality, but of bodily or spiritual presence. To those who had had Him as the living man among them, the mere visit of His departed spirit would not have been “Himself,” for it is no question of metaphysical accuracy, but of heart, to which the Lord responds. They saw Him, did not believe that it could be a living man come among them in that mysterious way, therefore thought they saw a spirit; to which He answers by bidding them prove that He had flesh and bones. Thus it was what their hearts could call Himself:

But here then it is very plain that the disciples of the Lord were as to this point Pharisees, and that, instead of checking their thoughts as superstitious fancies, He appeals instead to the bodilessness of a “spirit,” and His own flesh and bones.

How common a use of the word “spirit” this is, we may see by the inspired statement of the Jewish views in Acts 23:8:

For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. There again the word “spirit” is taken as ordinarily applying (as our word “ghost,” which is equivalent, does now) to the spirits of men apart from the body. Angels are given as another class. And the context confirms this: for Paul being called in question about the resurrection of Jesus, declared himself a Pharisee, a believer in resurrection; and hereupon the council was divided,

And there arose a great cry; and the scribes that were of the Pharisees’ part arose and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man, but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God {Acts 23:9}.

In these two last quoted passages, and as identified with the Pharisees’ belief, angels are named as a separate class of beings from these spirits spoken of — “If a spirit or an angel.” And with their belief Paul links himself. For having declared himself a Pharisee, and called in question as to one point of a Pharisee’s belief, the resurrection of the dead, it is added as showing the points in which their faith coincided with the Christian’s:

For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess both {Acts 23:8}.

The language of the inspired writer here shows his own consent with this doctrine:

The Pharisees confess (or acknowledge) both.

When I speak of “acknowledging” a thing, I plainly suppose it true, what is acknowledged. And thus in these matters the Pharisaic and the Christian faith are one.
If I take the light this gives me, how plain and simple it makes such passages as the Lord’s words to the dying thief, for instance:

To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise {Luke 23:43}.

Or Stephen’s prayer in the midst of the stones of his enemies:

Lord Jesus, receive my spirit {Acts 7:59}.

Or,

The spirit shall return to God that gave it {Eccl. 12:7}.

Or, yet again, the passage that speaks of the

spirits of just men made perfect {Heb. 12:23},

by resurrection, as Heb. 11:40, which we all get together.

The Lord’s saying to the thief will come up in another connection. Meanwhile I turn to some other passages.

In Phil. 1:21-24 occurs a statement which has naturally had an important place in the controversy upon this subject. It reads as follows in our version, which is sufficiently correct: --

For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour [an idiomatic expression meaning, ‘worth my while’], yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better; nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you {Phil. 1:21-24}.

The passage is simple enough, and would scarcely seem to need any explanation. But because of objections made, I shall divide it into its parts, and look at each part separately.

(1) In the first place, to the apostle, the object of his life was Christ, and to die was gain. This is the plain meaning. Only one interpretation is admissible. The “for to me” standing at the commencement of the sentence is necessarily related to both clauses of it:

To me to live is Christ, and (to me) to die is gain.

He does not say, as some would read it, “To me to live is gain to the cause of Christ,” but to me to live is Christ, Christ is the object of my life. And when he comes to speak of being gain, he never says, “To the cause of Christ,” but “(to me) to die is gain.” The apostle goes on to say:

(2) Yet what I shall choose I wot not, for I am in a strait betwixt two.

Is it not plain that it was in spite of death being gain to him, that he was in a strait betwixt choosing death or life; and this because it was a question of choosing his own interest or that of the saints, as he goes on to tell us. In what follows, I am persuaded, any candid mind will perceive that the apostle is only revealing the cause of his perplexity between these two (death or life,) when he says, “Having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better; nevertheless” -- here is the perplexity -- “to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.”

So that although death would be his gain, and he knew it, the strait was between his own gain and other people’s gain. To depart and be with Christ was no third thing at all. It was just his strait on the one side and his abiding in the flesh being more needful for them, that was his difficulty on the other.

And thus “departing and being with Christ” is fixed to mean his dying: just as his “abiding in the flesh” is fixed to mean his living.

(3) But here a great tumult is raised, and much knowledge of Greek is endeavored to be shown in letting us know that to analusan does not mean “to depart,” but that the passage should read,

Having a desire for the returning and being with Christ {Phil. 1:23},
supposing it to refer to Christ’s returning. However, it is unfortunate for this theory that the substantive “analusis,” derived from the verb “analo,” is used by Paul in 2 Tim. 4:6, undoubtedly for his death:

I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, etc.

If it be departure there, and death, why cannot it be so here, where the context fixes its application to death? Some annihilationists are willing to admit that “to depart” means to die, but insist that to “be with Christ” must mean the glorified state at resurrection, placing between these events, nonentity, or soul-sleep. This would make departure into forgetfulness far better than present fellowship with Christ, and joy in God, and magnifying Christ by service such as this! Strange enigma!

I shall not again do more than refer to 2 Cor. 5. Its “at home in the body” and “absent from the Lord” -- its “absent from the body and present with the Lord” -- speak manifestly the same language as that we have just been considering. I pass on to just one more Scripture in this connection, which gives us in full reality the thing of which we have been in search -- not in parable but in the historical fact -- a man absent from the body -- a spirit conscious of unutterable things -- a bright transient gleam from the unseen -- Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration with the Lord.

It is no dream, for eyes, that closed in sleep behold it not, awakened to behold it. {Luke 9:32}:

But Peter and they that were with Him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake they saw His glory, and the two men that stood with him.

This proves also that it was no mere vision, even waking. The thing was there before they beheld it:

Moses and Elias talking with Jesus. {See Matt. 17:3; Luke 9:30.}

Thus it was a real thing, apart from all spectators. And how simply described,

Two men which were Moses and Elias {Luke 9:30}.

One of these a man caught up in glory centuries before, and one still longer “departed,” and his body buried, yet still a “man,” neither extinct nor asleep, but in activity of thought and of enjoyment. Not raised from the dead either, as some would have it, because Jesus was Himself the “first-fruits,” and the “first-begotten of the dead.” For it is no question here of simple restoration to the earthly life just quitted, as with Lazarus and others, whom the Lord had so restored. It is a
man in the blessedness of another sphere, to enjoy which he must have been raised (if raised at all) spiritual and incorruptible. But of this resurrection the Lord Himself was the beginning, as Scripture asserts. Moses could not have been thus the first-born then. Apart from the body therefore he was, yet associate with one who had never passed through death, and though not in the likeness of Christ’s glorious body, yet appearing “in glory,” let men make of it what they will; entering moreover into the “bright cloud” (as Peter calls it afterwards “the excellent glory”), the Shechinah of the Divine Presence.

I confess I do not understand how it can be plainer that we are here permitted to gaze upon one departed, and to realize as far as we can how a departed Abraham, Isaac and Jacob still

live unto Him {Luke 20:37, 38}, who, as the Lord tells us,

is not the God of the dead but of the living {Matt. 22:32}.

We thus see how to Him they live who to men are dead. We learn to distinguish between the language of sense and the language of faith. We learn how really there is a departing and being with Christ which is, compared with life on earth, far better. No argument that Annihilationists can bring against this passage will avail for a moment. Their arguments have in fact been already disposed of, as they either suppose on the one hand that Moses was raised from the dead, which Scripture elsewhere confutes (Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 15:23; Rev. 1:5), or that it was only a “vision” or appearance, which the passage itself confutes. I may leave here then the question (though there be other texts) of the consciousness of the separate state, with the full conviction of its complete, manifest and divine answer.
Chapter 13

Objections From The Old Testament

I now proceed to consider the objections which are made to the views I have expressed, grounded upon the supposed plain teaching of many passages of Scripture. It is a point worthy of attention at the outset, that these passages are, with few and slight exceptions, all found in the Old Testament, and especially in three books which lie near together (united really, I doubt not, in many respects), Job, Psalms, and Ecclesiastes.

There is, however, a tale that these quotations tell, the moral of which will be found in 2 Tim. 1:10; where the apostle tells us, that Christ has abolished death, and brought life and incorruption (not immortality) to light by the Gospel.

That means that the objectors to what we have already shown from the Scriptures, are groping for light amid the shadows of a dispensation where comparative darkness was yet upon this subject. They look at death as it existed before Christ had for the believer abolished it. They look at life where as yet it had not been “brought to light.” No wonder if they stumble in the darkness they have chosen.

But the abolition of death is clearly connected with the bringing life to light by the gospel, and it is clear that the Old Testament statements must in some way correspond to this. If “life” is brought to light by the gospel, as in any and every sense it is, how could death even be known fully in the Old Testament? Take Paul and Job, as I have before said, and compare their utterances as to death -- is there no difference? is there no light come for Paul into that land of gloom and darkness which Job contemplates? Surely there is.

Another passage furnishes us with a further point about that old economy: that by the hanging of the veil before the holy places,

the Holy Ghost this signified, that the way into the holiest was not yet manifested, while the first tabernacle was yet standing” (Heb. 9:8).

The fact of Abraham and other saints going to heaven after death, does not imply that the way there was made manifest in the Old Testament, i.e., of course to men before they died. Nor do the Lord’s words which He quotes (John 3:13) at all imply even that Enoch and Elias had not “ascended into heaven.” Plainly they had. But the Lord is speaking, as the context decisively shows, of available witnesses of “heavenly things.” It was no question of Enoch and Elias, who were not there to tell what they might know, still less of the condition of the departed dead, but of there being no other accessible witness of heavenly things, except Himself, the Son of Man, yet “subsisting in heaven.”

If I have told you of earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man [evidently, none here to give witness] hath ascended up to heaven, save He who came down from heaven, even the Son of Man who is in heaven {John 3:12, 13}.

To make this clash with Enoch and Elias having gone there is surely a mere straining of the words, and just as much so to infer from it the condition of the righteous dead.

The passage in Hebrews in no wise teaches that the saints of the Old Testament did not go to heaven after death, but that there was no revelation yet of their going there, no promise of it yet to living men. It simply means that the dispensation dealt with earthly and not heavenly promises. Thus if the faith of a Job carried him on to a day on which that Redeemer who he knew lived, should be seen by his eyes, it is to His standing upon the earth in the latter day he looks. If Sheol, the land of darkness, lay between, certainly for him that was not heaven.

But such then, as Job’s, was the Old Testament hope. Outside the present scene there was little light, and death’s dark “shadow” well-nigh impenetrable; resurrection and restoration to a scene of earthly blessedness the tangible, plain thing. Scattered hints there were indeed of other things. Enoch had of old gone to God, and not seen death.

Elijah in a later day had followed him. Little gleams of light had broken in. But that was not the revelation of the heavenly places and a portion there for those who believed. Nor was death abolished, or life and incorruption brought to

21. The Old Testament word for hades, the unseen world. See next chapter.
22. Some difficulty will be found perhaps in reconciling Heb. 11:13-16 with this. I fully admit that this passage shows that individuals had hope beyond the proper Old Testament revelation. How they got this we hope yet to inquire. But no revelation of it is given in the Old Testament itself. Let my readers search and see.
light.

Still they were not Annihilationists, as Pharisaism, which the people followed, shows. Something they did know: and with all their darkness were wiser than those who have now turned from the light which has come, back into darkness.

This even necromancy witnessed. Heathenish as of course it was, yet its practice testifies to the belief which lay at the foundation of it. And the bringing up of Samuel 23 is an Old Testament confirmation of that belief too strong for any cavils of questioners to set aside.

True, indeed, the departed spirit of a saint was not at the mercy of a witch to summon back. The appearance of the prophet threw the woman herself into astonishment; but so God permitted Saul to get his answer of doom. The language of the historian should be plain to any one who believes in the full inspiration of Scripture, that the woman saw Samuel, and that Samuel spoke to Saul. Moreover any difficulty as to Samuel appearing in his clothes, or being seen as an old man, may be answered by saying that we know too little of spiritual appearances even to apprehend them as difficulties. Nor does it seem one that Saul himself should not have seen the spirit of Samuel, any more than that Elisha's servant did not see the horses and chariots of fire around Dothan (2 Kings 6:17).

To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me

{1 Sam. 28:19},

means merely in the death state, or in sheol, as a Hebrew might have expressed it. I only dwell upon this to show that all was not dark, even here, as to immortality.

In Ezek. 18:14,

The soul that sinneth shall die,

the soul is put for the personality of man. “The soul that sins shall die.” Not a son for a father's sins, or a father for a son’s, but every one for his own. This use of the word does not conflict with its proper force when used, as it has been proved Scripture does use it, for the immortal part of man. The other uses are all secondary to and founded on this, of which I have spoken at large.

We shall look now at the three books, Job, Psalms, and Ecclesiastes, from which annihilationists draw most of their texts to support their doctrine.

These three books belong to a portion of the Old Testament very distinct in its character from all the rest. While the historical books are, as a whole, the language of the divine historian, and the books of the prophets are still more directly the words of Jehovah Himself, addressed through the prophet to the people, that section of the Scripture which comprises Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon, is eminently man’s voice. Of course I do not mean that they are less fully inspired on that account. I doubt not it is all directed by the Holy Ghost Himself, so that we have nothing but what is profitable and needed. Still, if we find, as in Job we do find, even Satan speaking, we do not adopt his sayings as the expression of divine truth. They are carefully registered for us with a divine purpose. But when he says,

Put forth thy hand and touch all that he hath, he will curse Thee to thy face {Job 1:11}

we do not take it as a “Thus saith the Lord.” That was what Satan said, although it is written. So in like manner, when the Lord says to Job’s friends,

Ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, like my servant Job {Job 42:8},

it is plain we cannot indiscriminately adopt their sayings, as divine truth either. And when we come to Job’s own sayings, spite of the commendation so far expressed, we find that he too, in his words, had justified himself rather than God (Job 32:2).

So that we do not without reservation adopt his words either.

I have noticed elsewhere something equivalent as to the book of Ecclesiastes, where we have the experience of a man who had ransacked the world in vain for happiness, and the things he “said in his heart” while he was pursuing that vain and weary course. We know what was Solomon’s career spite of his wisdom, and his own conclusion upon it, under the teaching of the Spirit of God -- when at last he becomes the “preacher” of the vanity of the world he so well knew. Would it yet be believed, that this man’s “sayings,” penned by himself for our instruction in the word of God, have been taken by materialists as the sayings of divine truth, to settle it that men are “beasts,” that “a man has no preeminence above a beast”?!?

The Psalms indeed are of a different character. They are much more really prophetic in character; nay, in one sense, fully so. Still their prophecy has the peculiarity, in which they resemble the others, of its being the projection of human thoughts and feelings which, under the control of the Spirit of God, become the foreshadows of another day and scene. Thus David muses upon his own sufferings until his thoughts find vent in words which, guided of God, have a deeper meaning than any application to David could exhaust -- prophetic utterances of Another, more than royal, Sufferer. But that is very different from direct revelation. It leaves the utterer to speak of things as from his own point of view he sees them, even while giving them this deeper significance.

We find man in these books giving expression to difficult problems as to the world, and himself also -- pondering over them only to thoroughly lose his way; the perfect answer to be found only in the presence of God. Man’s voice is thus permitted to utter itself -- his questions, doubts, objections, reasonings -- before One not uninterested, who condescends to take the place of listener, and does not decide a case before he hears it; is it not worthy of God to give this? To me, it is of profoundest interest, and of deepest value.

This applies of course mainly to the books before us, Job, Ecclesiastes, and (in much smaller measure) to the Psalms. Against this it is alleged that the quotation of Job 5:13, with seven other “allusions” to the book, in the New Testament,
gives proof of Job as a whole being God’s voice. Let us look at these latter first.

They are as follows: --

Job 1:21, referred to in 1 Tim. 6:7 (?).
Job 12:14, referred to in Rev. 3:7 (?).
Job 34:19, referred to in Rom. 2:11; Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:25.
Job 41:11, referred to in Rom. 11:35.

Of these references it will be seen that James 5:11 merely speaks of Job’s patience and the end of the Lord. 1 Tim. 6:17 and Rev. 3:7 are very doubtful as allusions at all; Rom. 11:35 refers to God’s answer to Job, which of course no one questions as His voice; while the three passages in Rom. 2:11; Eph. 6:9 and Col. 3:25 may allude to what Elihu says of God’s not accepting persons, but are the expression of so simple a truth that it scarcely needs to consider them even an allusion.

But Elihu himself moreover is not one of the three friends convicted of falsehood by Jehovah, but one who is used to give Job his answer, after they and he both have left off speaking. It remains then that in all the New Testament there is one more or less doubtful reference to Job’s own words, and this one quotation of the words of Eliphaz, in 1 Cor. 3:19:

He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

Now, God’s own words make the express distinction between Job and his three friends, that, whereas, Job had spoken of him the thing that was right, they bad not done so. All of them, Job included, had erred in the interpretation of God’s dealings, if that were all; and on that account, first Elihu becomes interpreter for Him, and then God Himself speaks. But Job had spoken rightly of God; and his friends had not.

Yet Eliphaz for all that could say many a true thing, truth that doubtless he had learnt of God, and could utter as from Him; and one such saying the Holy Ghost gives us certified through the mouth of Paul. This could not certify the things which the same Eliphaz had spoken which were not right.

As to Ecclesiastes there is nothing which can be rightly construed to prove it to be God’s voice. The inspiration of the book is not at all in question, but its character and purpose.

As to the Psalms, they are undoubtedly divine, but that is not the question. While inspired fully, their utterance, as already said, is so far like the rest, that the point of view is that of a man upon earth, the horizon earthly, the thoughts and feelings in accordance with this. Granted, fully granted, that the divine is in the human everywhere, it is none the less man’s song or man’s sorrow, human utterance out of a human heart, with only exceptional direct sayings of God.

Proverbs again is most evidently human, however perfect and divine in its authority, as it surely is.

All the weight of what Job says is found in the following expressions: that, had he died from the womb, he would then have been lying still and quiet, he would have slept and been at rest, as a hidden untimely birth, there where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest (Job 3:13-17); that he would have been as though he had not been, in a land of darkness and the shadow of death, a land of darkness, as darkness itself.

Now, as I have said, I am not concerned to prove the harmony of all Job’s utterances with the actual revelations of Scripture as to the intermediate state. They are given as Job’s words, that is all. As the utterance of a saint of those old days, they show the dimness and uncertainty which then prevailed. Contrasted with Paul’s language they show us death not yet abolished, “darkness” not yet dispelled by light. Yet the words cannot be fairly pressed into the service of materialism.

Job’s words, then, are no contradiction of what we have seen elsewhere to be the revealed truth as to those departed. To weariness such as his a place of “rest,” indeed, was the unseen world; but “rest” is not extinction; and if it were a “land of darkness” also, darkness and nonentity are absolutely contradictory thoughts.

I turn now to Ecclesiastes.

And here all that annihilationists urge has been already virtually answered, except one passage. That one passage is, Eccl. 9:5, 6:

For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward, for the memory of them is forgotten; also their love and their hatred and their envy is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun.

And in Eccl. 9:10,

Whatsoever thy hand findest to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave (sheol) whither thou goest.

Now this is a very plain example of that way of speaking, looking at things from a mere human standpoint, which I have before remarked upon. The writer’s point of view is most evident. Nor was he capable, at the time he had these thoughts, of any other. As to the dead actually, he “knew not anything,” for he knew not whether the spirit of man went upward or not. He was not, therefore, capable of looking at anything save from his standpoint in the world; otherwise he could not have said, “Neither have they any more a reward.” That would deny all resurrection and life to come, if taken absolutely. But he was looking at the scene around, out of which men departed, and left no sign behind to indicate that they had been; their memory was forgotten; their love, hatred, envy, which had once made them conspicuous actors in the scene, had vanished; and, in relation to it, they knew nothing, their wisdom and knowledge had departed too. This does not mean that they “lost their memories,” or that they became fools; but they knew nothing of things taking place after their departure, nor could their wisdom or knowledge

appear in it any more. The closing sentence shows clearly to what the former part applies: "Neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun."

Therefore the moral is, Be busy now; work ceases in the grave; wisdom for this busy scene there is none there. All true in its way. But this was man’s musings, not divine revelation of the state of the dead at all, nor given as such. Had you asked this man what he knew of that, he would have said, as he did say, Who knows? “Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward?” He saw the dust laid in the tomb, and that was all he knew. The rest was conjecture, nothing more.

But that was only part of the preacher’s utterances, the musings of his heart while vainly seeking to search out by wisdom all things that are done under heaven (Eccl. 1:13).

But the time came when he had to own his inability to do so. To quote once more his lowly confession (Eccl. 11:5):

As thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb or her that is with child; even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.

Simple, but most important confession! on the dark side of which all the passages are found upon which materialists rely; while on the other, one pregnant sentence at least is read, which, to do justice to the Old Testament preacher, we should look at a little closer than we have done: --

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return to God who gave it {Eccl. 12:7}.

As we have seen, men seek to explain the “spirit” here to be merely the “breath,” as they do that which the Lord upon the cross commended to His Father, and Stephen to the Lord Himself. Simple minds will scarcely see the sense of the return of the breath to God, whereas, if it be indeed the spirit, such a statement becomes of the greatest possible importance. It is what lifts the veil from the life of "vanity,” and interprets its true significance. It is the answer to the doubtful questioning of the former chapter. Having come to the end of human wisdom in the matter, “the way of the spirit” is here revealed. It “returns to God who gave it.” And thus there is complete harmony with that conclusion of the whole matter which the closing verses invite us to “hear.”

Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil {Eccl. 12:13, 14}.

Now if that be the conclusion of the whole matter, does it look as if the matter from which he drew the conclusion ended merely with the blank and silence of the grave? Rather, does it not conclusively show, that that return of the dust to the earth “as it was,” is only what brings the spirit -- not “as it was,” but with the character acquired in its earthly tabernacle -- into the presence of the God who gave it!

While the judgment of every work does not come before resurrection, yet it is when we “fail,” that either we are “received into everlasting habitations,” or to the prison-house in which already the soul has the premonition of its doom, as the rich man in hades. Ecclesiastes has no word of resurrection. Death, the stamp of vanity upon everything, is what is dealt with, and that which all men’s reasoning can so little avail to penetrate or understand, faith makes known in its true character as the recall of the spirit into His presence, without which it is but a valueless cipher, and with which it becomes almost infinite in value.

I now pass on to consider the testimony of the Psalms.

Some passages adduced I may be content with quoting. That man is like to vanity; his days as a shadow that passeth away (Psa. 144:4), and that

as for man, his days are as grass (Psa. 103:15).

Statements like these, which depict the brevity of man’s life on earth, are not new or unknown to believers in the soul’s immortality. And that it is a solemn and unnatural thing for God’s creatures to be thus “subject to vanity,” quite irrespective of what comes after death, is a thing to consider. For the point it presses, is the wreck and ruin of the first creation by death coming in. This is what gives solemnity to the brevity of his earthly history.

The other passages are mostly of similar character to those that we have already looked at. That is, they speak of man as connected with the world through which he passes. Thus,

While I live, will I praise the Lord; I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being (Psa. 146:2);
Before I go hence, and be no more (Psa. 39:13), are expressions no stronger than those used of one who was translated that he should not see death. Enoch “was not,” yet even Annihilationism has not yet taught that he literally ceased to be. To be consistent, they should do so.

Or again, take Psa. 146:3, 4:

Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help: for his breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, and in that very day his thoughts perish.

Is it not plain here, that, so far as the context leads, his “thoughts” that perish are the plans and purposes in which he who was to be benefited by them had been made to hope, and which the death of his patron might in a moment frustrate and cut off?

Again, there is a somewhat different class of passages, as Psa. 6:5:

For in death there is no remembrance of Thee; in the

25. Here the connection of the “way of the spirit” with the growth of the bones in the womb, confirms the application of the former expression to the human spirit. It is the double mystery of generation that is referred to, still as ever unfathomable to man’s science. We know not how the spirit nor even the flesh of man comes into being. And death is, necessarily, a mystery, as life is.
grave (sheol) who shall give thanks?

And again, (Psa. 115:17),

The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that goeth down into silence.

Or again, that passage in (Isa. 38:18, 19);

For the grave (sheol) cannot praise Thee, death cannot celebrate Thee, they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth; the living, the living, he shall praise Thee as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth.

This may take a little deeper looking into: but only because we are so little accustomed to realize the point of view from which the pious Israelite beheld these things. That congregation of the righteous {Psa. 1:5}
in which sinners should not stand, which the first psalm gives us, was what he looked for. A day, as we say, millennial -- a scene in which righteousness shall reign, and the earth be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea, this is what his faith anticipated; what ours does; but his, much more exclusively, for his knowledge of heavenly things was very dim. To swell that great hallelujah chorus, such as the last five psalms give it us, and in a scene such as they prophetically anticipate, that was a godly Israelite’s ambition. To celebrate His praises upon earth, to train up children for the service of His sanctuary, to go up to that temple where the glory of Jehovah visibly dwelt, this was with him connected with every thought of Jehovah’s praise. You see it in that last quotation from Isaiah:

The father to the children shall make known thy truth {Isa. 39:19}.

Death would cut short that declaration, and make those praises cease. Death could not in that sense celebrate. “Who should give Him thanks in the grave?” Nay, the living, the living, alone could do it.

Beside, as length of days was one of the blessings of the law, to be cut off in the midst of one’s days as Hezekiah was threatened, argued divine wrath for a Jew. This manifestly adds its gloom to the first and last passages. While the 115th psalm is prophetic of a future day, when the earth will be purified by a judgment which will destroy sinners out of it, and these, I have little doubt, are referred to in them.

But the Old Testament contains brighter and more assuring passages than these, and with one of them we may close this chapter:

The righteous perisheth and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous are taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness (Isa. 57:1, 2).

Those who cannot quite give up Scripture language as unmeaning, nor put bitter for sweet or darkness for light, will be unable to accept the conclusion that “peace,” as well as “rest” (Job) is simply nonentity. As well might the “second death” itself be everlasting peace.
Chapter 14

Sheol, Hades And Paradise

We are now to consider what is indeed but a secondary point, but one which will help to give completeness to this sketch of the Scripture doctrine of the soul’s immortality. The word “hades” (hell, A.V.) is found, as we have already seen, in the story of Lazarus and the rich man. The parallel word in the Old Testament is sheol. “Paradise” is found in the Lord’s reply to the dying thief, and in 2 Cor. 12, where Paul tells us he knew a man in Christ caught up into Paradise.

The interpretation of these words by the materialistic section of annihilationist writers is pretty uniform. Hades, they say (and of course sheol), is the grave. Paradise, for most, is the place of blessing on the restored earth; necessarily, therefore, having anything to do with an intermediate state, nor existing at present, for a man to be caught up into. Others dissent from this in favour of its being a place in heaven, in this more Scriptural than those they hail as co-workers in this cause.

To begin with sheol. It is a word apparently derived from shaal, “to ask,” and is generally supposed to derive its meaning from the insatiate way in which death continually “demands” its victims. Some have, however, suggested, what seems at least as probable, that it is derived rather from the “questioning” as to the dead, as in Job 14:10:

Man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?

Sheol is acknowledged to be the equivalent of hades, and its significance seems, from the only probable derivation, to be the “unseen” -- the invisible world, as people sometimes say. It applies undoubtedly in ordinary Greek to the region of departed spirits, an application with which the Pharisaic use coincides, as the treatise ascribed to Josephus bears witness, whether it be his or not: and to this the Biblical use in Luke 16 (even to the term “Abraham’s bosom”) exactly corresponds. Now we have seen that not only was it impossible for the Lord to adopt without remark a mere superstitious and pagan notion, but that Paul also professed himself a Pharisee on kindred points. From this persuasion no denunciation of heathenism or of Pharisaism is of any force to turn us. Neither the one nor the other was all untrue, and Pharisaism was at least more orthodox than the Sadduceesm to which in many points the annihilationist belief conforms.

That “hades” should have a wider application, is no wonder from what we have seen to be its meaning. But although it might be used in other connections figuratively, in relation to man it has one very uniform sense. That sense is never the grave, as they allege, although the imagery of the grave may very naturally be applied to it. It is nevertheless demonstrably distinct, and stands in the same relation to the soul as the grave to the body. The common coupling together of “death and hades” illustrates this, for in such a conjunction as,

Death and hades delivered up the dead that were in them (Rev. 20:13),

dead naturally stands connected with the lifeless corpse, as hades (the unseen) does with the soul or spirit. So similarly the quotation as to the Lord in Acts 2:27,

Thou wilt not leave my soul in hades,
refers to the soul; as

Neither wilt Thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption {Psa. 16:10, Acts 2:27},
does to the body: and the apostle Peter distinguishes them accordingly in his interpretation:

His soul was not left in hades, neither his flesh did see corruption {Acts 2:13}.

This accounts for eight out of the eleven passages in which hades is found in the New Testament. That in Matt. 16:18 can present no difficulty. It is borrowed very likely from Isa. 38:10, where the gates of the grave should be rather “the gates of sheol.” The two remaining passages are really one:

Thou, Capernaum, shall be brought down to hades {Matt. 11:23, Luke 10:15}.

Here the word is used tropically.

The use of sheol, though similar, is somewhat more obscure. This results from the character of the Old Testament, which has been noted and accounted for. It is quite natural that materialists should use it for their purposes, as they do, although after all with very poor success. Psa. 16:10 we have seen quoted and applied by the apostle. Jacob speaks of going down to sheol to his son Joseph (Gen. 37:35); and this has singularly little force, if going down to nonentity. If we compare David’s words as to his child similarly,

I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me {2 Sam. 12:23},
the truth of existence beyond the grave is greatly strengthened.
Then we have such expressions as the
depths of sheol (Prov. 9:18),
the lowest sheol (Psa. 86:13; Deut. 32:22)
-- in the last passage God's wrath being said to burn to it --
Though they dig into sheol (Amos 9:2),
which show that the grave cannot be the whole matter there.
So even in sheol (Psa. 139:8) there is no escape from the presence of God:

If I make my bed in sheol, behold, Thou art there!

Can that be nonentity?

Surely we may be excused from following very closely the dissertations of those who have learnedly endeavoured to prove that sheol is the abode of dead sheep, of men's bones, and of weapons of war! For the first statement there is one passage produced, Psa. 49:14:

Like sheep they are laid in sheol;
as Delitzsch expresses it,

They are made to lie down in sheol, like sheep in a fold.
In the same way, Psa. 141:7,

Our bones are scattered at the mouth of sheol,
is made to assure us that "the bones of the dead are consigned in death to hades!" The psalmist plainly says they are outside. 12

By others the imagery of Ezek. 32:27 is pleaded to show that people go down to sheol with their weapons of war, and their swords laid under their heads! Nay, if Jacob speaks of bringing his grey hairs down in sorrow to sheol, we are bound to believe that sheol is the abode of grey hairs also! So Korah and his company go down alive into sheol, the earth swallowing them up alive; and this is proof conclusive that men's bodies go to hades! We have only to remember the vagueness of a term like "the unseen," to see how little we have here the formal doctrine they would draw from it.

Time fails us to pursue these phantoms. We may reasonably say that the consciousness of the intermediate state has been fully and independently established by the texts we have examined: and if the soul be a living entity separate from the mere bodily organism, there can be no question that hades is not the grave; there need be none that it is not extinction.

It is pointless to say we make hades "a land of life" by making it the receptacle of men's souls after death. I answer that although it be true that the spirits of the dead are living, they are nevertheless the spirits of the dead; and we necessarily and rightly speak of hades as the abode of the dead. To us they are the dead, though not extinct; and to God they live.

The only thing that might be judged a real difficulty as to hades we shall consider after we have briefly looked at the third term, "Paradise."

The greatest importance that the word has in this connection is from our Lord's use of it in His reply to the dying thief:

Verily I say unto thee, To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise {Luke 23:43}.

The common method of their dealing with this text is by altering the punctuation. They would have us read the words, "Verily I say unto thee to-day: thou shalt be with me in Paradise" -- that is, "To-day, this day of my humiliation, I say to thee." But the order of the words in the sentence is all against them. With the emphasis they give it, "to-day" should precede the verb. As compare in the Greek, Matt. 16:3; Mark 14:30; Luke 19:5, 9; Acts 13:33; Heb. 3:7, 15. But, beside this, the Lord is answering a prayer in which a time wherein the thief sought to be remembered was expressed. He had said,

Lord, remember me when Thou comest in thy kingdom {Luke 23:42}.

The Lord says virtually, "You shall not wait for that: to-day you shall be with Me." This is the simple, intelligible reason for the specification of time: "To-day," not when I come merely, "shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." 13

Again it is said, "this day" means the day of Christ's coming; and it is urged that Paradise is in the new earth, and therefore not yet in existence, which of course would dispose of the passage effectually as far as it applies to any teaching concerning an intermediate state.

I shall now briefly state what Scripture furnishes as to Paradise.

"Paradise" is an Eastern word for a "park" or "pleasure-grounds." The Hebrew, pardes, is only used in Neh. 2:8; Ecel. 2:5; S of S 4:13. It is there translated once "forest"; twice, "orchard." It is not used for the garden of Eden in Hebrew, but there it is the ordinary word, gan for "garden." The Septuagint translation, however, gives here paradeisos which is uniformly the word it uses for the Garden of Eden, or of God, except in one place where the usual word for garden is used. From the Septuagint use of the word the New Testament use is doubtless derived. It does not follow, however, that it will have exactly the same application. Rather, we shall find, the Old Testament word becomes in it, as commonly such words do, transfigured into a higher meaning. The Old Testament type becomes the New Testament antitype: the "shadow of good things to come" emerges into the substantive reality. It is used but three times:

-- Luke 23:43 -- To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.
2 Cor. 12:4 -- How that he was caught up into Paradise.
Rev. 2:7 -- The tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.

12. "Their souls below, their bones above," as Delitzsch well says.
13. Others would render serpenton, "in that day," or "this day" -- meaning "the day of which you have spoken." While the word may be well rendered "this day," it cannot be as referring to a day not present when it is spoken. It is the exact equivalent of our word "to-day," which is incapable of the use they would make of it.
In the last of these passages the mention of the tree of life connects itself plainly with the after account of the heavenly Jerusalem, which is therefore at least not the new earth, however related to it may be.

The second passage speaks of paradise as existing now, for Paul was caught away into it, whether in the body or out of it he could not tell even at the time he wrote. Manifestly, if he supposed he could be caught away bodily into it, he supposed it to be an existing place, and the plea that it was a vision will not answer. The “visions” doubtless refer to what he saw there.

But it is insisted that this Paradise could be no part of hades, and that people are forced thus to suppose that there are two Paradises! I agree that it is one and the same Paradise throughout. The difficulty arises through people studying rabbinical theology more than Scripture. Hades, as is acknowledged, is but the “unseen,” and never defines precise locality. It is the attempt to make it definite which has confused people’s minds, that is all.

But is not hades in the “heart of the earth?” they say. -- Why? Because the earth swallowed up Korah and his company, and they “went down alive into sheol,” is the proof given. May we not equally say that hades is the belly of a whale, because Jonah says he cried “out of the belly of sheol”? The necessarily vague thought of the “unseen” refuses such limitation of locality. True, its imagery was naturally borrowed, before the fuller revelation had been given, from that grave with which it necessarily was associated in the mind, and thus you have it pictured as “beneath,” souls going down to it or coming up from it. There is moreover a real truth in this conception, in its being a descent from man’s position, a degradation from his natural place on earth.

The New Testament removes for the saint the veil of the unseen. He departs to be with Christ, and Christ is not in the heart of the earth. The very name of hades for the believer almost disappears, and thus it is most beautifully at the Cross of Christ that the veil begins to lift decidedly. “With me in Paradise” may well be in contrast with Old Testament utterances. Alas, that men should refuse the consolation, the brightness of the new revelation, and seek to retain the darkness, passed away for faith.

The saying of the Lord after His resurrection, that He was “not yet ascended to His Father,” is not inconsistent with the thought of His having been in Paradise in the intermediate state. For “ascension” is another thing from the departure of the spirit to God. It is connected with the victory over death, not the submission to it. David is not ascended while his body remains in the grave. And for the Lord how easy to see the unspeakable difference! The departure of the spirit was the witness that all had been stooped to -- death in its full reality undergone; ascension was the witness of that work accepted, and man as man brought into the new place with God.
Part 3:
The Eternal Issues

Chapter 15

The Authority And Use

Of Scripture

We are now to look at the final issues of life or death eternal. And here there are two classes of objectors to the common views: those commonly called “annihilationists” on the one side, but who prefer for their views the designation of “conditional immortality”; and those who on the other side advocate the doctrine of the possible or actual salvation of all men, after whatever ages it may be of purificatory suffering.

An examination of these opposing statements leads us in very different directions: they unite only in maintaining the doctrine to which is generally given the Scripture title of the “restitution of all things,” and in certain ethical arguments against the ordinary views. The stronghold of the first class of writers they believe to be in the texts which speak of immortality, and of eternal life as the portion of the saved, and of death and destruction in various forms of expression as that of the unsaved. The stronghold of the latter, so far as they take Scripture as their ground of argument, is found, as they believe, in the texts which speak of the reconciliation of all things, and in the expressions for “eternal” being not really equivalent to “everlasting.” As, however, we desire to take up and show the scriptural view from Scripture itself, and as its statements in their full bearing need to be considered, not mere selected and isolated texts, the consideration of these is necessarily the only satisfactory course to meet the various arguments from whatever source, by an examination of the Scripture doctrine itself. This only will suffice him for whom Scripture has its due place and authority. The truth will thus be continually before us, and our souls be kept in the presence of Him who has given it, rather than in the presence of human thoughts and questionings, which can be but this after all.

I do not shrink from the ethical inquiry. But for this we must have first of all the distinct statement of the doctrine before us, and then also Scripture itself must test the ethics as all else.

It is worth while then, in the first place, to consider the authority of Scripture in this subject of so immense importance to us, which involves not only our views of the eternal destiny of men, but of the character of God Himself. And the question of its authority embraces another, of what is authoritative: is it the text, the “letter” of the Word, if you will, or is it what some call the “Scriptures of God in their broad outlines” in contrast to this? To which of these is the appeal to be? Is the danger in too close a scrutiny, or too little?

For it has been asserted by a very well-known writer 14 that, because “we are in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit . . . our guide is the Scriptures of God in their broad outlines; the revelation of God in its glorious unity -- the books of God in their eternal simplicity, read by the illumination of that Spirit of Christ which dwelleth in us, except we be reprobates. Our guide is not, and never shall be what the Scriptures call ‘the letter that killeth’ -- the tyrannous realism of ambiguous metaphors, the asserted infallibility of isolated words.” This really involves the setting of the Spirit of God and the supposed illumination He may give, at variance with His actual words, if so be that those words plainly mean something different from the illumination. This borders on a claim to an inspiration which may make the text of Scripture mean anything that the caprice of the interpreter desires. It

deprives us of the very authority by which alone we can decide. The apostle tells us that the things he spoke were not in “the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth.” It seems strange to make the Holy Ghost to be in conflict with His own “words.” It is to them we appeal, and by them alone we can hope to settle the matter.

Now it is the same apostle, who vouches for his very “words” being taught him by the Holy Ghost, who tells us that “the letter killeth”; and if we would not have that in the worst sense an isolated text (a phrase wrenched from its context and applied haphazard as we please) we must inquire a little what its context is. We find the words in his second epistle to the church at Corinth (2 Cor. 3:6); and with the verse preceding it runs thus: --

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God, who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life [2 Cor. 3:5, 6].

If we look back to the verses going before, we shall find that he has been contrasting the writing on “tables of stone” with the writing of the Spirit of the living God “in fleshy tables of the heart.” If we go on to the verses following, we find him speaking of the former as “the ministration of death, written and engrav’d in stones,” given to the children of Israel by Moses, and of the latter again, in contrast, as “the ministration of the Spirit.” And in the next verse again he styles the one “the ministration of condemnation,” the other “the ministration of righteousness.”

Upon the face of this then, in “the letter” that “killeth” the apostle is speaking of the “ministration of death,” and that as what was written upon the “tables of stone,” the law, and nothing else. It is this that he is contrasting with the “new testament,” or gospel, as “the ministration of righteousness” and life by the Spirit. The law (the letter) killeth. It was designed, by its manifestation of what God required from man, to give him the sentence of death in himself.

When the commandment came, says the apostle, speaking of the law’s effect, sin revived, and I died (Rom. 7:9). The gospel on the other hand “ministered righteousness” -- provided, not required it, and so was life to souls, not death. In the one “the letter” of a mere commandment “killed.” In the other the power of the Spirit wrought, giving life. Paul was a minister of the “New Testament,” not the Old; “not of letter, but of the Spirit.”

But those who speak as Canon Farrar does, are usually guilty of using “isolated words” -- words isolated from their context and applied to establish principles with which they have not the remotest connection. He uses them to put in opposition the words which the Holy Ghost taught and the Holy Ghost who taught them; and instead of adherence to the inspired text, substitutes a sort of mystic guidance, which renounces the Scripture as having any verbal accuracy to be adhered to, and replaces this with “the Scriptures of God in their broad outlines,” not to be too narrowly defined; “the revelation of God in its glorious unity,” untroubled by the discordance of “isolated texts” -- practically, anything that we may please to call the teaching of the Spirit, and this not to be critically tested even by that Word through which the Spirit teaches!

On the other hand, we have been taught that

Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error (1 John 4:6)

-- not by any assurance of our own hearts, as having the fulfillment of,

I will dwell in them and walk in them [2 Cor. 6:16]

(true and blessed as that promise is), but as hearing

or not hearing (1 John 4:6)

the men inspired of God to give us Scripture. We have learnt by the conduct of the Bereans to “search the Scriptures daily” whether these things are so; and from the apostle of the Gentiles that the “very words” he gives us are words taught of the Holy Ghost Himself.

Canon Farrar, in the appendix to his book, says:

I care but little in any controversy for the stress laid upon one or two isolated and dubious texts out of the sacred literature of fifteen hundred years. They may be torn from their context; they may be distorted; they may be misinterpreted; they may be irrelevant; they may be misunderstood; they may -- as the prophets, and the apostles, and our blessed Lord Himself distinctly intimated -- they may reflect the ignorance of a dark age, or the fragment of an imperfect revelation; they may be a bare concession to imperfection or a low stepping-stone to progress. What the Bible teaches as a whole; what the Bibles also teach as a whole -- for History and Conscience, and Nature and Experience, these too are sacred books, that, and that only, is the immutable law of God.

Thus we see what is meant by refusing the “infallibility of isolated words.” There are many Bibles, all fallible alike, and men are the only apparently infallible interpreters of these fallible Bibles. History is such a Bible, written where and how (out of all the contradictory tomes to which every day is giving fresh birth) he does not say. Conscience is another, though it teach men to bow down to stocks or stones, or snakes and crocodiles; conscience, which made Saul kill God’s saints to do Him service. Nature is still another, with, perchance, a Huxley or a Darwin as its expounder. Experience, which proved to the Jews of Jeremiah’s day, that while they burnt incense to the queen of heaven they “had plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil.” All these are Bibles, upon whose imperfect and contradictory utterances the mind of man is to sit in judgment -- to decide what it can receive and what reject! And the blessed word of God is to take its place among these, and man is to say which of its utterances is the “reflection of the ignorance of a dark age,” and which “a
low stepping-stone to progress!"

Where do prophets and apostles, or the Lord Himself, sanction this view of the matter? Let Canon Farrar tell us. There is certainly abundance of proof of the very opposite; and in the mouth of those who profess such confidence in the “illumination of the Spirit of Christ,” it seems a strange assertion that the Spirit of truth must have taught error, or at least have used such feeble and imperfect means of communicating truth, that He could not prevent its being mixed up with error. We refuse such teaching altogether. We, on the authority of Scripture itself, believe that,

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

We believe in a really divine revelation given to us by One who cannot lie, and who does not give us a stone for bread, nor put darkness for light, or light for darkness. We would obediently “search” these Scriptures, conscious indeed of our own weakness and ignorance in doing so, but sincerely trusting Him, who assures us that he that will do God’s will shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God (John 7:17).

The pictorial representations, if I may say so, of the eternal state are those naturally in which we find the most vivid images of eternal judgment; and these are precisely the passages which are most difficult to reconcile with these various theories. The book of Revelation especially, the prophetic panorama of things to come, gives their advocates special trouble. The “highly figurative” character of these visions is the constant plea, and they refuse upon this ground what they cannot explain. To maintain the authority of texts like these, is just to assert that “tyrannous realism of ambiguous metaphors” against which Canon Farrar utters his protest. Yet the book has, as few have, its inspired title, and that title is,

The Revelation of Jesus Christ {Rev. 1:1}.

It is as if the complaints of obscurity and ambiguity had already reached the Divine ears from out the unborn future, and He had provided for them with the assurance of its being a revelation, a true unfolding of “things to come to pass.” I would ask them to mark this, that it is here they find their greatest difficulty, in what Christ calls His “Revelation.”

The figurative character is confessed, but it is only what is found wherever eternal things are pictured to us. There seems no other way of their being set before us indeed, than by figures taken from the things around; and we may be sure that He who speaks to us in them has taken not the most obscure and doubtful way to show them to us.

We see through a glass, darkly, says the apostle. The last phrase is literally in an enigma (1 Cor. 13:12, marg.).

Thus it is the Scripture way to use enigmas to describe what otherwise it may well be impossible for a man to utter (2 Cor. 12:4). Yet though it was of old the complaint as to the prophets that they spake parables (Ezek. 20:49), it is nevertheless expected of disciples at least, that they should understand them.

Know ye not this parable? asked the Lord once of the twelve, and how then will ye know all parables? (Mark 4:13). Surely our shame it is to be akin to those who seeing do not perceive, and hearing do not understand. The Lord does not trifle with us, does not invite us to see what He forbids us to understand. And there we must pause for the present. The visions themselves will come before us at another time.
Chapter 16

Immortality: Is It Conditional?

The course we shall pursue in our examination is briefly this: first, we shall seek out the meaning and use of the terms which are employed in Scripture in relation to this subject; then we shall look at the prophetic outline of the future, so far as may be needed to connect and apply the various passages; next, we shall try and fill in this scheme with the passages which bear upon the successive events which it marks out; and finally, give some attention to the ethical questions. We shall begin with immortality and eternal life, two questions which for annihilationists are only one.

The true Scriptural statement is this: --

In the New Testament the true word for immortality, *athanasias*, occurs but three times:

This mortal must put on immortality;

When this mortal shall have put on immortality {1 Cor. 15:53, 54};

and once of God it is asserted that He only hath *immortality* (1 Tim. 6:16).

The adjective “immortal” does not even occur.

There is indeed another word, *aphtharsia*, twice translated in our version “immortality,” but its proper meaning is “incorruption,” and so it is mostly translated.

I cite all the passages: --

Rom. 2:7: -- “Glory, honour and *immortality*.”

1 Cor. 15:42: -- “It is raised in *incorruption*.”

1 Cor. 15:50: -- “Neither doth corruption inherit *incorruption*.”

1 Cor. 15:53: -- “Must put on *incorruption*.”

1 Cor. 15:54: -- “Shall have put on *incorruption*.”

Eph. 6:24: -- “Love our Lord Jesus Christ in *sincerity*.”

2 Tim. 1:10: -- “Brought life and *immortality* to light by the gospel.”

Titus 2:7: “Incorruptness, gravity, *sincerity*.”

Its adjective, *aphthartos*, “incorruptible,” is used seven times, and applied to God (Rom. 1:23; 1 Tim. 1:17);

- the crown of the righteous (1 Cor. 9:25);
- our inheritance (1 Pet. 1:4);
- the word of God (1 Pet. 1:23);

and once figuratively, that which is not corruptible (1 Pet. 3:4).

It is only once in our version rendered immortal (1 Tim. 1:17), but with no more reason than in other places.

Furthermore its opposite, *phthartos*, “corruptible,” is six times found, and always so rendered: Rom. 1:23; 1 Cor. 9:25; 15:53, 54; 1 Pet. 1:18, 23.

The difference between these words comes out in 1 Cor. 15, in which they are all to be found. Speaking of the dead body of the saint (1 Cor. 15:42-50) the apostle uses the words “corruptible” and “corruption.” It was not mortal, but dead. Then, speaking of the resurrection of those that are Christ’s at His coming (1 Cor. 15:23), he brings in also the change of the living saints which would accompany it:

We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; {1 Cor. 15:51};

the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we (the living) shall be changed; for this corruptible (applying to the dead saints) must put on incorruption, and this mortal (applying to the living) must put on immortality {1 Cor. 15:52, 53}.

Thus there is evident distinction in the use of these words in Scripture; and when it is said (Rom. 2:7) that God will render to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and incorruption, eternal life, it is not at all the same as seeking for immortality, but the blessed, incorruptible state in which resurrection or the change will put the saints at the coming of Christ. And it applies only to the saints, as the whole description in 1 Cor. 15:42-50 does. The wicked are not those of whom it is said.

It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power {1 Cor. 15:42, 43}.

Such words are applicable alone to the bloom and beauty of the resurrection of life.”

Quite true that the saints, alive but mortal when Christ comes, will then get “immortality.” The liability and tendency to death will in their case be of course removed. But that word is the expression of a different fact from that which is pointed out in the case of those who have died. All will alike
of course possess incorruption, putting on alike the image of the heavenly; but the fact noticed as to the living is that they shall not sleep at all, “mortality” in their case being “swallowed up of life.”

Mortality is our condition down here. Immortality is not our natural and present condition. Immortality is deathlessness; and who asserts that we do not die? The soul does not die; nor the spirit; but man does surely. The question is as to what death is, not whether men are subject to it. By death we mean the dust returning to the earth as it was, while the spirit returns to God who gave it.

We deny that flesh and blood are the entire natural man; we agree that “incorruption” everywhere applies to the body. We deny that mortality or immortality refers to the soul. It refers to the bodies of the living when Christ comes, as corruption and incorruption to the bodies of the dead. Let any one compare 1 Thess. 4:15-17, where the same event is spoken of, and where the dead in Christ, and “we” who are alive and remain are similarly contrasted. The “we shall be changed” is contrasted in 1 Cor. 15:52 with the dead being raised incorruptible, and so similarly in the next verse, “this corruptible” applies to the dead, “this mortal” to the living: both expressions to the body, the “mortal flesh” (2 Cor. 4:11).

In 2 Cor. 5:4 the apostle has distinctly stated that he groaned, not to be unclothed, but clothed upon. Now this is the very change of the living we have before looked at. Paul, the living but mortal man, longed not to be unclothed -- to be apart from the body -- but, in opposition to that, to be clothed upon, that mortality, his present condition, might be swallowed up of life.

But it is objected (quoting 1 Tim. 6:16), “God only hath immortality.” What then? Why, it is argued, “the soul can’t have it.” Go a little further, and the result will be apparent. The angels then cannot either. Does death then reign throughout the ranks of created, sinless beings? That will not of course be contended for; but it is involved necessarily in the argument; and must follow, or the argument be given up. It is admitted that “they are of the divine nature; they are spirit.” And so is man’s spirit “spirit,” and we have seen that, if angels be “sons of God” on that account, just so are men also “His offspring.” Whatever therefore this proves as to angels, it proves also for the spirit of man.

The Scripture sense of the passage does indeed make it apply to angels, and to all created beings. It is the essential difference between the Creator and all His works, that He alone by Himself subsists. “By Him,” on the other hand, “all things subsist.” “He upholdeth all things by the word of His power.” Thus we by no means maintain “the false doctrine of the innate and essential immortality of the earthly race.” We contend that the race is mortal, and that immortality innate and essential belongs to no creature, fallen or unfallen. The passage in Timothy gives this assurance. In that sense, as possessing it in Himself, God alone hath it, and in Him we live, and move, and have our being [Acts 17:28].

By Him all things subsist [Col. 1:17].

But this no more proves that the soul dies, than that angels die. Dependent, derived immortality it may have equally with them, and in that sense its immortality is affirmed; for they that kill the body cannot kill the soul.

Eternal life, which is confounded with immortality, is a wholly different thing; and this we shall now proceed to show.
Chapter 17

Eternal Life: What Is It?

The word used in the New Testament for the life that the righteous enter upon as their eternal condition is always the same Greek word. It is not psyche but zoe. Let it be remembered then that we are speaking of this one word zoe (life), when we inquire into the meaning of “everlasting life.”

First, let us consider the New Testament use of the term with which we are concerned, and we do not purpose carrying the examination further. For my own part, in the case of a common New Testament word, I am convinced that a Greek concordance (that is, the examination of the word itself as it occurs in Scripture) is of more value to the Bible student than the best dictionary that ever was. The word zoe occurs 134 times in the New Testament. It is in one place rendered “lifetime” (Luke 16:25); in every other case it is rendered, as it only could be rendered, “life.”

Now existence and life are not the same thing. If they were, the question occupying so intently the minds of many in the present day would have no meaning. We quote Prof. Nicholson to the effect that no rigid definition of life appears to be at present possible. 15 I believe from the Scripture point of view indeed something approaching a definition may be possible, but let us examine it a little.

Life manifests itself by action: it is the energy that works the whole machinery, so to speak, of the being in which it dwells. But we may also, and in fact do more frequently speak of it as the motion of the machinery itself. The latter is life phenomenal, what it is as subject to our inspection, a matter of actual observation and knowledge. The former is life potential, the power behind the movement and unseen.

But then we also speak of life in a still larger way as comprehending the course of this active existence; life as furnishing the individual history. And as connected with this, although distinct, we speak of life as differentiated by its surroundings: English life, American life, and even without an adjective at all, of a young man entering upon life -- life in the pregnant sense, implying its full tale of hopes and joys, and cares and sorrows.

1. In the sphere of merely natural things of which alone we are as yet speaking, the life potential, according to Scripture, is the soul, or psyche.

2. The phenomenal, physical, animal life induced by the presence of the soul in the body, is also psyche.

3. The historical life is on the other hand always zoe. 16

4. Zoe, too, is life in the pregnant sense, implying all that it introduces to.

The first two meanings are connected together and covered by the one word, psyche, as the last two are on the other hand connected, and covered by the one word, zoe.

Of psyche enough has been said already. Zoe used with reference to the natural life occurs but thirteen times in the New Testament. I give all these occurrences that we may have the subject as fully as possible before us.

1. Life in the historical sense: --

Luke 1:75: “All the days of our life.”


Acts 8:33: “His life is taken from the earth.”

Acts 17:25: “He giveth to all life and breath and all things.”

Rom. 8:38: “Neither death nor life shall separate us.”

1 Cor. 3:22: “All things are yours, whether life or death.”

1 Cor. 15:19: “If in this life only we have hope in Christ.”

Phil. 1:20: “Whether by life or death.”

1 Tim. 4:8: “Having promise of the life that now is.”

Heb. 7:3: “Neither beginning of days, nor end of life.”

James 4:14: “For what is your life? It is even a vapour.”

2. In the pregnant sense; only twice, but distinct: --


1 Pet. 3:10: “He that will love life, and see good days.”


16. I leave out of consideration, bios, which, although it figures largely in ordinary Greek, occurs but five times in the New Testament in the sense of “life,” and here always as a synonym of zoe in the historical sense. Its use lies outside of our present inquiry. The five passages are Luke 8:14; 1 Tim. 2:2; 2 Tim 2:4; 1 Pet. 4:3; 1 John 2:16.
So far then we have been speaking of natural life only. I have been thus particular in speaking of it, because the natural sense is of course the primary, and furnishes the basis of the spiritual sense. We shall find, if I mistake not, by carrying these definitions with us, that they will assist us greatly in the apprehension of what Scripture calls “eternal life,” which as a term is used in a precisely similar way.

If life then is not mere “existence,” “eternal life” is still less, if possible, merely “eternal existence.” It is a life begun here and now in those who are nevertheless as mortal as ever, a consideration which at once sets such an explanation of it entirely aside. The wicked who have it not “exist” just as much as those who have it, while they do not in this sense “live” at all. Let us examine this closely, for it is the key of the whole position.

“Eternal life” in Scripture is always, as before said, zoe, never psuche. It is presented, however, in the same four aspects as the natural life.

1. Here the potential life, the soul of this spiritual existence, is Christ Himself.

2. The phenomenal life, the result of His relationship to us, is that which begins with our new and spiritual birth.

3. The historical life is our individual course on earth as children of God.

4. And finally we enter upon life, embark on it in the full and pregnant sense when we go into it in the fast hastening day of the Saviour’s coming. We must look at it in each of these different applications.

1) Scripture is full of it; but it will suffice to quote but a few passages. Thus the apostle speaks of Him who in the beginning was with God, and was God, that

   in Him was life, and the life was the light of men (John 1:4).

   In his first epistle similarly that,

   the life was manifested; and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us (1 John 1:2).

   So the record is,

   that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son; he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life (1 John 5:11, 12).

   Now here to begin with, let me ask, is it eternal existence that was manifested in Christ, and was the light of men? But again, and furthermore, --

2) Not only “he that hath the Son of God” has life, but he has it as a present possession, and an abiding one. He has no mere pledge and promise of it. It is as possessing it that be is in the spiritual sense a child of God and born of God.

   He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life (John 3:36).

   Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my words, and believeth on Him that sent Me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life (John 5:24).

   Is this only “the promise and the pledge?” Nay; for --

   Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you; whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood hath eternal life (John 6:53, 54).

   And again,

   We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him (1 John 3:14, 15).

   Thus eternal life is “in,” and “abideth in” the believer: he has no mere pledge and promise of it; it is begun in him already. Listen, and the Lord Himself will define it yet more simply:

   for --

   THIS IS life eternal, that they might know, or better,

   that they know17 Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent (John 17:3).

   Here it is characterized for us, and we know (if we know anything) the life it speaks of. It began in us when faith began. It began with our new birth. It is not then eternal existence, for still we die. It is not existence, but a new and blessed energy of good; an activity of holy affections of which Christ now known as Saviour is the spring and soul. This is eternal life, if Scripture is to be believed. The definitions of annihilationists fail hopelessly, therefore, here. Eternal life is not immortality; it is not eternal existence, as they allege. It is the life which we have as spiritually quickened from the dead.

3) The outward historical life necessarily blends with the outward natural life so that they cannot be really separated. The life of the saint and the life of the man are here but one. For this reason no Scripture can be produced under this head, which might not be fairly challenged.

4) But the pregnant sense, is, as we might expect, in fullest use of all; for our life points ever forward to the time when we shall have it in all that it implies. And even as we have said, the young man “enters upon life, ” when he enters upon its full activities, free from the necessary restraints of immaturity, so we too shall “enter into life,” albeit we have it now within us. And who that feels the workings of the life within most fully, but must look forward, too, most simply to that future, and say to himself, without a thought of denying what he has already, that his life is there?

   Thus,

   Ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life (Rom. 6:22);

   In the world to come eternal life (Mark 10:30);

   In hope of eternal life (Titus 1:2);

   Shall inherit everlasting life” (Matt. 19:29),

   and similar expressions, in no wise interfere with the fact asserted quite as plainly, if not as frequently, that we have

   17. For it is a well-known peculiarity of John’s Gospel to use hena for hoti “in order that” for “that.”
eternal life abiding in us now. These are only the various modes of speech which as we have seen we use with regard to the natural life itself.

Your life is hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:3) is used by some to deny present possession of eternal life, and they try to make the positive “hath” of other scriptures mean that the child of God has it “in safe custody.” Where is there a word about its being so? It is William Cowper, I believe, who sings,

“Your life is hid with Christ in God,
Beyond the reach of harm.”

But then that is not Scripture. The Scripture use and purport of the text is far otherwise.

Ye are dead,
says the apostle,

and your life is hid with Christ in God; when Christ our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory {Col. 4:3}.

The passage belongs to the first class of texts pointed out, in which our life is *identified with its origin*. Christ is this life. He is hid in God, and the world sees Him not until the day of His appearing. Our life then is in character a hidden one; we shall not appear till we appear with Him. A life which draws its character from Him who is the soul of it cannot be known by a world which has rejected the Son of God and found no glory in the Lord of glory. With Him then we are dead. Our life is a hidden one, for Christ is hidden. But it is hidden *in God*, and so but waits for the time in which it will shine fully out. Christ is to appear; and then we shall. This has nothing to do with the question of security, or with eternity of living. It is Christ who is hidden, and who is our life. Our life, therefore, is hid with Him. But that is no denial of its being in us here, but implies the very contrary. It is our possession of it that gives us this character, and Christ being the soul of it, the

world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not (1 John 3:1).

Eternal life is not mere eternity of living, nor does it date only from the resurrection. It dates for us from that quickening by the Spirit which every child of God has known; and manifests itself, though the world (and alas, others) have no eyes for it, in every throb and movement of the soul Godward; while we wait yet to enjoy its fulness --

In the world to come, eternal life {Mark 10:30}. 
Chapter 18

The First Sentence

As I have said, I do not refuse to consider the moral aspects of the present question. But just now we are occupied with what must necessarily precede all such considerations. The facts must be before us before there can be any proper appreciation of them. We are searching for the facts of the case, and any preliminary moral reasoning would be out of place -- would hinder and not help our investigation.

The question of penalty stirs all the feelings of our heart, and there are two things, often forgotten, which should lead us to question how far we can safely allow their influence. The first is, that we are judging in our own case. The second, that the sin which has entailed the penalty has enfeebled necessarily the power of true judgment. The heart of man is not only "desperately wicked": it is deceitful too. Will it be any more likely to judge righteous judgment because the cause it pronounces upon is its own -- itself? Is the sinner’s estimate of sin and its desert so likely to be right? Is there no self-interest in the way? no pride that would forbid to stoop so low as to the truth? Ah, the heart of man! that question of the All-seeing is the judgment of its trustworthiness: "Who can know it?"

Yet there is One who knows. Can I trust Him? and has He spoken in such a way that I can assuredly know what He has said? He has. I can. You might stir my poor human feelings, no doubt, and make me murmur at the judgment God has given: -- I am quite capable of that. But I look at the Cross, where for man His own Son hung. Shall I persuade myself I have a more tender heart than He? No: His judgment is not an enemy’s, nor the impassive estimate of One indifferent. He has given His Son. And though His judgments may be a great deep, and I may be little able to follow out His governmental ways, I have what is better, for I know Himself.

Thus you and I, reader, are to listen to His words; not with hearts callous to human suffering, but subject to God. The deep, dark shadow of the cross, wherein for us the Son of God hung and died, prepares us for a view of sin and its results deep and dark enough in shadow. But we know the heart we cling to through the gloom; and the sheep, here as ever, know the Shepherd’s voice.

We are now to look at the solemn question of penalty. It will be profitable to inquire just what was the punishment of death denounced on Adam, and how far it has affected his posterity. And the simplest method we can take in doing so seems to be to ask ourselves what Scripture states as to the consequences of the first sin.

Evidently, the fullest statement we have has to its effect on Adam’s posterity is that which is given us by the apostle Paul in Rom. 5:12-21. And here there are three things of which he speaks: --

First, "Sin entered into the world," and "many became sinners": this is the depravation of nature, which is the sad heirloom of succeeding generations.

Secondly, "Death by sin, and so death passed upon all": this is corporeal death, the death He could point to as undeniably "reigning from Adam to Moses" even the time before the law.

Thirdly, "Judgment was by one to condemnation" -- "upon all men to condemnation." This is what death following upon sin, proclaimed. It was the sign that nature was tainted in her whole course, that the God who had made man, and could not otherwise repent, now "turned him to destruction."

Of these three things the first clearly is the cause of the judgment pronounced, and not the judgment itself. Of the two latter, the first is the infliction, and the second is involved in it, and shows its character. Death is the infliction, but not as an arbitrary thing proceeding from the mere will of the Creator, but the mark of changed relationship to Him which the fall had produced. Death then (what we ordinarily call that) was the sentence, and that alone; but it involved necessarily a change in moral relationship between the Creator and the creature, distance between man and God, which His love and pity might yet find means of bridging over -- which was not yet final therefore, but which was there.

Now, I apprehend, the difficulty found in reading aight the sentence, pronounced on Adam, "Thou shalt surely die," proceeds from the seeking a final sentence in what was not intended yet as final. God had of course His plan of mercy already in His mind, and was not yet giving an eternal sentence. Had He left man to himself, no self-recovery on man’s part being possible, it would have been, no doubt, practically eternal. But He had no design of leaving him to himself. As we know, this sentence, under which the whole
race lies, is not the close, but the beginning of our history; and we shall keep, I believe, most closely within the limits of revelation, by interpreting the sentence following the sin of Adam as in no way involving the eternal issues, but as strictly provisional with a view to the intended mercy. This relieves at once from the difficulty as to the penalty involved. It makes all clear and consistent; and is in the highest degree important in reading aright the eternal penalty itself.

This in no way interferes with the first death being the type and shadow of the second, while it harmonizes with the fact that when the second death comes, the first death will entirely pass away. It harmonizes also with the statement of Scripture everywhere, that that second death will be consequent upon a future judgment, in which men will be judged, not at all for Adam’s sin, but “according to their works.” It harmonizes also with what we shall find to be the fact hereafter, that the Old Testament revelation has no direct announcement of the second death at all. In a word, it will be found to clear the way for the after-question in many and most important respects, while it is a view which from Scripture itself it seems impossible to contravene.

It would be the most attractive course, perhaps, from this point to follow out the Old Testament revelation as to the future state; but before we can do this, we must look still further at the lexicography of the subject that we may understand the meaning of the terms which are used with reference to it, before we look at it as a whole.
Chapter 19

Destruction, And Its Kindred Terms – The Old Testament

Assuming that death is extinction, a number of passages of very different application are often used by annihilationists to describe the “end of the ungodly”:

- The destruction of the transgressors and sinners shall be together (Isa. 1:28)
- which applies to the purification of Zion in the last days; Prepare them for the day of slaughter (Jer. 12:3)
- which is also judgment in the land; The slain of the Lord shall be many (Isa. 66:16), and
  - They shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of them that have sinned (Isa. 66:24).
- God’s destruction of Israel’s enemies and others; God shall destroy them (Psa. 28:5);
  - They shall be consumed (Psa. 37:20);
  - They shall be cut off (Psa. 37:38);
  - Root thee out of the land of the living (Psa. 52:5)
- referring to “Doeg, the Edomite”;
  - Blotted out of the book of life (Psa. 69:28);
  - They are not (Job 27:19).

Not one of these can be shown to apply to the final judgment of the wicked. Let any of them prove this if they can.

They also take up the separate Hebrew words. All these words are applied to death. If death therefore does not mean extinction, plainly its synonyms need not. Thus, then, the foundation being removed the edifice falls to the ground.

First, abad, to perish: and here a text already spoken of, from Isa. 57, presents itself:

- The righteous perisheth,
  - enters into peace {Isa. 57:1, 2};
  - The good man is perished out of the earth {Micah 7:2}.
It is the word also applied to a “lost” sheep (Psa. 119:176; Jer. 1:6; Ezek. 34:4, 16).

The next word, haras, is claimed as “another word in frequent use for future punishment.” There is one passage which may possibly be thought to apply, but which has no necessary reference to another state at all; that is Psa. 28:5:

- Because they regard not the works of the Lord, neither the operation of His hands, He shall destroy [or overthrow] them, and not build them up.

The third word, tzamath, is the word used in Psa. 119:139,

- My zeal hath consumed me;
  - and in Psa. 88:16,
  - Thy terrors have cut me off.

It would be impossible to show it to refer to final judgment at all.

The fourth, shamad, they claim “is significant of utter extinction,” so that it must be the most forcible of all these terms. Yet we find it used to predict the curse upon Israel under the penalty of which as a nation they still are, and which is not “utter extinction,” as the very passage shows.

- Also every sickness and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will the Lord bring upon thee, till thou be destroyed, and ye shall be left few in number, etc.,
  - i.e., not utterly extinct at all (Deut. 28:61, 62). In the 30th chapter it is added further,
  - And it shall come to pass when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind . . . and shalt return unto the Lord thy God . . . that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, etc. (Deut. 30:1-3).

Here is national repentance and restoration predicted, after what is called “utter extinction.” Here is in fact the place in all Scripture where the word is used most constantly. It is found in Deut. 28:20, 24, 45, 51, 61, translated “destroy” and in Deut. 28:63, “bring to nought”: and yet the very prophecy shows that there is no “utter extinction” at all in the matter.

It is used also (Dan. 9:26) of Messiah being cut off: let them say what this means.

- It is used of death continually, and this is indeed the almost constant use, although it does not always mean as much as that.

Finally, the next word, nathatz, is used once in the psalm
which according to its title, speaks of Doeg (Psa. 52:5);

God shall likewise destroy thee forever: he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling-place (lit., tent), and root thee out of the land of the living.

It is death by the judgment of God that is indicated, and the meaning is better given in the margin, “beat thee down.”

There is no proof that all these words apply to future punishment. Until there is we shall have cause to suspect an application of them which requires the assumption of materialism for its support, and which treats the overthrow of a man and of a wall as if it was undeniable there was no difference between the two. If death is not extinction, as it is not -- if the soul is immortal (though not independently, but by the will of its Creator), as it is -- then the materialist's argument is wholly, irretrievably, hopelessly gone. But we must follow him into the New Testament.
Chapter 20

The New Testament Terms

In considering “death” as applied to the punishment of the wicked in the New Testament, we find there is a new sense placed upon it. Yet if this was not so, as bearing in remembrance what death (in the ordinary sense of it) is, and that it never means, nor implies, the extinction of being, we should have to consider all the texts which materialists use as against, and not for the view of the extinction of the wicked. No more than the seed is extinct, when sown in the ground it is preparing the harvest -- no more than man is extinct when the spirit returns to God who gave it -- no more, if I am to accept the necessary conclusion from such use of words, no more will the wicked become extinct when eternal death becomes their awful portion. I grant, of course, the body might become extinct upon this view of the matter, but not the spirit or the soul. Even so there is no escape from God into the blank of nonentity. Alas for him who thinks that there is such!

But there is more: for there is an express statement that death as applied to the final punishment of the wicked is not mere ordinary death. In Rev. 20:14 the “second death” is explained to be “the lake of fire.” The editors of the Greek Testament, without exception, read the passage:

This is the second death, the lake of fire.

And to this the first death delivers up its prisoners. This is at the end of all, when the heavens and earth flee away before the face of Him who sits upon the throne of judgment (Rev. 20:11). It is when finally, all enemies being put under His feet, the Son shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father; and then “death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed.” But so far from the second death being then destroyed, it is then that its reign begins, to endure “for the ages of ages.”

The first death, then, gives place to the second. They are not the same. The “second death” is the lake of fire. Second extinction it cannot be, for there has been none before, and moreover extinction would be deliverance from it. Extinction by it would be as rapid, according to the usual arguments, as by any other process whatever. How long would it take for life to be extinct, or flesh and blood to be consumed by a literal fire of brimstone? Would it consist with “torment for the ages of ages?” Yet that must at least be the distinctive feature of the lake of fire. What then does this “second death” imply? Death must in this case mean torment; at least that must be part of what it means; for the lake of fire undeniably means torment. It cannot mean irresistible power of extinction, for any ordinary fire would make quicker work. No; it means protracted torment, extraordinary, supernaturally protracted torment; if it can mean this and extinction too, then extinction itself may mean protracted existence and its end alike.

Thus at least “death” here, as applied to the future punishment of the wicked, is not, cannot be, and is expressly stated not to be, used in its ordinary sense. I shall not pursue the matter further here because the fitting place to inquire its precise meaning will be found when we come to look at the intensely solemn and important passages referred to. This we hope to do in the fullest way hereafter, and do not wish to anticipate it here.

We pass on to consider other terms used for eternal punishment.

The first of these is apoleia, “destruction.” Now the force of the word is not by any means what materialists would make out. When the new wine bursts the skins and the bottles are marred (Mark 2:32) this word is used to express it. The bursting of a skin-bottle is by no means its “disorganization and wasting away till it should disappear,” as they would have it. It is not even the first step to such wasting away. This would equally go on were the bottles whole. My argument is that the bottles are destroyed for the purpose to which they were originally destined, and so is man whether as the subject of the first death or of the second. In either case he is set aside from the place for which he was originally created, in the first death temporarily, in the second eternally. But the bottles exist, though “destroyed”: they do not cease to be; and so neither does man. This is the Biblical force of destruction.

So it is not to be wondered at if from our point of view we should consider this application of “destruction” to death, as the overthrow of the very thing it is sought to establish by it. The verb appollumi is used in this way over and over again (Matt. 2:13; 8:25; 12:14; 21:41; 22:7; 26:52; 27:20; Mark 3:6; 9:22; 11:18; Luke 11:51; 13:33; 15:17; 17:27, 29; 19:47; John 10:10; 18:14; 1 Cor. 10:9), and translated by the words “destroy” and “perish.” In all these cases utter extinction is not its meaning.

But again, appollumi is used in the sense of “losing”
(Luke 15:4, etc.). The “lost” sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. 15:24); the “lost” sheep, “lost” piece of money, “lost” son of Luke 15, are all examples of this use of the word. Also Matt. 10:6; 18:11; Luke 19:10; 2 Cor. 4:3. Throughout it is being useless for the purpose of their existence; and in a similar way, only remembering the unspeakable difference between an inanimate thing, and a morally accountable being such as man, do we understand the destruction of the wicked.

I make no pretension to more than ordinary scholarship, but I dare maintain against all or any, that the words in question NEVER in themselves mean annihilation at all. Let the proof be only from Scripture, and let any that will prove it. We must pass on now to other words.

The next is aphanizo. It is once used as applied to unbelievers (Acts 13:41),

Behold, ye despisers! and wonder, and perish,

and once to the “vanishing away” of life (James 4:14). The latter is its true signification in both places, although it has other meanings. To say that the apostle is telling us that unbelievers “will rise from their graves and see what they have rejected, will marvel at their folly and will vanish out of existence” is pure invention: there is nothing in the text about the second death, about rising from the graves, or even of passing out of existence in the materialistic sense. And this is quite unquestionable, because it is a simple adoption of the language of the Septuagint translation of Hab. 1:5, where such ideas suit neither text nor context. It is there added as an appendage to “wonder marvellously” as if to complete the sense, to “wonder marvellously and vanish.” The apostle puts it, “wonder and vanish,” thus still more plainly making the last words give emphasis to the former by the substitution of “vanish” instead of “marvellously.”

We have next four words, intimately united together, phtheiro, phthora, diaphtheiro and kataphtheiro. In the New Testament the first and second are uniformly translated “corrupt” and “corruption,” except 1 Cor. 3:17, where we find, correctly enough, “defile” and “destroy,” and 2 Pet. 2:12, “Made to be taken and destroyed.” The third is found six times: Luke 12:23, “Where no moth corrupteth”; 1 Tim. 6:5, “Men of corrupt minds”; 2 Cor. 4:16, “Though our outward man perish”; Rev. 8:9, “The ships were destroyed”; and Rev. 11:18, “Shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.” The fourth is only found, 2 Tim. 3:8, “Men of corrupt minds,” and 2 Pet. 2:12, “Shall utterly perish in their own corruption.” The meanings are sufficiently well given in these passages. But the last is the one most emphasized by Annihilationists because, Peter says, “These, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, shall utterly perish in their own corruption,” the same Greek word being used of the end of beasts and the end of the ungodly.

But the point is really just what we have before glanced at, man’s loss of the place for which he was originally created and for which his natural constitution fitted him. From this place he perishes, utterly perishes, and is destroyed: he “loses himself and is cast away.” This is the natural thing for a “brute beast, made to be taken and destroyed” -- to fill a place temporarily, not perpetually. Man, made for eternal occupation of the position assigned to him, perishes like the beast when he forfeits forever and loses this. The comparison with the beast is here sufficiently obvious without its involving the physical extinction which only materialism would suggest.

The other words are exolothreuo and olethros. The first of these words occurs but once (Acts 3:23); the second is four times used -- three times applied to the destruction of the ungodly. Exolothreuo is given by Liddell and Scott as “to destroy utterly.” Olethros is given as “ruin, destruction, death.”

A last word is katargeo, to make void, of no effect, to nullify. It is the word translated “destroy” in 1 Cor. 6:13; 15:26; 2 Thess. 2:8; Heb. 2:14; “come to nought” in 1 Cor. 2:6; “abolish” in 2 Tim. 1:10.

The effect of this inquiry as to Greek is to bring us back to the English, better satisfied than ever to abide by its decision. The question is after all one of simple understanding of some common English words. It takes no uncommon education to arrive at a satisfactory settlement of the question raised. It is worth while to have gone through the Greek to have discovered this. Our readers will go with us with the more assurance and intelligence, that we may adhere in this to our common English version.
Chapter 21

A Further Survey
Of The Scripture Terms

Death and destruction are clearly Scripture phrases for the end of the wicked. But the first is never extinction as we have seen, and all this class of texts are clearly against the views they are quoted for. Destruction again is the ruin of the thing or being of which it is predicted, but by no means its passing out of being. The importance of the point is such, however, that we shall again review the matter.

The texts quoted by some are those which speak of eternal life, that which with God is really life. Take as an example:

He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life (1 John 5:12).

Or again:

Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you (John 6:53).

How is it that they do not see that, according to their views, not only the wicked will have no future existence, but have none now?

First, eternal life is not merely existence or immortality, and in Scripture language one may be (to use Paul's expression of the woman that lives in pleasure)

dead while living (1 Tim. 5:6).

Now, if there be such a living death even now, as we are thus assured there is, why not for eternity? And if the believer, having now (as we have seen) eternal life, yet enters into it as his general state hereafter, why may not the unbeliever, dead now as alas he is, and alienated from the life of God, yet go into death as his final adjudged condition, by the sentence of the Judge hereafter?

That in 1 Tim. 5:6 the apostle is speaking of a state of spiritual death, may be determined by a similar phraseology, sufficiently clear elsewhere to make the meaning there plain. For instance, where the Lord (in John 5:24, 25) speaks of the dead hearing His voice and living, He is plainly not speaking of those subject to the first death, for the life must of course be in contrast to the death. If He was speaking of subjection to physical death, then as "passed from death to life," they could not physically die, which we know is not the truth. Then, they who are here spoken of as quickened by hearing, receive the impartation of a true life here and now, a life which is morally characterized by the knowledge of the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. The death in contrast with this, can only be what we rightly call spiritual death,

alienation from the life of God through the ignorance that is in men, because of the blindness of their hearts (Eph. 4:18).

Where this life is not, death is.

I ask again then, If there be such a living death now, as it is proved there is, why not for eternity?

Again let us remind ourselves also that the second death is the lake of fire, beginning when death (as it is ordinarily understood) ends and is no more, and certainly not therefore its continuance or repetition. In no way can the threatening of "death" imply extinction. It means separation from the Blessed Source of life: that "alienation from the life of God" on man's side, which is spiritual death, meeting its end in God's final withdrawal on the other. And as God's withdrawal cannot mean indifference, and as He cannot cease to be the Moral Governor of His creatures, it implies the manifestation of that eternal displeasure, which the lake of fire is.

We have seen that the righteous "enter into life" in the world to come, and yet that does not imply they have not got it here; and similarly the wicked enter into death, find it in all its awful reality, in that judgment day, while also their present life as alienated from God is also spoken of as death. The resurrection for just or unjust alone can give them their full capacity for enjoyment or for suffering. The resurrection of the wicked precedes their judgment to the second death.

Again, as to the simple force of the words "destroy," etc., our translators used both destroy and perish for ruin where the thing remained in ruins, and did not come to an end. The bottles burst by the new wine are thus said to be "perished," as we have seen. They were ruined, looking at the original purpose for which they were destined. And so, though the righteous "perished," he entered into peace. So again we have, "the land perisheth," "the valley also shall perish"; so over and over again is it said that Israel was to be "destroyed," and after this had come upon her, her captivity was to be turned (Deut. 28, 30). The constant reference to death agrees entirely with this. In none of these cases is there
an end of the thing destroyed. It is very plain that destruction
does not mean “annihilation” in any of these examples.

But there is one text, Matt. 10:28, which we must
specialy look at in this connection, and a very important one
it is. The question is raised: “Does it not distinctly threaten
that God will do to both body and soul that which man can do
to the body, but is ‘not able’ to do to the soul -- ‘kill’ them?”

No, it does not. The word is expressly altered to avoid
saying so. And what is not said here is not said anywhere in
Scripture. The soul is never “killed.” To kill is the decisive
word in the first clause of the sentence, but the Lord refuses
it for the second part. Certainly not without some reason for
it, He turns aside from saying what would seem the most
natural thing for Him to say, and instead of using again the
word “kill,” which He had just used, He substitutes “destroy”
for “kill.”

Nor only so. No one can find this word “kill” applied
anywhere to the soul or to future punishment. It is rejected as
unfit both here and everywhere. And I ask, Why? Why does
the Lord substitute “destroy” for “kill?”

Now the word “kill” is only employed for taking life, and
scarcely ever in any figurative sense at all. The latter word in
the verse, appollumi, is indeed given as “to destroy utterly,
kill, slay, murder,” but it is added that it means “very
frequently in all sorts of relations, to destroy, ruin, spoil,
whaste, squander,” and in the middle form, not only “to
perish, die, fall,” but “also simply, to fall into ruin, be
undone,” and even “to be wretched or miserable.” (Liddell
and Scott.)

Now compare the other word, apokteino, and we find the
only meanings given to be “to kill, slay, smite to death, to put
to death, to weary to death, torment” -- but this last
metaphorical use a very rare one, and in Scripture never
employed. Now I ask any honest man: If our Lord had
designed to use a word which should unequivocally set forth
the annihilation of the soul, which would have been the fitter
for His purpose, the one which in Scripture language has no
other sense than that of taking life, or the one which is very
frequently used in other senses?

And even this, decisive as it ought to be, does not put the
argument in its strongest form. For if we will be at a little
pains to go beyond the lexicon, and inquire for ourselves the
force of the terms in Scripture, we shall find -- and I do not
doubt the same to be true elsewhere than in Scripture -- that
appollumi is NEVER the word used simply to express the
taking of life. That may be (often is, no doubt) necessarily
implied; but that is quite another thing. It is never once
translated “kill” in our version, only once (in the middle)
“die,” where “perish” would be better (John 18:14), and is
actually put alongside of kill in the same sentence to convey
a different thought (John 10:10). The more any one will study
the Scripture use of the words, the more he will be convinced
that the decisive word to convey the annihilationist meaning
is the very word that the Lord rejects, and deliberately rejects,
after having used it in the beginning of the very sentence from
which He rejects it at the end.

Finally, as to those passages from the Old Testament in
which occur the words, “cut off,” “consumed,” “slay, slain,
kill,” or “blot out,” and which are used to attempt to prove
the extinction of the wicked, it is sufficient to say, as the
passages themselves show, that they refer to their extirpation
out of the earth simply, without intimating their after
condition. Thus Psa. 37, speaking of millennial days:

For evil doers shall be cut off; but those that wait upon
the Lord, they shall inherit the earth {Psa. 37:9}.

Again:

0 Judah . . . the wicked shall no more pass through thee:
he is utterly cut off (Nah. 1:15).

Or again:

But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the
transgressors shall be rooted out of it (Prov. 2:22).

There are few more frequent causes of mistake with
annihilationists than this confounding of the destruction of the
wicked out of the earth, in order to the great predicted
blessings for it, with the eternal judgment when the earth and
heavens flee away.

Take Zeph. 1:2, 3 for example:

I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the
Lord. I will consume man and beast; I will consume the
fowls of heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the
stumbling blocks with the wicked, and I will cut off man
from off the land, saith the Lord.

So Psa. 104:35:

Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the
wicked be no more.

It is all the earthly judgment which precedes millennial
blessing. And upon the principle of interpretation which must
be adopted in order to make texts such as these apply to the
final extinction of the wicked, I could not only prove that
Enoch was annihilated (because he “was not”) but could find
the doctrine of annihilation in most books that were ever
written. What can one think of such arguments, or the cause
that needs them? Against such use of Scripture I appeal to the
very texts cited. They need but a little patient examination,
with singleness of purpose and waiting upon God, to give true
and unambiguous testimony, as the word of the blessed God
who cannot lie, cannot fail the soul that looks in faith to Him.
Chapter 22

The Provisional Character
Of Death

We now come to look at a point of great importance in many respects; it has been already spoken of, but not fully proved or dwelt upon as it deserves. I mean the provisional and temporary character of the first death.

We have already argued that the penalty attaching to the eating of the forbidden tree was simply this, and did not at all (as so many assume) include in it “all that God purposed to inflict upon Adam and his posterity in case of transgression!” Where is the least warrant for this? The actual result to us of that primal sin we have had the apostle state to us, and that is (so far as infliction from God is concerned) physical death, as His stamp upon a fallen condition, His judgment of a race corrupted from its beginning.

Herein lay of course the possibility, nay, probability, of a final sentence. But God is in no haste with judgment; and this was the beginning of the world’s history, not the close of it. Who, save for the need of making a system, could imagine the beneficent Creator of man, at once, and for the personal offence of our first parents, adjudging all their descendants to eternal death? Scripture at any rate has naught of it, and we are seeking to follow Scripture in its simplest facts and statements.

It may be urged, however, that as death followed it shows that Adam’s posterity shared in Adam’s judgment.

But that is a very different thing, as a little consideration will assure us. Death was indeed God’s judgment upon the race as vitiated and corrupt, but -- inasmuch as it was corrupted by another’s sin and not its own -- a judgment which was a merciful discipline for it, a witness to the fallen creature of its own condition, an appeal to it by its own frailty and helplessness to look higher than itself for help, an admonition so to number its days that its heart might be applied to wisdom. What should we do without the thorns and thistles which grow out of the ground cursed for man’s sake? What should we do without the need of the sweat of the brow? What, without the ministry of death itself? Surely a blessing is in this curse; it is an evil which is good; the discipline of the Father of spirits for our profit, the chastening of a holy hand that we may be partakers of His holiness, and in its own nature contrasted with that final sentence which is, “Depart from Me, ye cursed.” The first death and the second death are contrasts and not the same.

Such is its nature, if we consider it as the fruit simply of Adam’s sin, its legacy to his descendants. It was the wise and tender foresight of Him who saw the floodgates of evil pierced and the awful outbreak of iniquity before it came; and ordained this as its corrective, as One who did not intend to give up His creatures to it, to perish through helplessness alone. If by one man sin was entering into the world, then “death by sin” was the Divine ordinance. And right and good every prodigal proclaims it whom the pressure of hunger causes to think of a Father’s house: every psalmist that ever was owns with Israel’s sweet Psalmist,

Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I have kept thy words {Psa. 119:67}.

This is death as an appendage to a fallen condition; but if we left it there, there would be manifest incongruity with much of Scripture and of fact as well. In order to have the whole statement and the full harmonious truth, we must look further. We must distinguish between death as we should rightly consider it, as introduced into the world through another’s sin, and, on the other hand, as brought upon us through our own personal transgressions. The Old Testament is full of this last subject, which is found also in the New. At Corinth, where they were profaning the Lord’s supper, many were weak and sickly among them, and many slept (1 Cor. 11:30). And the apostle John tells us of a “sin unto death” for which he does not say that one should pray (1 John 5:16).

But the Old Testament it is that insists ever upon death as the penalty of personal transgression, and this is just what the text means, on all sides so little understood.

The soul that sinneth it shall die {Ezek. 18:4, 20}. Even this is not the second death, which the Old Testament knows nothing of. It is a sinner dying in his sins and under judgment, and which leaves its boding shadow upon the future beyond death. But we must reserve this subject for another chapter.

Death is then a provisional, not a final, sentence. It is a corrective discipline from the Father of spirits in view of the entrance of sin into the world. It is in its own nature temporary and to pass away, as Scripture declares it will. As the separation of soul and body, it is a necessary hindrance to
the full blessing of the righteous, and a hindrance also to the 
full judgment of the wicked. For the righteous and for the 
wicked alike, although with opposite effect, it is finally done 
away at the resurrection.

Let us look at some Scriptures which in this way get their 
proper significance, and in this way only.

First, the Lord’s answer to the Sadducees touching the 
resurrection (Luke 20:27-38). These Sadducees were 
consistent in their unbelief, and, as they denied resurrection,
they denied the existence also of the spirit in the separate 
state; and it is this last the Lord takes up and proves, in order 
by it to prove the resurrection.

God says at the bush,

I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the 
God of Jacob [Ex. 3:6].

But, if He were then in that relationship to them, they must be 
existent for Him to be so. He could not be the God of the 
dead (in the Sadducean sense of death, the nonexistent), but 
avive to Him, and so they are.

But this apparently proves but a separate existence of the 
spirit in death, and that has ever been the difficulty about it. 
How does proving the existence of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob 
in the separate state prove resurrection? Very simply after all. 
For what is death upon this view of it? Manifestly the 
infringement of God’s creative plan. He had not made man a 
spirit merely, but a spirit embodied. A spirit disembodied 
could not be God’s intention, for His gifts and calling are 
without repentance, The body therefore must rise again.

And this is no forced argument. I doubt not it was one 
well understood in that day, when men were accustomed to a 
sort of reasoning which the clear light of the New Testament 
(wherein life and incorruption have been brought to light) has 
set aside as unnecessary to those who have it.

Take an illustration from a fact before our eyes. The 
preservation of the Jews as a nation after over eighteen 
hundred years of dispersion into all lands, is one of the 
standing miracles whereby God rebukes unbelief in His 
prophectic word. But what does it argue to those who believe 
in His hand as guiding surely and not doubtfully, all things 
according to His resistless counsels? If we must say this is the 
finger of God, to what does it point? Surely, to that national 
resurrection from the dead, which yet in His own time He 
will accomplish. This is the simple, prompt conclusion of 
faith. It may serve to illustrate the connection of thought 
between the belief in the separate spirit and the resurrection 
of the body.

And we may note that the inspired historian seems in 
some way to connect them, when, Paul having proclaimed 
himself in the council a Pharisee, and son of a Pharisee, he 
adds in explanation:

For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither 
angel, nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess both 
{Acts 23:8}.

God says, “I am the God of Abraham,” in the present, 
actually. He could not assert, “I am the God of Abraham” as

a matter of present relationship, when none existed. To say so 
is to speak deceitfully for Him. “I am the God of Abraham”
to human ears necessarily inferred what God was then at the 
time He spoke. Nor was there here prophecy at all; no 
announcement of the future, nothing that could involve the 
thought of the future. God could no more say He was the God 
of Abraham while there was no Abraham to be God to, than 
He could say, I am raising the dead, a thousand years before the 
resurrection.

“I am the God of Abraham” then involved the fact of 
Abraham’s existence when He spoke. He could not be the 
God of one who had no existence, could not be in relationship 
to a nonentity, could not be (in the Sadducees’ thought of 
what the dead were) “The God of the dead.” The survival 
thus of Abraham in his most important part implied “the 
restoration of the body to life.”

Death is then in its own nature temporary. As the 
derangement of God’s thought of man in his creation, it must 
of necessity be set aside. It is the provisional appendage of 
a scene into which sin has entered, but where God’s mercy also 
abounds. In its nature it could not be final. In fact it is to be 
done away.

Death does not enter then into the final judgment. That is 
expressly stated to be “after death.” It is appointed unto 
men once to die, but after this the judgment. There are 
men we wot of who say it is appointed unto men twice to die, 
-- that the second death is of the same nature as the first, and 
that death thus is the judgment. Let us examine carefully then 
this text also.

There is one fruitful cause of misapprehension of it on all 
sides. The sentence produced is not understood to be, what 
upon the face of it is, part of a larger sentence in which the 
portion of the saved is distinguished from the general lot of 
men.

Now once in the end of the world hath He [Christ] 
appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And 
as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the 
judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of 
many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear 
the second time without sin unto salvation (Heb. 9:26-28).

There is a manifest contrast here -- a designed one. The 
express object of the passage is to display the efficacy of the 
work of Christ. He had appeared to put away sin by His 
sacrifice. Sin had brought in death, had created a necessity of 
judgment. How then did Christ’s work meet these effects of 
sin for those who believed? Were death and judgment their 
common portion still? Alas, the general answer has been in 
the affirmative, and thus the meaning has been almost taken 
away from this pregnant and wonderful statement. Men say 
still, with the woman of Tekoa of old, “We must needs die,” 
and as for judgment, to deny that a saint shall be judged 
would be by the mass considered heresy. Let us seek to get 
“full assurance of understanding” as to this.

First, as to death, is it a “must needs” that the believer 
die? Did Enoch die? Did Elijah? Will the saints that are “alive 
and remain unto the coming of the Lord”? “We shall not all
sleep,” says the apostle, “but we shall all be changed.” Thus
death, with the apostle, is no necessity for the believer. We
die, not must. We may meet it as the providential
dispensation of an infinitely wise God -- not as wrath, not as
penalty, nor necessarily even as judgment, in that sense in
which the Father judgeth His own children. 18 It is
to depart and be with Christ, which is far better
{Phil. 1:3}
-- to be
absent from the body and present with the Lord
{2 Cor. 5:8}.
Thus has Christ
abolished death, and brought life and incorruption to light
by the gospel {2 Tim. 1:10}.
This is simple to the one who refuses the unbelief of the
Sadducees as to death. In Scripture and for faith (but oh, how
little alas, faith is with us) death is no more the portion of the
saint. It is abolished. And, if alive and remaining to that
coming of the Lord for which we are taught daily to wait, he
shall never even “sleep” at all.

And now as to judgment after death. The plain
unequivocal statement of our Lord has been obscured to us by
an unhappy translation; but there is no question as to the
simple fact that in John 5:24-29 the word used both for
“condemnation” and “damnation” is the simple word for
“judgment.” Alford and many others give, “He that heareth
my voice, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting
life, and shall not come into judgment”; and again, “They that
have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment.”

The common thought is, “We shall have to come into
judgment, but we hope not to be condemned.” The Scripture
truth is, if such as we are at our best came into judgment, we
could not but be condemned. Hear the Psalmist express it
when as a servant of the Lord He yet pleads:

Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord; for in
thy sight shall NO FLESH LIVING be justified (Psa. 143:2).

To this fact, Scripture everywhere bears witness. The solemn
final scene, as Rev. 20 pictures it, before the great white
throne, we shall look at in detail at a future time. But the
second chapter of Romans is sufficiently plain as to the issue
of judgment for those who come into it. Let us look briefly at
the apostle’s words.

Mark then, in the first place, it is
the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus
Christ (Rom. 2:16).

The principle, too, of the judgment is clearly stated. God
will render to every man according to his deeds; to them
who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory
and honour and immortality (incorruption), eternal life:
but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the
truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,

18. For of course I do not speak of such cases as those of the Corinthians,
or of a “sin unto death.”
another matter, and should not be confounded with this. As a question of reward, we shall receive for the deeds done in the body, and “suffer loss” or find gracious recompense accordingly. That is not denied but affirmed. But we are not judged according to our works, we do not come into judgment, if our works do. There is a very manifest distinction between these things.

Having seen the Scripture testimony as to death and judgment, let us return to look at these as the portion of men, from which Christ’s work delivers His own.

It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment {Heb. 9:27}.

For the saint on the other hand,

Christ was once offered, to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for Him shall He appear without sin {Heb. 9:28}

-- or rather

apart from sin,
as having no more to settle that question --

apart from sin unto salvation.

“Once death,” then, and “after this, judgment” is the lot of the unsaved. How clear this makes the distinction between the two! Death temporary and to give place to judgment, which is not in death but afterwards. That judgment is indeed the second death. But therefore the second death is not the repetition of the first: it is cancelled forever when the judgment of the second death begins. Is it so ill-named “a death that never dies”? -- a death in which they who suffer it never die? How vain to dispute the unspeakably solemn fact!
Chapter 23

The Ministry Of Death

If death has then the place which we have seen it has, it is no longer a strange thing to hear of a “ministration of death”; nay, it is rather just what we should have reason to expect, that God would take up the fact of it, and of the condemnation of man which it involves, and press it home upon the hearts and consciences of men in some distinct and positive way. We should expect from His goodness that He would not be content in letting the fact speak for itself, but would give it a voice and utterance which should be in itself -- however much men might shut their ears to it -- an unmistakable one.

Now this is precisely what the apostle says he has done. The character of the law -- of the Old Testament therefore -- is that it was a

ministration of death

-- a ministration of condemnation {2 Cor. 3:7-9}.

Death was therein taken up as a moral, yea, spiritual teacher of a lesson most humbling to man’s pride indeed, and therefore most difficult to learn; but a lesson, when learnt, of the very greatest value. It was made a teacher of the inadequacy of all human righteousness, the impotence of human power, the impossibility of a corrupt and fallen creature standing in the presence of a holy God: all this we shall find in the Jewish system when we understand that the death it speaks of --

the soul that sinneth it shall die {Ezek. 18:4, 20}

-- is not the yet unrevealed second death, but “death” in its ordinary sense. This once established satisfactorily, we shall find in the Old Testament a new light, and the perfect self-consistency of truth everywhere in its utterances.

And this will be established, as soon as it is seen (what should be manifest as to the holy law of the unchangeable God) that the obedience it required was absolute, perfect obedience, and nothing short. This the New Testament, no less than the Old, abundantly declares. We have already had the apostle’s statements as to this, which shows that Christianity itself also had not modified the law’s requirements. It is the great apostle of the Gentiles, the man who, if any did, understood God’s grace in the gospel, who assures us that,

as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them (Gal. 3:10).

It is again an apostle, who is considered by many (however improperly) the apostle of law, who unites with Paul in this testimony, that

whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10).

Unswerving, perfect obedience was therefore what the law required.

To this, however, may be thought opposed the whole system of appointed sacrifices and the forgiveness that in this way the very law itself proclaimed. But the objection would apply in that case to the apostles’ teaching, who certainly were not ignorant of so plain a fact. We must take it up, however, a little particularly, and try to show the consistency of these two things.

There were, as all will easily remember, two givings of the law. The first time (which we shall find as history in Ex. 19-24) it was pure law, with no whispered word even of mercy -- no provision for failure or for sin. Moses is then called up into the Mount to receive from God’s hand the tables of stone “written with the finger of God.” There, in the Mount, he does indeed see the pattern of other and of heavenly things, for God would show us that mercy is already in His heart, as it surely is. But no word of this is yet spoken to the people, and as actual institution finds no place till the covenant of the law as first given is transgressed and set aside. As far as the people is concerned, it is all as yet law, pure and simple. Under this they fail utterly, turning their deliverer-God,

their glory, into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass {Psa. 106:20}.

The tables of the covenant are broken; judgment is executed on the guilty people; and all, on this ground, is over forever (Ex. 32).

But the blessed God has still resources in Himself, and again He takes up the people. Again the law is given, word for word the same, and not a jot abated; for the holiness of God’s nature can know no change. But now we hear the new glad tones of long-suffering goodness and mercy. Jehovah declares Himself, as He did not before. His glory shines out as not yet it had. He is
the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin [Ex. 34:6, 7].

This is new ground; and yet not altogether new, nor grace unmixed. He is still the Lawgiver, still in a covenant of works with His people --

and that will by no means clear the guilty [Ex. 34:6, 7].

This is the new basis upon which everything is now to rest. It is law, but it is not pure law. It is law in a mediator’s hand, ministered in mercy, yet not lessening its requirement: an apparent contradiction, and in reality two principles united which cannot unite really in the justification of man. God says so: He cannot clear -- cannot justify; and it is of the law thus given, the second time, the apostle speaks when he calls the law “written and engraven in stones,”

the ministration of death

and

the ministration of condemnation (2 Cor. 3:7, 9).

It is of this law in the hand of the mediator, that he says again,

As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse {Gal. 3:10}.

If we look at the scene described in the book of Exodus (33, 34), we shall find that God really gave witness at the very time He gave it, of its true character, although in a typical way, the well-known characteristic of Old Testament revelation. When Moses the mediator, and thus the representative of the people, prays,

I beseech Thee, show me thy glory,

God answers:

I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee, and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

But He adds -- and the words are the key-note of the Old Testament dispensation --

THOU CANST NOT SEE MY FACE; for there shall no man see Me, and live. And He said, There is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock; and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and cover thee with my hand while my glory passeth by; and I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back parts; but my face shall not be seen [Ex. 33:18-23].

And thus, as at the first time of the giving of the law, the flame of fire upon the quaking mount hid, not revealed, the Divine Goodness; so even now while goodness covered the human eyes not yet able to behold face to face the One in whose presence he stood, still it covered them; and what Moses actually saw, as the mediator of that dispensation, was GOD WITH HIS FACE TURNED AWAY.

And that remained the feature of that old economy. It was what the veil before the holiest declared: the way into the holiest was not yet manifested. None could stand in His presence. All had sinned, and having sinned, came short of the glory of God. Death, not life -- condemnation, not righteousness, was the ministration of the law.

God might forgive iniquity, transgression and sin. But He could by no means clear the guilty. He could make known His long-suffering, and say,

When the wicked man turneth from his wickedness, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive (Ezek. 18:27).

But who ever did what was lawful, as measured by a law whose death sentence is upon every breach of it? Who ever broke off his sins so as to be fit for the presence of a “holy, holy, holy” God? Never one!

There is none righteous, no, not one was the law’s verdict;

There is none that doeth good, no, not one {Rom. 3:10-12}.

And the veil hung before God’s presence unlifted, save as once a year the typical blood was put upon the mercy-seat; and then it dropped again, impenetrable as ever, for the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin. {See Heb. 10:4.}

Thus, through all the old economy: until one day -- marked out from other days by a darkness such as never was! And when that passed, the darkness in which God dwelt had also passed.

The veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom {Matt. 27:51; Mark 15:38}.

God was no more

in the darkness (1 Kings 8:12);

He was

in the light; (1 John 1:7).

The way into God’s presence was no more barred up: Christ was

the Way (John 14:6).

And instead of, as heretofore, One who could not clear the guilty, there was revealed the glory of divine grace, justifying the ungodly (Rom. 4:5).

One would gladly enlarge upon this unspeakable loving-kindness -- would gladly apply this healing assurance to any soul conscious of the double character of evil attaching to man. He is “ungodly”; true, but he is more, much more than that: he is “without strength” also. Christ died for him as such (Rom. 5:6). As such, he is welcomed at once to the blood which cleanses from sin, and the grace which strengthens and enables for holiness. But our subject is now the character of the law rather: let us turn back to consider what this involves as to the Old Testament.

God was, then, by a dispensation of law, shutting man up to mercy. He was running the plough-share into the soil to prepare it for the seed of the gospel. He was not by it saving: He was convicting and condemning. The New Testament constantly asserts this as the object of the law. The apostle speaks of it as what all Christians were well aware of:

We know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth might be
stopped, and all the world be come guilty before God {Rom. 3:19}.

By the law is the knowledge of sin {Rom. 3:20}.
The law worketh wrath {Rom. 4:15}.
The law entered that the offence might abound {Rom. 5:20}.

If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the Scripture hath concluded (shut up together) all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe {Gal. 3:22}.

I need not quote more.

But now, if such was the scope and object of the law -- if God by it was seeking to produce conviction of a sinful and helpless condition, and to cast men thus upon His mercy -- how simple that He should take up in it the solemn reality of that death which had entered in by sin, and which was constantly appealing to man in every possible way -- the broad seal of condemnation, wide as humanity -- upon the fallen creature! How irresistible the conviction of what man was, and where he was, in the eye of a holy God, if He should come in and say to him, meaning just what it says:

The man that doeth these things shall live in them {see Ezek. 20:11, 13, 21; Gal. 3:12};
The soul that sinneth, it shall die {Ezek. 18:4, 18:20}.

This interpretation, strange as it is to many, is just the perfect consistency with the whole design and meaning of the law. If no one under it ever escaped death (with one exception evidently on another ground) people think it impossible that death (in the ordinary sense) could have been meant. They forget that no one ever did fulfil it, that there was none righteous, no, not even one. How could they then escape it? And if God in the law were not judging for eternity, but as a present thing, to cast men in the conviction of their lost condition upon His mercy, how consistent with this plan that He should make the judgment upon that condition a thing apparent to every one under it, instead of something yet unseen, and which eternity alone should too late reveal.

Had God said, as we have made Him say, “The soul that sinneth shall die the second death,” they might have comforted themselves with the assurance that no one could know much about that, and written placid lies upon the gravestones, and lost the whole reality of the ruin they were in. Doubtless many did do so in spite of all, for light never opens eyes closed to it; still God had borne witness -- none the less, if they rejected it, as men still reject -- that they were fallen creatures, who had confirmed by their own act and deed the original sentence under which they lay. Every white hair in a man’s head, every wrinkle in his brow, was thus God’s witness in a double way, a solemn appeal which one would think irresistible. Death was not that for which man was created. No; it was God “turning man to destruction.”

Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath; we spend our years as a tale that is told . . . So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom (Psa. 90:8, 9, 12).

But not only in this way was man’s lost condition manifest, but the judgment of the law still left God free to the grace which was under the veil, while yet the veil was not removed. Had God said, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die the second death,” none could contest with Him the justice of that sentence; but it would seem to bind Him to eternal judgment, to universal justice -- divorced from grace. As it was, He did not bind Himself so that He could not show mercy to the broken and contrite, outside of the law and its penalty altogether. The law could do its work as convicting man of sin; and on the ground of human effort and human righteousness shut him up in condemnation, bring him to hopeless self-despair, yet leave God free to show mercy. It could in short tie man’s hands, as to all working out of claim upon God. It could not tie God’s hands as to mercy shown to man.

As to the fact itself, that the law does really speak of the first and not the second death (and there is no death between) is a thing which, when we examine it, seems impossible to question. That he that honoured father and mother should “live long in the land” of Canaan, is imbedded in the heart of the ten commandments. And in Deut. 4:40, where Moses is urging the people to keep these very commandments, what does he put before them as the result of their being kept, but that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth which the Lord thy God giveth thee forever.

Let any one who doubts read on and on through the entire Pentateuch, if he will, and let him find if he can any penalty pronounced, or any reward promised, of which he has the least proof that it refers to a future state at all. Doubtless death, as the result of rebellion against Him who had created man, turning him to destruction, cast its shadow over the state beyond, which the people of the old dispensation certainly had knowledge of. That I have affirmed. It is the very thing which gives significance to it such as I am speaking of. But everywhere the legal promise is a life of blessing in the land, and everywhere the legal curse is the perishing from the earth.

Pass on to the New Testament, and look at that which is the very central feature in the whole scene, and what is the “curse of the law” which the Lord of glory bore?

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, as it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree {Gal. 3:13}.

The hanging on a tree was only the outward expression of the curse, surely, and not the whole thing; and so, as I have urged, is death. This is death in its most shameful form; but it is not the second death, nor does the law speak of that.

Strange as it may seem, and inconsistent too with the known belief of the Jews before our Lord’s time, there is not really one passage in the Old Testament in which either heaven is spoken of as the abode of the righteous, or hell (in our present sense of it) as the abode of the lost. The word “sheol” which we have already looked at, is the equivalent of
hades, “the unseen,” and is applied always and only to the death state. This abundantly confirms the belief that the death threatened, even to impenitence and unbelief, was death in our ordinary understanding of it -- death as the judgment of God, and throwing its awful shadow over the eternity beyond.

The legal dispensation was intended as a means of reaching the consciences of men. It was part of a method of grace to prepare for the coming Christ, by convicting men of guilt and of helplessness, shutting them up to the grace which was then to be revealed. And thus it was that there was a “due time” for Christ to come, as the apostle declares, when this purpose of the law should be accomplished. Thus

when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly (Rom. 5:6).

In the meanwhile, for individual need a way of cleansing and forgiveness was provided (typical largely) in which broken and contrite souls found hope of mercy. But the system was, as a whole, a ministration of death and condemnation.

And for this purpose, the death, which was the broad seal of condemnation upon universal man, was taken up and used in the penal code of the divine government in Israel: man thus having under his eyes a temporal retribution, which would witness to God’s wrath upon sin, and his own condition as a sinner under it.

But that was not all the light shed upon the future, and we must look at what yet remains in some little detail: first, the prophetic landscape of the Old Testament, which is important in many ways with regard to our present subject, and then the meaning and character of its typical teaching.
Chapter 24

The Purification And Blessing
Of The Earth

Let us now seek to arrive at some definite conclusion as to the prophetic future portrayed in the Old Testament. It is quite necessary to do so in order properly to understand the predictions of coming judgment which are scattered through its pages.

First, then, the horizon is earthly, and extends neither to heaven nor to hell. It is recognized that the souls of the departed exist indeed in sheol, but that it is as yet a land of darkness, unexplored and little known to living men. It is recognized, too, that there will be a resurrection, and the Redeemer will stand in the latter day upon the earth, and Job in his flesh will see Him. But there is no dwelling in heaven openly revealed, and no hell, in the true sense. I do not say there were no beliefs upon these points, but we shall consider these hereafter.

A text or two here will give us the Old Testament range.

First, what the psalmist says: --

The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord’s; but the earth has He given to the children of men (Psa. 115:16).

There is no other statement anywhere than that, save that Enoch had not died, but the Lord had taken him; and Elijah, too, had gone up in a chariot of fire to heaven. But there is no statement anywhere that heaven is to be man’s dwelling-place. God dwells there, but into his “hill” the righteous ascend, and in His “holy place” on earth they stand (Psa. 24:3, comp. verse 1). Zion is where Jehovah rests forever (Psa. 132:13, 14).

Then as to judgment or reward --

For evil-doers shall be cut off; but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace (Psa. 37:9-11).

Again:

The righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner (Prov. 11:31).

This is the universal strain. The God of Judgment is going by judgment to purify the earth, and make it the abode of righteousness and peace. Transgressors are to be rooted out of it. The whole earth is to be full of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

These are the promises. But whose? Mark well, there is not one word yet of the Father’s house or of the heavenly places. The inheritance is of earth only. The prospect is what we are accustomed to call millennial. Whose then are these Old Testament promises? If I take the Old Testament itself, they are Israel’s.

Israel shall bud and blossom, and fill the face of the earth with fruit (Isa. 27:6).

But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up unto the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it (Micah 4:1-4).

Thus sealed with Jehovah’s seal is Israel’s claim to the Old Testament promises. If still we doubt, let the apostle of the Gentiles assure us whether we are to read the name typically or literally here.

I have great heaviness, says he,

for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh; who are Israelites, to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory and the covenant, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, AND THE PROMISES (Rom. 9:3,4).

If we have no doubt then, as to who were Paul’s kinsmen according to the flesh, we can have none as to whose are these Old Testament “promises.” They are literally Israel’s spite of her present dispersion and casting off. For this she must of course be gathered and converted; and so she shall be, but it is interesting and important to ask when this national
restoration and conversion shall be.

Scripture leaves us in no doubt either upon this point. The same apostle intimates to us, what seems so strange and hard to be received now, that it will not be by the going forth of the gospel as at present; that the partial blindness of Israel will not cease, and all Israel -- the nation as a whole -- will not be saved, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

As concerning the gospel, he adds,

they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes: for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance (Rom. 11:25-29).

Thus the divine purpose holds, announced in the ancient Scriptures. God has not dispossessed the people of His choice. Yet for the present, blindness in part is theirs, and they are enemies (God is holding them as such) with regard to the gospel. Not till the full number of the Gentiles is brought in by it will "all Israel" be saved.

And then, how, if not by the gospel? Scripture answers:

They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born: in that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem . . . and the land shall mourn, every family apart . . . In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness (Zec. 12:10-13:1).

When shall they see Christ thus, and how? With the mental eye only, or actually? That too is answered: --

Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also who pierced Him, and all kindreds of the earth -- or tribes of the land,

as the Greek might read --

shall wait because of Him {Rev. 1:7}. 19

Here then is Israel's national repentance, and how it is produced. It is then, when the Lord Jesus comes, their eyes shall see Him, and thus Israel's blessing, and that of the earth, follows, not precedes, that for which we as Christians wait, to receive the fulfilment of heavenly, and not earthly, promises. We thus see how it is that the gospel, as now going forth, will have to come to an end, and the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. All is consistent here, for it is true; and the present gospel dispensation is thus seen to be an interval in Israel's prophetic history, a time of the suspension of her promises, only suspended, to find, as soon as this has run out, their full accomplishment.

And this is the uniform tenor of Scripture. The last chapter of Zechariah proves convincingly that the Lord God and His holy ones will have come, and His feet have stood on the Mount of Olives, before He is

King over all the earth, and in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one {Zech. 14:9}.

The second psalm also speaks with perfect plainness of the heathen being given to Christ for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession; but often, and rightly as that is quoted as a millennial prophecy, it is not always clearly seen that, to take possession, He must break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel {Psa. 2:9}.

And Revelation adds distinctly the promise to him that overcometh, that he shall share with the Lord this rod of iron (Rev. 2:25-27).

Thus again, therefore, when in the visions of the latter part of the book the Lord is seen coming forth from heaven to the judgment of the earth (Rev. 19), it is after the marriage of the Lamb has taken place in heaven; and the armies of heaven that follow the white-horsed rider are clad with the covering of the bride herself -- the fine linen which is the "righteousness of saints." Then follows that millennial picture with which we must become more familiar at a future time.

It is not possible to enlarge on all this now. But it needs to be seen in order to get rightly hold of two very different epochs of judgment which, if confounded, confuse the whole subject of the prophetic future. There is a judgment of the quick, and a judgment of the dead; and these are quite distinct from one another. The judgment of the living is at the coming of the Lord, and before the millennium. The judgment of the dead is after it, not when the Lord comes to the earth, but when the earth and the heavens flee away (Rev. 19, 20). The judgment of the living is a purification of the earth in view to its blessing, that the meek may inherit, as we have partly seen. The judgment of the dead is the final award at the close of all, when every one not a sharer in the "first resurrection" shall receive his discriminate award.

It is of the judgment of the living that the Old Testament passages speak, which predict in so many ways the destruction of the wicked. As we have seen, its predicted future is of earthly blessing, which such a judgment is needed to produce. The obstinately wicked perish out of it; then the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness (Isa. 26:9). Then our Melchizedek becomes the Prince of peace; but the character of millennial times is righteous, authoritative rule, in which (if we are to take Scripture simply) the saints of the first resurrection reign with Him, 20 who is the manifest King

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19. It is well-known that in Greek, as in some other languages, there is one word which stands for "earth" and "land." I do not insist on the latter, for it is quite according to the character of the New Testament to be of greater breadth than the Old. But the reference to Zech. 12:10 cannot be doubted.

20. Rev. 3:21 may help some to distinguish between a throne in which Christ now sits, and which, being the throne of absolute Godhead, the Father's throne, mere man can never share, and a throne which as Son of
of kings, and Lord of lords.

There is one glimpse beyond this millennial condition in Old Testament prophecy, but it is only a glimpse. The Lord (in Isa. 65:17; 66:22) announces:

Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

The next verses return evidently to the millennial condition, before sin and death are finally done away. Again, He identifies the new earth with Israel’s promises:

For, as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make, shall remain before Me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain [Isa. 66:22].

But this verse, too, is parenthetical, and the next again returns to the millennium. It is plain, however, that the apostle Peter refers to these passages when he says,

We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness (2 Pet. 3:13).

The only expansion of this is in Rev. 21:1-5. We cannot dwell upon it now. It is only added as giving us the full range of Old Testament prophecy.

As I have said, it is to the purificatory judgment of the earth, which introduces the millennial blessing, that a mass of passages relate, which are brought forward to prove the extinction of the wicked. When only one “day of judgment” is thought of -- and that the judgment of the dead after their resurrection -- such passages do indeed seem to have force in this way; but it is gone as soon as we perceive their true application. And this is as true of some New Testament passages, as it is universally of the Old. It is only of the Old we are speaking now. Let us consider some of these texts, and they will illustrate the truth of the statements we have been advancing.

The Psalms abound in reference to this time. Passing over the second and eighth, which connected give us the prophetic outline, let us look at some more detailed statements in the ninth: --

For Thou hast maintained my right and my cause; Thou satest in the throne judging right. Thou hast rebuked the heathen, Thou hast destroyed the wicked; Thou hast put out their name for ever and ever . . . But the Lord shall endure forever: He hath prepared his throne for judgment: and He shall judge the world in righteousness, He shall minister judgment to the people uprightness . . . Sing praises to the Lord, which dwelleth in Zion; declare among the people his doings. . . . The wicked shall be turned into sheol -- all the nations that forget God [Psa. 9:4-17].

These words need no interpreter, if we will only read them literally as they stand, and not supplement them with other statements which have to do with a very different subject.

The 37th Psalm has been more than once referred to. It should be carefully read in connection with our present theme. But pass on to the 58th, and listen to language which people quote of eternal punishment; it is again judgment upon living enemies: --

Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth; break out the teeth of the young lions, O Lord. Let them melt away as waters which run continually; when He bendeth his bow to shoot his arrow, let them be as cut in pieces. As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away; like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun. Before your pots can feel the thorns, He shall take them away, both living, and in His wrath. The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash his footsteps in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily, He is a God that judgeth in the earth [Psa. 58:6-11].

In a similar way speak the 83rd Psalm, the 101st, the 118th, the 144th; but there is no use quoting testimony of the same kind repeated. But we must look a little at the prophets.

Isaiah describes in his first chapters “the day of the Lord of hosts” upon the pride of man, and here again we find similar expressions: --

Therefore saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease Me of mine adversaries, and avenge Me of mine enemies; . . . . Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness; and the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed [Isa. 1:24, 27, 28].

Again (chapter11): --

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots, and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him . . . with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall He slay the wicked [Isa. 11:1, 2, 4].

Then follows a well-known picture of millennial peace and of the regathering and reunion of Ephraim and Judah.

Ezekiel gives us the principle of these judgments, and applies them to God’s dealings with Israel; see especially Ezek. 33. But even to refer to the passages which treat of the

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20. (...continued)

Man He calls His own (cp. Rev. 1:13), and which He promises to share with the overcomers here.

The future millennial kingdom is thus clearly distinguished from the kingdom of Christ as Son of God (Col. 1:13) in which we now are. That future one is when He takes His great power and reigns in order to bring everything into subjection to God; and, having accomplished this, He delivers it up to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24).

One other caution. The reign of the saints with Christ over the earth does not imply a return to a fleshly condition, the gross Chitiasm of many of the ancients. The heavenly and earthly spheres are always separate, whatever the links of connection in that time when the new Jerusalem comes down out of heaven.

21. Only the atmospheric heavens, which are dissolved with the earth.

22. The second psalm has been already referred to; the eighth is applied by the apostle (Heb. 2:5-8) to Christ’s reign in the “world to come.” That this term applies to earth, not heaven, this eighth psalm witnesses, as does the expression of the apostle, “The habitable (earth) to come,” the expression translated “world” in Luke 3:1.
judgments themselves would fill up our space unduly. The theme is that of the prophets generally, but as a necessary step towards that blessing of Israel and the earth which fills everywhere the landscape of the future. One last testimony from the closing prophecy of the Old Testament is often quoted of eternal judgment, and with that we may leave the subject: --

For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth and grow as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts (Mal. 4:1-3).

Now this is, as stated, the time of the earth’s day-dawn: the time when the sun rises. At present it is “night,” although a night “far spent.” This harmonizes the passage with all the other prophecies of the same time. It is earth’s judgment in view of earth’s blessing.

We have still to look at the bearing of the typical system of the Old Testament upon our present subject.
Chapter 25

Old Testament Shadows

We have mentioned it as an apparent contradiction to our view of the limited range of the Old Testament future, that the belief of the people plainly went beyond it. Not only does the epistle to the Hebrews tell us that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob confessed themselves pilgrims upon earth, and looked for a “heavenly country,” but also the very word used by our Lord for hell, Gehenna, seems to have been in use among the people before our Lord’s time in that very way. This implies a knowledge apparently in opposition to the statements of the last chapters. But any one need only read carefully the first half of the book of Genesis, to be quite clear at least as to Abraham that there is no promise at all of heaven to him recorded there. How then did he obtain the assurance of there being in store for him “a heavenly country”?

One of two things could alone be supposed. There was either an unrecorded promise; or else he must have been given to see very plainly the typical character of things which we know were types of the very truths which the New Testament shows us he had received. Abraham’s call to Canaan was a marked symbol of our “heavenly calling.” How he could have understood it so, we may be at a loss to comprehend; yet there were some things that might have aided greatly in this.

Man had been shut out of Paradise two thousand years before, and Revelation ends with the picture of another Paradise, heavenly, not earthly, into which those that have “washed their robes” in the blood of the Lamb shall be admitted. No one doubts, save an infidel, that here again the first garden of God was a type of the other. Had the secret then been so shut up those two thousand years that no such meaning could be discerned?

Our suppositions in such a matter may not possess much value; but we are seeking to account in this way for the fact of Abraham’s having a knowledge of what does not appear upon the face of the inspired record. And, our attention being turned to this, we cannot but notice how much the divine way was in those early days to teach by type and figure. Did Abel know nothing of the significance of that “more excellent sacrifice” which by faith he offered? And if the “Seed of the woman” spoke, as we know it did speak, of a Deliverer to come, it spoke in the language of type of the bruising of the serpent’s head. In Abraham’s vision a figure spoke, though with some interpretation (Gen. 15). And may we not think that in the offering of Isaac, and the ram “provided” (Gen. 22:7-14) Abraham saw the day of Christ? (John 8:56). So Jacob’s ladder; and still more the mysterious night-wrestling, with its consequences of a halting thigh. Joseph’s dreams still exemplify this way of the divine teaching; and so the dreams which he interprets. In these and similar instances we find not merely the use of type and figure, but as things whose significance was known to the people in whose time they happened. They show us that these were the language of the day, certainly not wholly unintelligible when first uttered, however much they had to wait for the full revelation, when the appointed time should come.

Still more would this be so as the word of God grew gradually to its full proportion, and the meaning of the law came to be unfolded by the prophets, partial though the unfoldings were. And though the people were indeed blind and carnal, even this would not hinder the attainment of a certain body of truth as orthodoxy, while the point and power of it as bearing practically upon themselves might be denied. Such exactly was the later Pharisaism which carried with it the mass of the people. And such, in the history of the Christian Church, was the Nicene orthodoxy.

We may thus account for a knowledge in Israel beyond the apparent measure of the revelation that had been made to them. We have only to suppose (what is otherwise indicated also) that the purpose of the great system of types which their law embodied was not wholly unknown to them; and while the ministry of death and condemnation was allowed to have its full effect, and the consistency of purpose was maintained throughout, the light was allowed in another way to shine, even if dimly, through the wonderful imagery in the midst of which they moved.

This was surely divine wisdom. But let us seek to realize a little how far beyond the usual thought of it, this typical character of the Old Testament books extends.

All must of course admit (who are not infidels) the

23. It is used in the Targum of Jonathan, and in the Mishna, as well as commonly by the Jewish doctors since. It is not used in the Septuagint, save once in Josh. 18:16, for the literal “valley of Hinnom.”
figurative nature of the tabernacle and temple service. Priest, altar, sacrifice and sanctuary we must allow to have their inner meaning, for the New Testament so reads them all. But the New Testament finds such also in many other things: in the details of Israel’s history, their Passover and Red Sea deliverance, the manna, the water from the rock, etc.

All these things, says the apostle, happened unto them for enamples (literally, types), and are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world (or ages) are come (1 Cor. 10:11).

But this typical teaching is not even confined to Israel’s history: we have similar explanations as to Adam and his wife (Rom. 5; Eph. 5), the flood and the ark (1 Pet. 3), Melchizedek (Heb. 7), Abraham’s wives and sons (Gal. 4), with more than a hint as to the offering up of Isaac (Gal. 3:16, 17). Thus the history itself (while of course true and divine) is typical and prophetic also.

Guided thus far by the word of God, are we to stop where the actual explanation stops, and view the rest of it as history simply? Or are we to take this explanation rather as the establishment of a principle which is applicable all through the historical books? On the one hand, we must remember that many of the parables given us by our Lord are given without interpretation, and that we are left to find this in the figurative meaning of words elsewhere, and the doctrine of Scripture generally. On the other hand, who could ignore a deeper meaning in such a story as that of Joseph? Yet no express warrant of inspiration can be produced to show what is thus typically set forth.

It seems plain then that we are to apply the principle to the history in general. And hear what a field of research presents itself, and how marvellously light breaks out in new and unlooked-for places in the Old Testament!

From the first Eden, now some six thousand years back, we look on to another, brighter and more blessed, God’s own Paradise; where the tree of life, in new luxuriante and beauty, hangs its glorious fruitage over the perpetual stream that flows from the throne of God itself. Who can miss the comparison? -- albeit no doubt there is contrast also between these two. Who can fail to see that the one is designed to be the shadow of the other; and that the contrast is but to remind us that the first is only the shadow, and cannot be the very image of that before whose transcendent beauty all pictures and forecasts fail? The first scene is the earthly and the fleeting; the second, heavenly and eternal. Earth is made the mirror of heaven, as indeed to mortal eyes (it would seem) it must be, to convey to us what

eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, but which

God hath (nevertheless) revealed to us by His Spirit {1 Cor. 2:9, 10}.

When we look further at the New Testament vision of the New Jerusalem, we find a new and most interesting link with the Old Testament. Let any one compare that picture of future blessedness with which Ezekiel closes with this closing scene of our last Apocalypse, and say if the correspondence between the two can possibly be undesigned. The waters flowing from the house of the Lord, in Ezekiel, bring life even into the salt sea;

And by the river upon the bank thereof on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to its months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary, and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine (Ezek. 47:12).

Who can refuse the connection with the account in Revelation? --

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations (Rev. 22:1, 2).

Yet there are contrasts also between the two descriptions. In one case there are limits to the blessing which we do not find in the other, as for instance, the marshy places are yet given to salt (Ezek. 47:11); and the one is connected with an earthly city and a temple, while in the “heavenly Jerusalem” no temple is seen (Rev. 21:22).

Thus here again we find the true characters of Old Testament types. The earthly is the pattern of the heavenly. The law has a shadow of good things to come, but not the very image (Heb. 10:1).

But then this shows us that not only the past history but the prophetic future also contains its types. And that the millennial age, which the prophecy in Ezekiel speaks of, is in part at least a picture for earth’s inhabitants of things outside of earth. Visible signs of divine power will bring them face to face as it were with eternal realities. It will be in short, in a very important way, a final dispensation of sight, as those preceding it have been of faith. Introduced by the appearing of Christ, and the manifestation of the risen and perfected sons of God, the reign of righteousness will be maintained by a manifest a display of divine authority. And as on the one hand we have in Ezekiel seen pictured the blessings which reflect the heavenly and eternal ones, so on the other hand does Isaiah show us the shadow of its awful opposite, by which men will be brought as it were face to face with “eternal judgment”:

And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against Me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh (Isa. 66:23, 24).

Now these are words in part quoted by our Lord in

24. So, Heb. 6:5, miracles are called “powers of the world (or age) to come.”
reference to another judgment, of which the scene in Isaiah is only the earthly type. We shall shortly consider the difference between His words and those of the Old Testament prophet: for there is here (as before in the blessing) a contrast between the Old Testament and the New. But in Isaiah it is evidently an earthly scene, and a literal one. And what is surely a reality, is a symbol too. It is the designed contrast, openly manifested to the eyes of all in that day, with the living water flowing from Jerusalem. There was the symbol of eternal life, and here the shadow of the second death. Each with its tale to tell in the ears of the millennial nations -- this warning; that inviting: God’s last appeal to man this side of eternity.

This, then, gives us the Old Testament with some completeness,

and in full harmony with itself, and with that later revelation which supplements it, in which both life and incorruption are fully brought to light, and also the second death is seen to be what the first foreshadows, as it is that to which finally also it gives place. We must not, even here, expect to have done with figures, for still we see in part and we prophesy in part, and the things with which we have to do are yet seen but “through a glass, darkly” -- in a riddle, or enigma.

But whatever is given by inspiration of God is given for our instruction, and we must patiently and humbly take God’s word as He has written it, and see if it deals in “ambiguous metaphors,” and whether we may not find there the truth of which we are in search.
Chapter 26

The Ages Of Eternity --
The Question Stated

We are again stopped upon the threshold of the New Testament. Stopped, by the need of considering a question of the utmost importance to our present subject. Some gravely ask whether we have any proper word for eternity in Scripture, in the sense in which we ordinarily understand the word “eternity.” For even this the eccentricity of a few learned men would take from us by an etymological sleight of hand which is scarcely creditable to them.

We must inquire, therefore, for ourselves; although we shall not refuse the help that those more learned than we can pretend to be can give us in the matter.

The words with which we have to do are in the Greek but two: αἰων and αἰωνίας. They have been Anglicized into æon and æonal, and these terms, although not naturalized in our language, we may find it convenient for our present purpose to retain. The phrases “forever” and “forever and ever” in our common Bibles are literally “for the “æon,” “for the æons,” “for the æons of æons,” and akin to terms in the Old Testament where the Hebrew word “olam” takes the place of æon. “Eternal” and “everlasting” are both renderings of the word “æonial.”

First, it seems, we have to look at these words outside of Scripture, and in their roots and beginnings in ordinary Greek.

Dr. Beecher has taken up this subject in a rather elaborate way. We may sum up his statements in a much briefer way without detriment (we think) either to their clearness or their force.

He first of all examines the proof of αἰων meaning eternity from Aristotle’s derivation of it from aeι on, “always existing.” Two questions arise from this: Is this etymology correct? And if so, Is it decisive of the matter? On the first point he concedes it to be correct. As to the second he objects that aeι does not always, or even commonly, imply eternity, but life. He says:

From this abstract idea of ‘life’ it passed to a concrete form to denote a living spirit, an æon. The element of time in any form is not included in these original uses of the word.

Nevertheless, as the idea of duration is essentially connected with prolonged life, the word assumed an idea of time, and denoted the continuous time of life at any given point, and also the total duration of life, as our word age, denoting the time of the life of a man, also comes to denote the life-time of a generation, and then a period marked with some characteristic, as the antediluvian age, or the Mosaic age, and then those living in that period; so was it with the word αἰων.

The senses of the word thus far spoken of, occur for above five centuries in such writers as Homer, Hesiod, the Orphic Hymnists, Sophocles, Euripides, Pindar, Herodotus, Xenophon and Thucydides; but we do not yet come to the idea of eternity.

But Dr. Beecher admits that afterwards we do find the idea.

The original idea of life was (at length) subordinated and disappeared, and ideas of time alone took possession of the whole ground, and αἰων, instead of denoting life, came to denote time.

Thus it passed into the sense of eternity: for time,

when it is qualified by adjectives denoting totality, acquires the sense of eternity.

At first this qualifying adjective was expressed; but by degrees came to be sometimes implied and understood, and αἰων, with this understanding, was used for eternity.

Thus the expression εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα came sometimes to mean, for all time, that is, forever, and to eternity. In such cases Cremer says that it means ‘for the future,’ that is, for all time to come. But this same form that may thus denote eternity, may also denote for an age, or for a dispensation, in other circumstances.

There is still another use of αἰων, introduced by Plato to denote a kind of philosophical eternity, from which past, present, and future time are eliminated, and absolute being only is retained.

I have thus far followed Dr. Beecher’s account of the matter, which seems to be on the whole correct. The next step carries us into Scripture, and there we get upon more satisfactory as well as more familiar ground.

In the Septuagint the word αἰων is used as the constant equivalent of olam, and it is easy to ascertain the meaning of it therefore at the time this translation was made. Olam is not the life of a man, and the Homeric significance of aion is not
found. *Olam* is undoubtedly more often used for a limited time than for eternity. We have seen indeed that the Old Testament in general gives us only the shadows of what are eternal things; and the shadows are necessarily transient and to pass away. Yet to these the term is constantly applied. The covenant with Noah is a covenant of *olam*; and not less so the Mosaic statutes and ordinances, although these plainly were to pass away. So also even the “men of old” are “men of *olam*”; “the ancient landmark” is the “landmark of *olam*”; Israel’s yoke had been “broken from *olam,*” and so repeatedly.  

By no process of fair dealing then can *olam* (or *aion* in its use in the Septuagint) be said necessarily to mean eternity.

But again, it is used in the plural, where we can scarcely translate it otherwise than by “ages”:

the years of *ancient times* (Psa. 77:5),

are

the years of *ages*;

the generations of old (Isa. 51:9),

are the
generations of ages.

Here the same remarks as before, and not less forcibly, apply.

Moreover, there is in the Old Testament a way of expressing absolute eternity, which seems fully to recognize the inadequacy of *olam* definitely to express it by itself. This is by the addition to it of a word which may be taken as “and yet”: “for the *olam* and yet,” showing that beyond the *olam* there is a conception of time possible and actual. This phrase occurs some fourteen times in the Old Testament, and in one instance only it may have a more limited meaning

(Psa. 104:5), and here really limited by the nature of that to which it is applied.  

This then gives us the sense (so far as the Septuagint goes) of both *aeon* and *aonian*: for “*aonian*” is the word they use where in Hebrew would be found the noun *olam* with a governing preposition. A “covenant of *olam*” becomes thus an “*aonian* covenant,” and the “landmark of *olam*,” the “*aonian* landmark.” No one can avoid the conclusion that *olam* and *aon* in the Septuagint may very properly be taken to mean “age,” and that *aonian* in the same way means “belonging to the age, or *ages.*”

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25. Gen 6:4; Prov. 22:28; Jer. 2:20. It is rendered “old” or “of old” or “in old time,” in Deut. 32:7; Josh. 24:2; Job 22:15; Prov. 23:10; Eccl. 1:10; Isa. 46:9; 57:11; 58:12; 61:4, etc.

26. The other passages are: -- Exod. 15:18; Psa. 10:16; 21:4; 45:6, 17; 48:14; 53:8; 119:44; 145:1, 2, 21; Dan. 12:3; Mic. 4:5.
Chapter 27

The New Testament Solution
Of The Question

In the New Testament we find *aion* over and over again translated “world,” and not badly, if we only think of worlds in time instead of worlds in space, but more intelligible to us if rendered “age.” The “end of the world” in Matt. 13:24; 28:20 is thus in all these places “the completion of the age.” In Heb. 9:26 it is “the completion of the ages.” So we have “this world” and “the world to come,” “the children of this world,” “the princes of this world,” and similar expressions frequently. So again we have “ages to come,” as we have ages completed, and we look back to a time before these ages began. 27

Thus Scripture everywhere recognizes the fact of these successive ages, not purposeless divisions of time, but each a step in the accomplishment of divine counsels. We have in fact the very expression (and to it we shall have again to return),

the purpose of the ages (Eph. 3:11).
The ages, then, are dispensational periods, whose existence and character are not unimportant things for the student of the ways of Him whose
goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting
{Micah 5:2}.

It is to the

King of (these) ages
that the apostle therefore ascribes

“glory unto the ages of ages” (1 Tim. 1:17).

Him they all serve in various harmony of the one everlasting anthem wherewith all His works praise Him their Maker.

We need not wonder to find eternity, in Scripture, expressed in terms of these divinely constituted “ages.” This is done in a number of different ways, hidden very much in our version by vague and dissimilar phraseology, which has little of the beauty and appropriateness of the inspired original. The word *aion* is used nearly eighty times in this way in the New Testament, and above seventy times the word *ainios*. We have thus nearly a hundred and fifty occurrences to test the Scripture use of these expressions, and should be able to arrive at some satisfactory result.

Let us first look at the past ages. Of course from our point of view in time we can look at eternity as behind or before us. It is but one and the same eternity, of course; for there cannot in the nature of things be two: but to our conception there is a past and a future one. Let us gather up the expressions of the former first.

We find then that there are “ages” in the “ends” of which we are: for we read that

all these things happened unto them for types, and are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world (literally, the ages) are come (1 Cor. 10:11).

Connect that with the passage before cited from Hebrews (9:26), that

once at the completion of the ages hath (Christ) appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

These ages were the preparatory times of which we have been already thinking, when God by the ministry of condemnation and in other ways was shutting man up to the grace which Christ should show. Thus

when we were yet without strength, *in due time* Christ died for the ungodly {Rom. 5:6}.

This grace lay under the veil throughout these ages -- there, but lacking full expression. The “ends of the ages” having come, that expression has been found; and thus the “types” of Israel’s history, as well as the shadows of the law in a stricter sense, give to us their full weight of “admonition.”

In Col. 1:26 again, we hear of a mystery hidden “from ages and from generations,” and in Eph. 3:9 find a similar expression. There need be no doubt that here we have the self-same ages as before. Nor again, when Paul speaks of hidden wisdom

ordered *before* the ages, to our glory (1 Cor. 2:7).

These ages then are plainly finite, and so is the whole course of them; but we have two other expressions which are different from these. In them *aion* is used in the singular, and in one passage at least eternity must be meant.

Known unto God are all His works from *aion* (Acts 15:18),

where we cannot say “from the age.” In the other passages

27. Matt. 12:32; Luke 18:30; 20:34; 1 Cor. 2:6; Eph. 2:7; Col. 1:26; 1 Cor. 2:7 (before the ages).
the expression may seem less decisive: God has
spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have
been from aion (Luke 1:70);

and similarly,

By the mouth of His holy prophets from aion; Acts 3:21;
but in neither case would “the age” do at all. What age?
“From the beginning of the world” might suit the context, but
would be no translation: and outside that beginning of the
world is what? Surely, eternity. In this sense then “from
eternity” would suit, and all the occurrences would be in
harmony.

Once more a similar phrase occurs in the words of the
man to whom the Lord gave sight (John 9:32):

From the aion was it not heard that any man opened the
eyes of the blind,

and here again the meaning is simply, “It never was heard.”
Thus wherever “aion” is used in these expressions it cannot
be spoken of a particular age or dispensation, but seems
invariably to imply eternity.

This is all we have relating to the past. As regards the
future we have more and various phrases, which we may here
again classify accordingly as aion is used in the singular or in
the plural. The plural form we shall look at first as being the
most simple. We have here three expressions: --

(1) Simplest of all, in Jude 25, glory is ascribed to God
both now and to all the ages.

There is plainly no reason to limit this.

(2) More often we have, and less fully,
unto the ages.

This occurs eight times. Six times in ascriptions of praise to
God or to Christ (Matt. 6:13; Rom. 1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 16:27;
2 Cor. 11:31); once there is the statement -- as to the force of
which we shall presently inquire --

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and to the ages
(Heb. 13:8);

and once it is said of Christ, that
He shall reign over the house of Jacob unto the ages
(Luke 1:33).

In none of these passages is there reason to question that a
proper eternity is intended

(3) The third expression is a reduplicative form which plainly
conveys a much greater impression of immensity “to the ages
of ages.” And this is five times applied to the life of God
Himself: He

liveth unto the ages of ages (Rev. 4:9, 10; 5:14; 10:6; 15:7);

once to the resurrection-life of Christ (Rev. 1:18);

once to the kingdom of
our Lord and His Christ (Rev. 11:15);

once to the reign of the saints (Rev. 22:5);

ten times in ascriptions of glory to God (Gal. 1:5; Phil. 4:20;
1 Tim. 1:17; 2 Tim. 4:18; Heb. 13:21; 1 Pet. 4:11; 5:11;
Rev. 1:6; 5:13; 7:12); twice to the torment of the wicked
(Rev. 14:11; 20:10); and once to the smoke of Babylon rising
up forever (Rev. 19:3).

These last passages we shall have again before us, but if the
duration of these ages is the measure of the risen life of
Christ, yea, of God Himself, surely its force cannot be
questioned.

In all these cases the plural form impresses us with the
sense of vastness and immensity. In the cases we have now to
consider the use of the singular conveys the idea, of course,
of unity. Here again we have various expressions.

(1) A very singular one is “the aion of the aion,” where it is
the duration of the reign of the Son of God:

Thy throne, O God, is for the aion of the aion (Heb. 1:8),
where we have the Septuagint rendering of the expression
before noted as the Hebrew one for proper eternity, olam
vaed. Here then it does seem that aion must, even in the
Septuagint, have this later but acknowledged sense. Plato has
it, and Philo also, an Alexandrian Jew, from the very
birth-place of the Septuagint, although of a somewhat later
date. Here the expression is used for eternity, and we can
only translate,

For the age (or perhaps, course 28) of eternity.

We have seen a similar use of aion for the past (Acts 15:18).

(2) Again, we have an ascription of glory to Christ,
for the day of eternity (aion) (2 Pet. 3:18).

Here once more a limited meaning can scarcely be contended
for.

(3) Again, in Eph. 3:21, we find,

Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus unto all
the generations of the age of the ages.

Here no one, I suppose, would doubt eternity to be meant. It
may define what “age” is meant when aion is used alone: the
“age of the ages” is the age in which all ages are summed up.

(4) But the most common expression of all is that for which
no more suited rendering can be found for aion than
“forever.” It is used twenty-eight times; and not in a single
instance can it be proved to have a limited sense. It too is
used for the duration of the life of Christ (John 12:34); of the
abiding of the Spirit of God with His people (John 14:16); of
Christ’s priesthood (Heb. 7); the enduring of the word of God
(1 Pet. 1:23), and of the doer of His will (1 John 2:17); and
of the believer’s righteousness (2 Cor. 9:9). It is used too for
the duration of the portion of the ungodly,

blackness of darkness forever (Jude 13; 2 Pet. 2:17).

Amid all this varied phraseology not one passage can be
shown where our common translation gives some equivalent
of “forever,” in which less than eternity can be proved to be
meant. We have seen that over and over again it is asserted of
God, that He “liveth for the ages of the ages,” and so, too, of

28. Aion is thus used in Eph. 2:2, “According to the course of this world.”
Christ as risen from the dead. Will any one say that His, “Behold, I am alive for the ages of ages” is not meant to convey the thought of the English version, “I am alive for evermore?” Or that “God, who liveth for the ages of ages” means “God who liveth for the time during which He is showing grace?”

Now in Rev. 11:15 we read in connection with the millennial kingdom that Christ

shall reign to the ages of ages.

This has been interpreted as meaning that “Christ’s mediatorial kingdom is for the ages of ages, and after these are finished He delivers it up,” thus denying that the expression “ages of ages” refers to eternity.

While this passage refers to the setting up of what is called the millennial kingdom, it is looked at as the setting up of an authority which will never cease, a divine kingdom, the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ (Rev. 11:15), and so, when it is added,

And He shall reign for the ages of ages,

does not affect the truth that the mere human form of the kingdom will be given up. “He shall reign forever and ever.” Though He leave the human throne to sit upon the divine, still “He shall reign.” It is the everlasting reign rightly then begun.

Certain it is that if as man He reign till all enemies be under His feet, and then deliver up the kingdom to the Father, and if death be the last enemy destroyed -- then the ages of ages of torment begin for most from this point, instead of ending here. And Christ’s reign for the ages of ages cannot end here either.

Now sitting upon the Father’s throne as Son of God, and having “all authority in heaven and earth,” He comes as Son of Man in glory to take His own throne as such. It is plainly this kingdom which He delivers up to the Father (according to 1 Cor. 15:24-28), having accomplished the purpose for which He took it. He reigns, says the apostle -- until when?

Till He hath put all enemies under His feet {1 Cor. 15:25}. Is that conversion? If it is, words have no meaning. No; it is the subjecting by power those who could not be subdued by grace. Death is among these enemies, and death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed. {See 1 Cor. 15:26.}

When? When death and hell (hades), having delivered up their dead, shall be cast into the lake of fire. When Gehenna shall swallow up hades, and the second death put an end to the first (see Rev. 20:13, 14). Then will the last enemy be destroyed, and all be under the feet of Christ. Then, therefore, will be the time when Christ will deliver up the kingdom to the Father.

But the ages of ages stretch on beyond this: for the torment for the ages of ages in the lake of fire begins, even for the devil himself, only at the close of the millennial reign (Rev. 20:10). The kingdom which Christ takes to put down all enemies will be over. Death, the last enemy, will be destroyed. But the ages of ages roll on their unbroken course, and Christ’s “reign for the ages of ages” will of course go on also.

The brief millennial reign in which Christ by power puts down His enemies must not be confounded with the everlasting reign of Christ as Son upon the Father’s throne, which never can be given up. For faith He reigns now, before that kingdom is come. All authority is His in heaven and earth. It will not cease to be His when that coming kingdom shall be delivered up to the Father, that God may be all in all.

We have yet to consider the word aionios, “aonian,” or eternal.

Aionios, as derived from aion, of course gets its meaning from this also. We have seen that aion has two meanings in the New Testament: one, that of “age” or dispensation, the other, of eternity in the commonly understood sense. We may expect then that aionios will reflect this double sense. And we shall find our anticipations verified by the fact.

But first, what does the expression “aonian times” really mean in the three passages where it occurs, Rom. 16:25; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 1:28? Does “aonian” there speak of limited duration? I think we may very fairly argue that it does not there speak of duration at all. “Times” is the word which there implies duration, and limited duration too, of course. Why then should another word be added to express the same thing?

We have before heard of a mystery

hidden from ages and generations,

and now made manifest to the saints (Col. 1:26), and we have seen that the ages here are those of preparation for Christ’s coming, and closed by His death; so that now upon us the ends of the ages are come, and we have the full admonition of what happened unto them as types. A reference to Rom. 16:26 will show that to these “aonian” or “age-times” the apostle refers: times which had the character of “ages” or of dispensations. This is what “aonian” here signifies: not the limited duration of the times, which as “times” are necessarily limited, but their being special, divinely constituted, times.

Aonian here then strictly means “belonging to the ages”: it gets its meaning from the first sense of aion. But inasmuch as aion has the sense of eternity as well, we may expect to find it also signifying “eternal,” belonging to the “age of ages.” Let us see how far we can prove this meaning to be in “aionios,” and how far this meaning is general in the New Testament.

One very plain passage, showing that it means “eternal,” is that in which it is contrasted with what is temporal:

The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal (2 Cor. 4:18).

Here limitless duration must be the contrast with the limited.

29. Compare Rev. 3:21; Dan. 7:13; Matt. 25:31, etc.
With this the “eternal weight of glory” of the verse preceding must be connected; and also “the house eternal in the heavens” of the following one.

So again in Philemon 15 the apostle writes:

For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him forever

-- the unlimited duration expressed in aionios is again contrasted with the limited “for a season.”

Thus simply is it proved to have the sense “eternal.” And why then should its force be doubted when we have it applied to God, to His “power” and “glory,” to the “Spirit,” to the kingdom of Christ, to the saints’ “life,” “inheritance,” “habitations,” “salvation,” “redemption?” I do not see how the New Testament could give us much more assurance of “æonial” being “eternal” in the fullest sense -- save where necessarily limited by the subject.
Chapter 28

The New Testament Scriptures As To
The Judgment Of The World

We are now free to enter upon the New Testament, unembarrassed by the questions which would otherwise divert us too far from the study of the special texts which we shall now consider. And in order to pursue our study of the subject with more clearness, we shall first seek to separate from the texts which speak of final judgment those which speak of the judgment of the living when the Lord appears.

We have already looked at this from the side of the Old Testament, as it is indeed a point of main concern throughout it. But the New Testament, while going beyond the Old as far as the literal sense extends, does not by any means lose sight of the coming judgment at the appearing of the Lord. The millennial blessing as to the earthly part of it is indeed very briefly touched on, and the blessings in heavenly places are substituted for this, Christian promises instead of Jewish ones. And in accordance with this the judgment coming on the earth is more a solemn warning to the impenitent and unbelieving, than as connected with the hope of the saints themselves.

The Jewish promises being earthly, for those who are to inherit them, the earth must necessarily be delivered from what defiles and destroys it. Israel’s foes must be put down with the strong hand of power, that they may be nationally saved, and inherit the earth. Christians, on the other hand, rightly expect to be with the Lord in heaven in the Father’s house according to His promise (John 14:1-3). Their part in the millennial kingdom is to reign over the earth with Christ, but this is not to be confounded with living on it.

It is not, of course, possible here to dwell upon the points in controversy between so-called pre-millennialists and the advocates of a merely spiritual reign. Still it will be found that the connection of truth is everywhere so intimate in Scripture that a wrong view as to the millennium may confuse many an otherwise clear passage of the gravest importance as to the present question. As already said, the putting off the Lord’s coming to the end of the millennium confounds together two wholly different epochs of judgment. But what has been already urged as to this must suffice us now. The texts which apply to the judgment of the living in the New Testament in general present no special difficulty.

(1) First, in the Baptist’s words we have Israel purged by judgment at the coming of the Lord. He will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire (Matt. 3:12).

It is a figure of judgment wholly inconsistent with hope for those condemned as “chaff.” Annihilationists claim it as a figure of utter destruction. But then a figure, and what it figures, are as different things as the “chaff” is from the men compared to them. This is what these writers constantly ignore. But material destruction is not a figure of material destruction. It must figure something else.

And here it is that universalism of all grades so completely fails. Material destruction cannot figure spiritual restoration. It is wholly and absolutely opposed to this. But it figures spiritual destruction on the other hand, and not material; and here annihilationism of all grades fails as completely. When God’s wrath is the fire, and man its object, who can argue that its necessary effect will be his material destruction?

I have shown before what man’s utter destruction is. It is his perishing from the place for which he was naturally made and fitted, and this by the wrath of God because of sin: this solemn judgment it is that may find its figure in the chaff burned in the fire. No material destruction can be argued from it.

Here the perishing even from the earth may be intended, for a similar figure is often used in the Old Testament when God’s wrath takes away living men. And to the judgment of the living the words here apply. Yet in this case eternal judgment is so closely connected with it, that I see no use in separating between them.

(2) In Matt. 22:13 we are again warned of the judgment at the Lord’s coming. The time is when the King comes in to see the guests invited and presenting themselves at the marriage-feast. The scene is earthly: no guest will find his way into heaven and be turned out. But here there is no figure even of destruction. The judgment is,

Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 22:13).

I need only refer to a similar picture in Matt. 8:12. “Darkness” is not annihilation, even in figure. In Matt. 25:30
the unprofitable servant is adjudged to the same thing: and in Jude 13 we shall find it again in stronger language used for an eternal doom.

(3) I pass over the separation of the sheep from the goats, because although it is really the judgment of living people when Christ comes, the terms of it connect it plainly with the final judgment. We shall examine it therefore in another place. Luke 19:27 again refers to the Lord’s coming, and presents no difficulty.

(4) Luke 20:18 is again one of those pictures in which material destruction figures another thing. I need scarcely repeat what I have just now said about a parallel case.

(5) We may pass on now to 2 Thess. 1:7-9, the time when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power, when He shall come to be glorified in his saints, etc.

This is an instance of the value of a little knowledge of what the Bible says as to the close of the present order of things. Plainly this takes place at Christ’s appearing -- before the millennium therefore, and more than a thousand years before the resurrection of the wicked. In this last, all the dead, not raised at the first resurrection, are to rise. It is impossible then that these could have been (in that sense) eternally destroyed, and so never to rise, a thousand years before. To any one who holds therefore to a true millennium, and Christ’s coming before it, this text alone should be decisive that “everlasting destruction” is not annihilation.

(6) In the next chapter we have another judgment which takes place at the same time -- the special destruction of the “wicked one.” It is evident that we have in this “wicked one” a person exalting himself above God, and claiming to be God, and whom “the Lord Jesus shall consume with the breath of His mouth, and annul with the manifestation (or appearing) of His presence.” The words are a partial quotation from Isa. 11:

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall come forth out of his roots; and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him; . . . with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall He slay the wicked (one) {Isa. 11:1-4}.

If any one doubt who or what is in question here let him follow on this quotation, and be will find a familiar picture of millennial days when “the wolf shall dwell with the lamb,” and Israel and Judah shall be brought from the four corners of the earth and finally united together.

Thus we have, both in Isaiah and Thessalonians, a premillennial judgment of this “wicked one.” In the latter we are distinctly told it is at the appearing of Christ’s presence. The wicked one is then to be “consumed” and “annulled,” in the day when the rod of iron shall smite (and yet heal) the earth.

Now, if we turn for a moment to Rev. 19, we shall find there (as I have before argued) Christ’s coming to the earth, which follows the marriage of the Lamb in heaven. It is a figure of Christ’s appearing with His saints; and, as the sword out of His mouth to smite the nations answers on the one hand to Isaiah’s “rod of His mouth,” so among the objects of the judgment we have two leaders, one of which is generally allowed to be “the wicked one.” It seems hardly possible for one who believes in any harmonious interpretation of the word of God to doubt this.

But what then is the “consumption,” or “annulling,” or even “slaying” of this wicked one? “These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone,” and there they are found still alive a thousand years afterwards!

We shall have to return to this again. But here at least how fully evident that to be “consumed,” “annulled,” and “put to death,” even, when applied to the final judgment of the wicked, do not mean material destruction or annihilation at all.

I do not know of any other passages referring to the judgment of the living which can cause any difficulty, save one which has been reserved for future consideration.
Chapter 29

The Resurrection Of Judgment

The Lord, in the 5th chapter of the Gospel of John, declares as distinct the “resurrection of life” and “the resurrection of judgment.” I have before noticed that the word “damnation” in this place (as in John 5:24, the word “condemnation”) is the ordinary word for “judgment.”

But in some places “damnation” is even inferior in force to that word “judgment,” apparently so much less strong. In that before us for instance its use has obscured the solemn reality that none can come personally into judgment before God, except to be condemned. This is everywhere what Scripture asserts, and here with force perhaps little less than that of any. For it is only “they that have done evil” who come forth to a “resurrection of judgment” at all. How plainly this should tell us that the saints cannot be numbered among those spoken of as raised for judgment according to their works before the great white throne (Rev. 20:11-15).

Yet this very passage in the Gospel has been assumed to prove a general resurrection of saints and sinners together, because it is said,

The hour cometh in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth, etc. {John 5:28, 29};
while a simple comparison of three verses before this would demonstrate that the “hour” in which the Son of God has been quickening dead souls has lasted now eighteen hundred years from the time He spoke. The Lord merely asserts here the general fact that all shall hear His voice, while He contrasts in the most absolute way the character of the two resurrections to which He summons them.

People imagine that but one obscure passage (which is not obscure however) in a book of visions is the only one which can be brought forward for a “first resurrection” of the righteous, whereas in fact almost every passage that speaks of resurrection infers it in some shape. There is even a special phrase for it, “The resurrection out from the dead,” as to which the disciples (who knew well the general truth of resurrection) inquired

what the rising from the dead should mean (Mark 9:10).
It was of this special resurrection the Lord spoke, when in answer to the Sadducees He said that

they which shall be counted worthy to obtain that world -- the world to come --

and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage, neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels: and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection (Luke 20:34-36).

How could people be “counted worthy” to obtain a general resurrection which none can miss? Or be the children of God as being the children of a general resurrection?

Then again, where the apostle is expressly speaking of the order of the resurrection, he gives it as,

Christ the first fruits; afterward, they that are Christ’s at His coming {1 Cor. 15:23}.

What more misleading, if all were to rise at the same time? Once more, in 1 Thess. 4:16, when the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, we are told,

The dead in Christ shall rise first,
then the living saints be changed, and all caught up together to meet the Lord in the air; and this before He appears to the world at all: for

when Christ who is our Life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory (Col. 3:4).

The passage in Revelation moreover is not obscure. We have a vision; then the interpretation of the vision.

I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, nor in their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished {Rev. 20:4, 5}.

This is the vision: and so simple in character that the interpretation repeats much of it over again.

This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: upon such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years {Rev. 20:5, 6}.

Thus the millennium is literally such, and the resurrection is literal, for these are given in the interpretation of the vision, not the vision itself. Accordingly, after the thousand years are over, we see the rest of the dead rise; it is, plainly,
the “resurrection of judgment,” in which by that very fact the saints can have no part. All is thus consistent, clear, and intelligible. For all is true.

There is little said as to the resurrection of the unjust in Scripture. The fact is affirmed. The nature of it is nowhere spoken of. But the resurrection of the just is distinct in character from the resurrection of the unjust; and it is the former alone which is the fruit of Christ’s redemptive work. The resurrection described in 1 Cor. 15 does not include that of the wicked. “It is raised in power,” “It is raised in glory,” “It is raised a spiritual body,” could not apply to any but “the just.” “The dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we” the living -- “shall be changed. For this corruptible (applying to the dead) shall put on incorruption; and this mortal (referring to the living) shall put on immortality.” Mortality cannot be affirmed of the dead, and here certainly, as in 1 Thess. 4:16, 17, the two classes are recognized. The “change” applies to the living alone.

That there should be difficulties in connection with a subject of which Scripture says so little as it does about the resurrection of the unjust need not surprise us, nor those who consider the mysteries which surround our present life. It may be true that “incorruption” is not the state of the resurrection of judgment, and this not involve at all what annihilationists insist upon. We know too little to say much. It is useless taking up seriously what must be the idlest of speculations in the absence of revelation. They that have done evil will come forth to the resurrection of judgment. That is revealed; and that death will be over and ended when judgment begins: and this alone completely negatives the conclusion of Annihilationism.
Chapter 30

Judgment When And What

We must now proceed to what comes after death. We have already seen the lesson which the Lord deduces from the first parable in Luke 16, that when the righteous “FAIL” (that is, at death therefore, not resurrection) they are received into everlasting habitations” (Luke 16:9).

And this, the last parable of that chapter shows, in whatever figurative language, with regard to Lazarus. It is in express contrast to this that the rich man in hades is tormented, as he is “comforted.” Thus there is no room to doubt the meaning of the solemn words. The rich man is certainly pictured as receiving retribution in hades, before the resurrection and the final judgment, and if the Lord did not mean that, He would not have used words which every one must admit give that impression, without one word of warning. Would the Lord thus confirm what men represent as false and “heathenish” ideas actually in the very minds of His hearers? -- for He spoke to Pharisees. We are forbidden by our reverence for Him, who was never anything less than the Incarnate Truth, to allow that He could so trifle with falsehood, and help to confirm in error the souls of those He came to rescue out of it.

Now, the righteous die, and the wicked. If death be extinction, the righteous could not be “comforted” in it, any more than the wicked “tormented.” We should at least want proof of a difference, if difference indeed there were. We should need proof that the wicked were not tormented, if we were assured that the righteous were comforted.

Thus every text for the one is an argument for the other also; and when the language even of a parable comes in to sustain the prior conviction, we must be permitted to think that it neither stands alone, nor gives an uncertain sound either. We do not expect that it should be much dwelt upon. We have just considered how little is said about the resurrection of the wicked. Enough is given to establish the doctrine. Warnings and promises alike may be expected to be connected rather with a final and everlasting state, than with one necessarily to pass away. Yet it is not the only text. There are others, as Isa. 24:21, 22; 1 Pet. 3:19, 20, the first of which speaks of the “kings of the earth” whom Revelation (19:19, 21) shows us “slain with the sword” at Christ’s coming in glory, while Isaiah speaks of them as prisoners shut up in the pit, to be visited after many days; i.e., at the judgment of the dead, after the millennium. While the latter speaks correspondingly of those disobedient in Noah’s days, as now “spirits in prison.” Both texts assure us of retribution in the intermediate state.

Some would allege that “retribution before judgment is contrary to all the principles of the divine and human law.” I allow it fully. What He fails to see is that, as far as the settlement of personal guilt and condemnation is concerned, man -- the world -- is already judged -- already condemned: a thing which is abundantly plain in Scripture.

We have already seen that God by the ministry of death and condemnation was for centuries pressing home upon man his lost condition, and that the apostle could speak for Christians in saying,

We know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God {Rom. 3:19}.

Is that, or is it not, a sentence of God? Is it to be passed, or passed already? Certainly, it is long since passed, and this sentence of the law was, as we have seen, only itself the affirming and confirming of a prior sentence, of which every grey hair in man was witness.

It is true, man might, alas, prophesy smooth things to himself, and dream of being able to face God about his sins, and on the other hand it is blessedly true that, wherever there was real bowing to the sentence, the mercy of God was ready to manifest itself: real “repentance” is always “unto life.” But it needed no judgment-seat for Him to manifest such mercy, wherever He knew a soul had bowed to own its guilt; while with all others judgment had not to be pronounced, but had been. This is what makes so solemn and so blessed that great truth of Ecclesiastes, the settlement of the question of the book:

The spirit shall return to God that gave it. {Eccl. 12:7}

Not yet indeed the judgment-seat, where He would bring every work into judgment {Eccl. 12:14}, but the assurance at least then, if never before, of personal acceptance, or of personal rejection.

Many do not see the difference between these two things. We must look at them, therefore, more in detail, and the Scriptures which affirm and illustrate them.

Personal acceptance with God is never on the ground of our works.
By the works of the law
-- in which all good works are summed up --
shall no flesh living be justified [Gal. 2:16].

So the word of God decisively says. On the one hand not the
most perfect upon earth (as Job was in his day) but must, with
Job, put his hand upon his mouth in the presence of God, or
open it but to say, “I am vile”: “I abhor myself, and repent
in dust and ashes.”

On the other hand, let any soul but take this latter ground, and
If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive
us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness
{1 John 1:9}.

The future day of judgment (whether we speak of saint or
sinner) is, therefore, never in Scripture for the settlement of
personal acceptance or the reverse. We have already seen that
personal judgment for a sinful creature before a holy God can
only be condemnation. The saved are saved here and now,
and do not “come into judgment.” The doom of the unsaved
is determined in the present life also, and if men ignore it
here, the spirit returning to God cannot remain ignorant. It is
a “spirit in prison,” already with the consciousness of wrath
upon it, if not received into “everlasting habitations.” This is
the rich man’s portion, where the wrath of God is the
consuming fire by which he is tormented, and yet resurrection
plainly has not come.

Does this set aside the reality of the judgment to come?
By no means. It only affirms the reality of the judgment
pronounced. The judgment to come is the judgment of works,
and there is what answers to this even for the saint; but he
comes to it in resurrection glory, and in the image of his
Lord. Can he be put on trial to decide the future, when
already glorified? Clearly not. But he does stand before the
judgment-seat of Christ, and receives for the things done in
the body, as a question of reward -- obtained, or lost. Eternal
life is not a reward, but the free gift of God in Christ, and
justification is by His blood alone. Sonship, membership of
the body of Christ, a home in the Father’s house, are all fruits
of the same blessed work, His and not ours. And these can
never be brought in question.

Similarly then as to the lost. The judgment to come does
not settle that they are lost. If they come forth to a
resurrection of judgment, it is not a judgment which is to
decide if they can stand before God or not; but they are (as
the saint is not) “judged,” themselves personally,
according to their works (Rev. 20:13).

They get a measured recompense of judgment: “few” or
“many stripes,” as the case may be; an absolutely righteous
apportionment for the sins committed in the body. This is the
judgment of works, distinct from the settlement of whether
lost or saved -- as is the reward of works for the righteous.

What has helped to confuse the minds of many has been
a question of prophetic interpretation. Failing to see the
Lord’s coming as antecedent to the millennium, and the
purification of the earth by judgment in order to the blessing,
the separation of the sheep from the goats has been taken as
being the same thing with the judgment of the dead more than
a thousand years later. It was inevitable in this way (though
in opposition to the plainest passages elsewhere) to suppose
that the righteous and the wicked would stand together, and
the former be discriminated from the latter by their works.

It should be plain, however, that in Matt. 25:31-46, we
have a judgment of living nations when the Lord comes to
earth and sets up His throne there, and not a judgment of the
dead, when the earth and the heavens are fled away; and also
that the taking up of the saints to meet the Lord in the air in
1 Thess. 4, before He appears to the world at all (Col. 3:4),
is quite inconsistent with such an interpretation. There is no
hint of resurrection in our Lord’s prophecy at all. The nature
of the judgment, or investigation, differs much also from that
in Revelation. The truth is, that “the nations” in the former
Scripture are those who (after the taking away of the saints
of the present dispensation, and during an interval which takes
place between that and His appearing with them), have received a final call by the preaching of the coming kingdom.
It would be too lengthy a matter to enter upon here. But the
broad characteristic differences between this and the
Apocalyptic vision, should be sufficient at least to prevent
their being confounded.

Into judgment he who now, believes in Christ can never
come. So He declares.

As it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the
judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of
many, and to them that look for Him shall He appear the
second time, apart from sin, unto salvation
{Heb. 9:27, 28}.

If “God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world
by that Man whom He hath ordained,” the saints whom He
declares to be even now “not of the world even as He is not
of the world,” shall (not be judged with it, but) “judge the
world” with Him (1 Cor. 6:2). They are thus seen upon
thrones in Rev. 20:4-6, as having part in the first
resurrection; and not till a thousand years afterwards does the
judgment of the dead take place. God has taken care to
separate thus widely between His people’s portion and that of
His enemies.

The truth is what makes all harmonious. Present
judgment has been passed upon the world. The very cross
itself, as His portion at men’s hands, has confirmed finally
that sentence, to be executed when He comes. 30 Out of it God
in His grace is calling men and saving them. His saved are
upon the ground of Christ and His work, not their own. The
unsaved are still under the universal sentence -- already
judged; the judgment of works, the full measurement of each
man’s due, being still to come. This is not a question of
personal acceptance or rejection, which is on other ground,
but is the solemn and exact award of deeds done in the body,
as Scripture says. The doer and the deeds, however
connected, are quite distinct.

The very personality of Satan is, as everybody is aware, denied in many quarters in the present day, and I may be allowed, without being thought to wander too far from the subject before us, to look briefly at this point.

We read of one in the book of Job who, when “the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord,” “came also among them.” He is expressly called Satan, and is a true “devil” according to the meaning of that word, “a false accuser.”

These “sons of God” are spoken of by Jehovah in the same book as present when He laid the foundations of the earth (Job 38:7), and therefore are certainly not men but angels. Among these angels then the accuser comes, as one of them: surely not a man among angels, and hardly a personification of sin as some would teach.

From the presence of the Lord be goes forth to exercise manifest superhuman power against Job within divinely ordained limits. Here, clearly, is an angelic, yet a fallen and evil being.

In the book of Revelation he is figured as a “dragon,” and explained to be that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan (Rev. 20:2).

“That old serpent” of course refers to Eden, and tells us who was the real tempter hid under the form of the irrational creature. Here too the words of the Lord apply:

He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it (John 8:44).

As a tempter we find him assailing the Lord in the wilderness, He in whom there was no indwelling sin to seduce; and there too he is called the devil and Satan, and appears as one who claims the kingdoms of the world as his. After departing from Him for a season, the Lord speaks of his return in a way which suits this claim of his:

The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me; and of the Cross as that which was his judgment, and would ensure his casting out (John 14:30; 16:11; 12:31); in all which we travel back to Eden, and find fulfilling the words to the old serpent,

He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel (Gen. 3:15).

We find his being and power so recognized among the Jews that the Pharisees impute the Lord’s casting out of devils to Beelzebub the prince of the devils; and the Lord rebukes them by asking, “Can Satan cast out Satan?” and, recognizing the fact of his having a kingdom, asks, In that case how shall it stand? The devils He casts out know Him in turn; they call Him the Holy One of God and Son of God, and beseech Him not to torment them before the time.

Everywhere in the Gospels the power of Satan is a thing as manifest as malignant. A woman cannot lift up herself eighteen years, and it is Satan that has bound her. He puts into Judas’ heart to betray the Lord, and in the apparent zeal for Himself of another disciple, Christ discerns Satan also. He sows the tares in the parable, and these springing up are “the children of the wicked one.” Among the signs that follow those who believe is this, that they cast out devils.

In the Acts the workings of the same malignant spirit are as manifest. Satan fills Ananias’ heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and keep back part of the price of his land. Cases of possession are noticed, and as a common thing. Paul speaks of being sent to turn men “from the power of Satan unto God.” In the Epistles he is the constant adversary of the people of God, whether openly as a roaring lion, or transformed into an angel of light. He is the spirit that works in the children of disobedience; the god of this world who blinds the minds of those that believe not. When resisted, he flees; the shield of faith is that by which the fiery darts of the wicked one are quenched. According to the first promise, we are reminded that, “God will bruise Satan under your feet.”

All this is but part of the testimony of the word of God as to the reality and power of man’s old enemy. If words mean anything they assure us of his true personality, with that of numberless evil spirits,

his angels {Matt, 25:41; Rev. 12:7, 9}, possessed of superhuman power, which is used to obtain dominion over men’s souls, and even bodies, and from which nothing but divine power can deliver. I need not pursue this further now. But we shall have to consider some common mistakes as to Satan which it is of great importance to rectify, in order to have clearly before us the Scripture view.

Satan has been considered commonly (as one finds in the Paradise Lost of a great poet) to be here as a prisoner broken loose from hell, into which he had been cast immediately
upon his fall, a hell in which even now he is supposed to reign, and to reign there eternally over fallen spirits and lost men as the appointed tormenter of those whom he has made his prey. For no part of this is Scripture responsible, and its grotesque horror has been the reproach of orthodox theology. What would be thought of a government which allowed its prisoners so to break their bounds, and which employed the chief criminal to torture the lesser ones?

There is in Scripture not the slightest trace of a reign in hell, or of Satan tormenting anybody there. He will be there, doubtless, the lowest and most miserable of all, but he is not yet in hell at all. 31 Strange and startling as it seems to many, instead of being in hell, he is in “heavenly places,” and instead of reigning in hell, reigns here, the prince and the god of this world.

Thus we are exhorted to

put on the whole armour of God, whereby ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil; for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against the spiritual hosts 32 of wickedness in the heavenly places (Eph. 6:11, 12).

Our translators have shown how foreign the thought was to their minds by putting “high” into the text instead of “heavenly.” But here the devil and his angels are looked at as the antitype of the hosts of Canaan with which Joshua and Israel wrestled. We have long lost the type in losing the antitype.

But in Job we have already seen Satan among the sons of God; and the “heavenly places” were surely his original dwelling-place. And if his casting down to hell has not yet taken place, he should still naturally be there where he belonged by creation. Now his casting into hell belongs to a time plainly yet future (Rev. 20:10), and everywhere in the Gospels we find the devils anticipating their coming doom, but knowing it was not yet come.

Art Thou come to torment us before the time?
{Matt. 8:29}

they ask. It is plain then that hell cannot be their present portion.

The binding of Satan precedes necessarily the millennial blessing. How could there be righteousness or peace in a world in which he was still as active as ever? Immediately, therefore, after the appearing of the Lord, among the other foes that are dealt with, Satan and his hosts are not exempted. The fate of the Beast and the kings of the earth is first shown us at the end of Rev. 19; Satan is then bound and shut up in the abyss a thousand years. The account is given in figurative language, no doubt, yet with perfect simplicity, and Isaiah, eight hundred years before, gives us the same things with almost equal plainness, and in perfect harmony with the obvious meaning. For

it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth (the two classes of which Revelation speaks), and they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days (plainly, the millennium) shall they be visited. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously (Isa. 24:21-23).

“When the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.” This post-millennial loosing seems again to stumble many. It is evident that the object is to distinguish between the true subjects and the concealed enemies of the Lord -- still such, in the face of the long reign of blessing and of peace. That there are these is plain from such intimations as Psa. 18:44, 45. And the effect of Satan being free is soon apparent:

He shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up upon the breadth of the earth and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them {Rev. 20:8, 9}.

Then comes Satan’s final judgment.

And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever {Rev. 20:10}.

Concerning the nature of this punishment we are now ready to inquire.

31. It may have arisen from a misconception of Rev. 9:11. But the “bottomless pit,” or “abyss” is not hell at all.

32. Alford. -- “Hosts” is not expressed in the Greek: it is “spiritals.”
Chapter 32

Gehenna

Gehenna is twelve times rendered “hell” in the common version, and is essentially the only word so rendered, beside “hades” already looked at.

It is of Gehenna that the Lord speaks when He asserts God’s ability to “destroy both body and soul in hell.” We have seen how little the text can be made to mean annihilation. The Lord holds out no vain warning here, surely. In a parallel passage in the same way He says, “Fear Him who after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell”; and we certainly know that threat will be fulfilled. If He never wills to do this, men need no more fear it than if He had not the power. And how strange a thing for the Lord thus to claim a power which none can deny, and which notwithstanding He will never exert! We do believe that God will fulfill the awful warning, and destroy both body and soul in hell.

Let us see now whence we may draw our views of Gehenna. We have the Old Testament, and from it all right views, such as the Lord could Himself adopt, must be taken. Revelation alone could be a light beyond the grave.

To one of these Old Testament passages (Isa. 66:24) we have already referred, in which we find both the fire and the worm attributed to the valley of Hinnom, which certainly are the basis of the well-known warning of our Lord, and which we must consider now.

The main passage beside is also in Isaiah, and here Tophet, the valley of Hinnom, is expressly named as the place of judgment for the Assyrian, where the breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone kindles the pile (Isa. 30:33). Here, while the literal Tophet might furnish the terms of the prophecy, the language points to something deeper, which the fuller revelation could alone make plain.

We must now look at the well-known passage in the Gospel of Mark (9:43-50), which I quote in full:

And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell [Gehenna], into the fire that never shall be quenched [or rather, the fire unquenchable], where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell [Gehenna], into the unquenchable fire; where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out; it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into the Gehenna of fire; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt is good, but if the salt have lost its saltiness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another.

It was to be expected that annihilationists should have stumbled over this passage as they have. The admitted borrowing of phraseology from Isa. 66:24, and the word Gehenna, with the associations which we have just been looking at, are taken to show that the terms used in these verses imply the “utter destruction” (in their sense) of the ungodly.

The first thing to be noted is the difference between type and antitype. It is scarcely the literal valley of Hinnom of which the Lord is speaking; and as for Isaiah, “the carcases” which he sees a prey to the worm and fire are surely not those of all the wicked, who are raised from the dead at the time the earth and the heavens flee away. “Gehenna,” was in point of fact used by the Jews in our Lord’s day in a figurative way, as the Talmud also plainly shows. The typical character of millennial things also I have already pointed out. Consequently the “carcases,” “fire,” and “worm” are all the figures of deeper things. Can any one suppose that all the Lord threatens is that fire and worm should consume men’s carcases? This would be infinitely less than extinction itself, and instead of being the picture even of destruction would be a picture merely of what would happen after they had ceased to suffer, and had been in fact destroyed!

The question is, Is it consistent with eternal existence? and that is a different thing. Now material destruction, if a figure, should be a figure of something else, and not of itself. The material should figure the spiritual: and spiritual destruction may be, nay is, entirely consistent with continued existence of body and soul. If the fire were material fire, and man’s body the prey, according to its present constitution the body would come to an end. If the fire be a figure of divine judgment, however, this will not be so clear; and as a figure fire does speak of this, I have already so fully shown that the “destruction” of the sinner is in fact not annihilation, that I

33. Once (referring to a class of fallen angels) the word Tartarus is used (2 Pet. 2:4), and translated “cast them down to hell,” literally “to Tartarus.”
may be excused from going afresh into the proofs of this.

The unquenchable fire may have been, as to the mere force of the phrase, unduly pressed by some. However, “everlasting fire” is spoken of by our Lord elsewhere. Even the passage in Isaiah gives reason to own that unquenched fire does imply at least perpetuity. If

from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another,
all flesh, as they come up to worship before Jehovah,
go forth and look upon the carcases of those that have transgressed against
Him, this implies a perpetuity of the awful spectacle surely.

And the words following give the reason for this:

For their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh
{Isa. 66:23, 24}.

It gives assurance of the perpetuity of an awful spectacle, which abides indefinitely before the eyes of men month after month.

This becomes plainer when we take up the passage in the gospel: for here the Lord is plainly not speaking of a spectacle before the eyes of others, but warning those who might suffer from it themselves. In Isaiah it is,

They shall go forth and look . . . for the fire shall not be quenched {Isa. 66:24}.

In the other case it is in effect: Fear it, for the fire shall not be quenched. And as these words in Isaiah announce the perpetuity of the judgment, so must they do when transferred to the passage in Mark.

But verse 49 adds something more,

Every one must be salted with fire; and every sacrifice must be salted with salt {Mark 9:49-50}.

Here salting with fire and with salt are distinguished. Salting is the figure of preservation.

Salt, which, as the Lord says,
is good {Mark 9:50},
and always has a good meaning in Scripture, is the figure of that energy of holiness which preserves for God by keeping out corruption. But salting with fire is a widely different thing from salting with salt, fire being always the figure of divine judgment.

Now every one (it is quite unlimited) shall be salted with fire -- even the saint, for he needs the discipline of it, and it is for his preservation as such, and salvation (comp. 1 Pet. 4:17, 18). But the ungodly will have it after another sort. To them it will be “unquenchable” fire, because of evil ever needing to be kept down: repression by judgment, where judgment alone will avail. The Lord adds, “And every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.” There is the point of transition, at which he begins to speak of the saint alone.
Chapter 33

The Apocalyptic Visions

At the mention of Revelation there is a well-nigh unanimous exclamation. The cause is considered by many as hopeless if appeal is made to this book of symbols for its support. In this regard the minds of many, who otherwise listen with reverence to the word of God, are under a cloud of unbelief which forbids their seeing some of the very plainest things that were ever written. While we look then particularly at these Apocalyptic visions, let us remember for our encouragement, that the title of the book is

the Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to Him to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass;

and that He has added,

Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of the book of this prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein {Rev. 1:1, 3}.

Plainly, we have nowhere else in Scripture the full and orderly detail of “last things” which we have in this one book of New Testament prophecy, the priceless gift of a love so little realized, for which we have been so little thankful. Nowhere are eternal things so vividly pictured to us, “the city which hath foundations” on the one side, the awful solemnity of the “lake of fire” upon the other. Glad would Satan be to withdraw from us the joys which beckon us forward in it, and the judgments which warn men to accept the grace that now beseeches. Has God written it so as to be unintelligible? Are the metaphors ambiguous? Shall we not at least look into it earnestly and reverently, before we thus dishonour the blessed Master and Lord who calls it His “Revelation?”

In the 19th chapter, after the marriage of the Lamb in heaven, we have the armies there, clothed in the fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints, following the white-horsed Leader to the judgment of the earth. The Beast, the false prophet, and the kings of the earth with their armies, are the objects of the judgment. The mass are slain with the sword, two being exempted from this to share a special doom, being cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone {Rev. 19:20}.

The next chapter shows us Satan bound and shut up in the bottomless pit a thousand years, while for the same time Christ and His saints reign together, the wicked dead not yet being raised.

At the end of the thousand years Satan is loosed out of his prison, and after having deceived the nations, and the judgment of God overtaking his followers, he is again taken, and this time cast into the lake of fire. There we are told expressly, a thousand years after they have been cast in,

the Beast and the false prophet are,

and it is added of them,

They shall be tormented day and night unto the ages of ages” (Rev. 20:10).

Now, if the lake of fire be extinction, how is it that two men remain in it a thousand years unannihilated, and that then, we are told, they shall be tormented for eternity? The expression is “unto the ages of ages,” one of the strongest expressions ever used for eternity, as we have seen; and, if it were not so, as far as Annihilationism is concerned, the use of such language would at all events preclude the possibility of reasoning, as this class of writers love to do, from the nature of fire, and the present constitution of human bodies, that it must imply the total consumption of those condemned to it. For if a man could live there a thousand years, why not ever so many thousands? If for ages of ages, why not for a proper eternity?

Details we are not now attempting, but only seeking to get hold in the first place of the general outline of what is here plainly presented. It is not from any peculiar difficulty in these chapters that people stumble at them, but simply because they do not harmonize with the views they have elsewhere imbibed. But the plainest reading of these Scriptures is what is in most real harmony with all others. We have assured ourselves of this in part already.

Man, unsaved man, then, here shares the destiny appointed for the devil and his angels. That destiny is “everlasting punishment” in “everlasting fire.” We have not as yet seen all the unsaved sharing it, but this the twentieth chapter gives:

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire {Rev. 20:15}.

This is spoken of the dead, standing in mass before the great white throne.
Into this lake of fire “death and hell,” or hades, are also said to be cast; and people claim, or unthinkingly concede, that this must mean their coming to an end. It does not do this at all, as we may see on looking more closely at the words.

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell (hades) delivered up the dead which were in them, and they were judged every man according to their works [Rev. 20:13].

Thus death and hades were emptied of inhabitants, who, standing before God to be judged on the ground of their natural responsibility, “according to their works,” come forth only to hopeless condemnation. Long before have the saints ceased to be tenants in hades. Nor does Scripture seem to speak of death for the saints living during the millennium. The result would be that, as none but the “blessed” have part in the first resurrection, so none but the wicked have part in the second. It is the resurrection of judgment. And it is as figuratively representing their inhabitants that death and hades are cast into the lake of fire. It is immediately added, to show that the people are intended.

This is the second death [Rev. 20:14]:

of course, not of death or of hell, but of those represented by them. And I press it again, that the second death is the lake of fire -- not extinction; for if there has been no first extinction, there can be no second. Yet so the first death (death, as we ordinarily call it) comes to an end. The last enemy is destroyed. The second death is deathless, and yet the “ages of ages” for most have but just begun.

It would seem that all this was clear, simple and conclusive. The metaphors are not ambiguous, and their “tyrannous realism,” as some have not feared to call it, amounts only to this, that they are in fact very positive in what they represent, because so clear.

We have seen that death is forever gone when the lake of fire begins; and that “the second death is the lake of fire.” If we are to learn in any way therefore what the lake of fire is, we look back of course to the prior account. We find two men -- we must take them as such, till they show us otherwise -- a thousand years in it alive, and then the devil sentenced with these to eternal torment in it. We argue, necessarily, this is no repetition of the first death; nor could it be, for the first death is over, and not existing still under another name. If the second death is the lake of fire, extinction of being the lake of fire is not Doubtless it is a figure, and to be explained by the use of such a figure elsewhere. It is indeed the true ignis sapiens, the discriminative wrath of God which must be the portion of all the impenitent, yet not alike to each. The Lord has Himself taught us to speak of stripes few or many, of judgment greater or less.

Now, we have spoken of two men being cast into the lake of fire at the commencement of the millennium, and found there still when Satan is cast in at its end. But the question is raised, Are the Beast and false prophet men, or are they simply systems or polities, as some have attempted to interpret them? But God’s metaphors are not ambiguous.

The book of Daniel conclusively settles that the seven-headed, ten-horned “Beast” of Revelation is the Roman empire. Rev. 17:10 says,

The seven heads are seven kings.

A new head (the eighth) then arises. This imperial beast is stated to be the last king, for in his day it “goes into perdition.”

In Daniel, at the commencement of the gentile empires of which Rome is the last, we find a statement very similar to that in Revelation. In Nebuchadnezzar’s dream the head of the image of fine gold typifies the Babylonian power; but Daniel applies it personally to Nebuchadnezzar himself: “Thou art this head of gold.” This double identification of the golden head may help us to understand that as in the days of Babylon one man represented in fact the empire, so it will be in the time of the fulfilment of Rev. 17:11. One man will represent the empire.

I beheld then, says the prophet, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake, I beheld even till the beast was slain [Dan. 7:11].

The beast is judged for the words of the horn: beast and horn are one as to responsibility before God. The great words of the horn bring down judgment upon the beast: and this assures us still more of the horn’s personality. For a “polity” is not a responsible agent, for that we must have a living being. Now, a king is the interpretation both of “horn” and “head,” and this ought to be simple enough not to need another interpretation to explain it to us. Why should we allow the dreams of men, who seem only to know how to darken daylight itself, turn us from the assured belief, that these two are men?

Next as to Jude 7, where it is said that Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire;

can this refer to “their overthrow in the days of Lot and their abiding condition ever since?” Surely it is not very hard to see that Jude in speaking of these “cities” speaks of the people in them. The people had sinned, and upon the people the judgment fell, the “fire and brimstone” from heaven being the type or pattern of that “eternal fire” in which they suffer still. The temporary fire by which they perished from the earth was not the eternal one, nor is it stated to be such. But the wrath of God manifested upon them is a sample or specimen of what could not be temporary, that wrath against sin which is the “eternal fire.” The fire which destroyed them was “eternal fire,” if you look, not at the material fire which was at once its instrument and symbol, but at the divine wrath so

35. See Isa. 14:9 for a similar putting of “hell” (sheol) for its inhabitants. It is the constant thing when speaking of cities: “O Jerusalem, that killest the prophets,” etc.
manifested. There is then no difficulty in the matter.

We turn to another separate and independent testimony of the destiny of the wicked which we must consider. It reads thus: --

And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever (for ages of ages); and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name (Rev. 14:9-11).

To object that here it is a specific crime, and therefore cannot be the doom of those who have not committed that crime, is vain. For hell-fire may be the common penalty of sinners, and yet men be solemnly warned, as here, that once let them commit the sin in question, hell would be their portion. What is intended very evidently is that for such persons there would be no escape.

The argument that it is evident this judgment transpires on earth, and before the coming of the Lord is baseless. “The presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb” would rather make the opposite evident. No, it is eternal torment that is meant, and certainly the fulfilment is found in chapter 20, which we have looked at already.

The wrath of God here not only is the judgments poured out at the time which just precedes the Lord’s coming in glory, but includes that endless torment which it is said “shall be” -- the former introducing their subjects to what is eternal, “for the ages of ages.”
Chapter 34

“Everlasting Punishment”
In Matthew 25

It is not needful to our present purpose to establish the particular application of what has been strangely called by some the “parable” of the sheep and the goats. It is indeed no parable, but a very simple statement of the separation of the living upon the earth when the Lord comes to it and sets up His throne there, which separation is compared to a shepherd separating his sheep from the goats. It is therefore a part of that pre-millennial judgment of the living already spoken of, and which precedes by more than a thousand years the judgment of the dead before the great white throne. With this it has been identified in the popular view, simply because they thought the Lord’s coming was at the end of the world; therefore a distinction between the two was impossible.

But the result has been disastrous. For the judgment in the one case being evidently a discriminative one it was, of course, considered that the risen saints were to be picked out from sinners by the trial of their works; and then the natural suggestion followed, that all must wait till the day of judgment, to know what was to be their everlasting condition. I do not need again to enter into this, but shall briefly state the distinction which the passages themselves show.

(1) The judgment in Matthew is evidently (and stated to be) when the Lord comes, a coming connected with various features of the previous part of the prophecy, which make indisputable its character. That in Rev. 20:11-15 takes place when, instead of His coming to earth, the earth and the heavens flee away.

(2) In Matthew there is no resurrection, and the judgment is of the living “nations,” not of the dead; while in Revelation, it is the dead, raised up for judgment.

(3) In Matthew they are judged according to their behaviour toward those whom the King styles His “brethren”: in Revelation they are judged “according to their works.”

These are distinctions which are simple enough and broad enough between the two scenes to prevent their being confounded. There is, however, a point of resemblance, and it is on this account that I have left the passage in Matthew to the present time. Instead of being slain by the sword as those are who follow the Beast, they on the left hand receive a judicial sentence, and are adjudged to the lake of fire as are those in the Apocalyptic vision; but, as it seems, before the millennium, as the Beast and the false prophet are. I do not say positively that they go directly into it, but so it would seem. It is certain that they are appointed to

everlasting punishment {Matt. 25:46}

and again

everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels {Matt. 25:41}.

The word for “punishment” here is kolasis, and is given by Liddell and Scott as meaning “a pruning: hence a checking, chastisement, correction, punishment.” The verb kolazo, from which it is derived, means “strictly to curtail, to keep within bounds; then to chastise, correct, punish.”

Finding nothing how they might punish them {Acts 4:21};

To reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished {2 Pet. 2:9}.

Kolasis, the noun, is only found here and in 1 John 4:18,
Fear hath torment.

It occurs six times in the Septuagint of Ezekiel: twenty-one times in the Apocryphal books.

So iniquity shall not be your ruin (Ezek. 18:30)
is translated

your punishment.

In a passage in 1 Esdras, we find the disobedient enjoined to be punished whether by death or other infliction, “penalty of money, or imprisonment.”

The word means then practically in the Hellenistic Greek of the New Testament, “punishment” simply, and the mode of punishment it does not express. Fine, imprisonment, death may come under the term; in the epistle of John (as well as in other passages outside of Scripture) it can scarcely imply other than suffering in some form. Here it is

36. The expression in Matt. 13 and 24, is not this, but is “the completion” (or, consummation) of the age.”
everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels
{Matt. 25:41},
and that we have seen is torment:

They shall be tormented day and night forever and ever
{Rev. 20:10}.

Now the words are, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment,” and this is explained to be “everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” Further, we have seen that the literal force of the word here rendered punishment always implies suffering in some form. Fine, imprisonment, death are that, and the passage in the first epistle of John, already quoted, cannot be rendered otherwise than by some word near akin to “torment.” It is not a word that will possibly allow the thought of the sufferer passing away from under it, while yet it endures. The punishment cannot continue when there is no longer a person to be punished. Annihilation cannot be eternal punishment.

As to eternal judgment, of course the “sentence” (krima) is not always being passed; but the person is always under it, or it would not be eternal. And similarly as to redemption, the person is always enjoying it. If the punishment be inflicted suffering (and that is the very idea of punishment), and the person cannot cease to be, then the suffering goes on. In “eternal redemption” the redeemed are not merely eternally enjoying the blessedness into which they are brought as the effect of redemption, but the redemption also itself. And this is, if you like to say so, one of the effects; but the redemption itself is possessed and enjoyed forever. It is in vain to plead that the punishment is endured forever, when there is no longer any being to endure it.
Chapter 35

Probation, Or Hope After Death
In Matthew 25

The thought of a hope after death suits men well, and they are drinking in this delusion. It is that which those who trifle with a Savior’s mercy will take to hang themselves over that awful abyss of hell, till they prove it, not the fire of love, but the awful and eternal fire of wrath, which answers to the undying worm within.

Is man willing to have God’s salvation, and God lacking in will or in power to save him? Never, surely. “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Is salvation a doubtful, laborious process, arrived at by long effort, by prayers, by strivings, which may have to be eked out after death by some supplementary process? Nay, but being “justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, “justified through the faith of Christ, and not by works of the law.” Is hell-fire God’s process of salvation for those who look to Him? -- or God’s wrath upon those who reject His salvation? It is the latter, and not the former. Did Christ tell the “poor in spirit” that theirs was the lake of fire or “the kingdom of heaven”? Did He tell the mourners they should be “comforted” or tormented?

The preaching of this hope is really infidelity as to fundamental truth -- as to Christ and grace. Those only could find encouragement in it who are ignorant of grace, or else those who want comfort to go on in sin as long as they can. The apostle asks, “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” The Lord bids, “Fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.”

It is not an exceptional thing that the question of God’s love and the denial of His truth should go together.

Let us consider the passage which is largely made the basis for this delusion.

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, by which also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water (1 Pet. 3:18-20).

Let us carefully examine this passage, therefore, and see what it really says and teaches. First, it was by the Spirit that Christ went and preached -- not personally. It has been sought to make “the Spirit” signify Christ’s human spirit; with this necessary effect, that if He were “quickened in His human spirit,” that human spirit must have itself died, in order to be quickened. On this account it has been attempted to substitute “quick,” or “alive,” or “preserved alive,” for “quickened”; meanings which the word cannot possibly bear. “Made alive by the Spirit” can only refer to resurrection, and thus it is not Christ as a disembodied spirit that is spoken of at all.

But they urge that “He went and preached” shows a personal going. It has been answered that in the same way He “came and preached peace,” in Eph. 2:17, must be (what confessedly it is not) a personal coming. “By the Spirit He went” excludes the thought entirely.

Then further as to the “spirits in prison.” They are in prison now (that is the force of it) as having been once disobedient in the days of Noah. But disobedient to what? Why, to the Spirit’s preaching. It was of these that of old God had said, “My Spirit shall not always strive with man.” Plainly it was in that time of old that Christ had preached to them, and what should make it certain, without any nice questions of translation, is that the limit of God’s striving with these antediluvians is plainly set:

My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: but his days shall be an hundred and twenty years (Gen. 6:3).

It is strange that some should think this a limit put to human life, which was for generations afterwards far longer. It is the limit of the Spirit’s striving with that generation, at the end of which the flood came. With them the end of the Spirit’s striving and of their life came together. And it is just to these, these teachers claim, that Christ specially preached more than two thousand years afterward, in direct contradiction of the divine assertion that His Spirit would not strive.

The text is an unfortunate one for such a hope as is advocated. It is unfortunate that the very examples of probation protracted beyond the grave should be the very examples given us by the word of God itself of the precise
opposite! And if the fate of these dead sinners was irrevocably fixed by death, it must be obvious that we have no good reason to suppose that ours is not as much as theirs. Nay, it is unreasonable to imagine that they are an exception to, instead of an illustration of, the universal rule.

Another similar text, however, in the next chapter of the first epistle of Peter is also used. Let us take it, and see if it will lead us to any other conclusion.

For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit (1 Pet. 4:6).

Are we to infer that the people were dead when preached to? The passage reads literally “to the dead”; and we must gather the rest from the context.

The apostle has been speaking of the altered conduct of those converted from heathenism, and of how the Gentiles around mis-judged them.

Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you; who shall give account to Him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead {1 Pet. 4:4, 5}.

Thus sinners in their fleshly way were judging the spiritual life of those approved of God by it. Christians were judged after the manner of men in a fleshly way, but lived according to God in a spiritual one. And for this -- to separate them from the ranks of these mis-judging ones, themselves the objects of God’s righteous judgment -- had the gospel been preached to them. So far all is plain; but why “to the dead?” Surely because the apostle would bring in the very thought that death fixed the condition in which it found men. These righteous ones had got the good of that preached gospel, which had made them anticipate the coming doom of sinners, and accept the judgment of men in the flesh, rather than God’s final and eternal one. But could they possibly be “dead” before they were preached to? Certainly not, if they were being judged according to men in the flesh for their changed lives! The context is conclusively against the Restorationist interpretation.

We must yet say a word as to another scripture, where the “great gulf fixed” assures us of the impossibility, in the death state at least, of any passing from the flame of torment on the one side to the comfort in Abraham’s bosom on the other. No doubt the expressions here are figurative; yet they express very plainly what they figure. It is Christ who has fixed it. He has ordained that none shall pass it, and that settles it, for the death state at least, that none shall. After this, eternal judgment allows no escape. So the fact remains of a “great gulf fixed” already in the intermediate state between the two classes of just and unjust -- a gulf which cannot be traversed from either side. “After death, the judgment,” and the nature and duration of that final award we have considered.

But all Scripture assures us of the momentous fact that the significance of the present life is just this, that here and now is decided man’s eternal destiny. He is called to repent TO-DAY, lest God swear “he shall not enter into His rest” (Heb 4:7, 11). And who shall say that brief as indeed it is, the present life may not as fully test the individual man as indefinite ages of probation or eternity itself? The judgment after death must be allowed is according to deeds done in the body, and no other. If these did not after all characterize the man, that judgment would be partial, and therefore false. It is in vain then to plead for the extension of a day of grace beyond the present, which brings with it no extension of responsibility such as the day of judgment would take notice of.

In conclusion, as to the arguments and scriptures advanced by those advocating Restorationism in its various forms, it may simply be said that they are based upon a wrong interpretation of the many statements or promises of earthly conditions, opportunities, and blessings of millennial character and time, dealing largely with the restoration of Israel, and in connection with her, the blessing of the nations. They confound national with individual restoration, and national with individual resurrection. Then failing thus to distinguish, they make national conversion, deliverance, etc., also of individual application. Some New Testament passages are then forced into supposed accord with the Old Testament scriptures, but once see the false principle of this system of interpretation, which has been, I believe, sufficiently shown, and the whole building falls with the removal of its foundation.

The familiar passage, Acts 3:21, upon which so much is built, as though it meant a restitution of the universe, speaks plainly of things, not persons, and (according to what we have seen to be the scope of that Old Testament to which, of course, the apostle refers) it is upon the earth -- and nowhere else. “Restitution of all (the) things of which the prophets have spoken” is the true force of the word. Likewise in Ephesians and Colossians, it is things, not persons, and in the latter place the persons reconciled are named apart. In none of these passages is hell named or by any possibility included; neither fallen angels nor lost men, but heavenly and earthly things. Reconciliation in Scripture in no way involves what Restorationists try to make out of it. Nor in the light of the testimony of Scripture as we have considered it, can the subjection of Phil. 2:10, 11 be construed to mean virtually salvation.

It must suffice now to say that there is nothing in the whole array of argument and scriptural quotations presented by any of the Annihilationist, or Restorationist schools, in their various individual or combined forms, which affects the plain teaching of Scripture as we have presented it in these pages.

These systems of error deal capriciously with the Word of God, and do not hesitate to set it aside by supposing copyst errors, etc., where its voice is too plainly against them. The judgment of sin is lowered, the person of Christ and the Spirit seriously attacked, atonement too, in fact all vital to Christianity becomes affected by these views.
Chapter 36

The Ethical Question

It is the judgment of many that the ethical question should precede the exegetical, which seems as much as to say that we must first decide what Scripture ought to say, before we attempt to ascertain what it does. We should certainly treat no other writings after such a fashion; and the claim of these to be divine does not affect their claim to be intelligible also. If God has spoken, He is as well able to make Himself understood as another, and is as ready too to assume the responsibility of His utterances. If it be God, we need not fear lest His word should be immoral, or that it will not approve itself to the consciences of men, His creatures. Judge Him too they will, no doubt: but He will be justified in His sayings, and clear when He is judged.

There is little doubt that the attempt to decide on moral grounds what Scripture must have said upon the subject before us, has destroyed with many all certainty of what it does say. Almost everywhere, among Universalist writers of every grade, the testimony of Scripture is not considered as beyond dispute by them. They may affirm positively what their conscience or “moral reason” says. We may not affirm positively what God’s Word has said. Strangely enough it is thought presumption to pronounce as to the latter, none in the former case. Must we suppose that God could not make Himself intelligible if He pleased? None can deny He has spoken on the subject if Scripture be His word. Is it to be supposed He meant to give no definite statement? Why then are men in such a fog to-day? Is Scripture responsible for the fog? Alas! this is a conclusion some would seem to have arrived at.

Confessedly for centuries the moral sense has accepted the truth of eternal punishment of many, and with the addition (Canon Farrar’s “moral sense” says, the softening addition) of a purgatory for nearly all. In the majority of cases within the limits of Christendom, it has not yet been able to free itself from what has been felt as a yoke which many would fain have shaken off. Outside of Christendom among the millions of Islam it has accepted a creed wherein God is blasphemously represented as assigning men their place in heaven or hell with utter and equal indifference. Among Brahmans and Buddhists alike it accepts the loss of personal identity, the absorption into Brahma, or the attainment of Nirvana, as the goal and highest aim of man.

The moral sense can hardly then be considered a satisfactory guide. Nor indeed do those who follow its guidance dare to speak of the attainment of any certainty thereby.

And what about sin? Is there such a thing? Is it true that “out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies?” What says the moral sense again? Are these things inconveniences merely, or do they defile the man? Are they results of wrong diet, political blunders, accident, or are they innate in every child of man? If the latter, is man as God made him, or is the Christian doctrine of the fall per chance a verity? One or other must be. If truth, if purity, if virtue, be any more than a mere name, what is the world, and what are we? If we ourselves are exceptions, what at least are our neighbours? If God made such a world, He were not God. Either there is no God or we are fallen creatures.

Allow me once there is such a thing as sin, and the shadow is gone from off the face of God. It may rest on man, and on nature, but faith in God is possible once more. Death and judgment are realities, but God lives, and God is good. The very laws of nature bear Him witness, as the expression of a nature opposed to evil, visiting transgression with penalty. The shadow is the frown of God; and if upon evil, then because He is opposed to evil. Granted there may be difficulties and perplexities, the general bearing of the facts is evident; and the human laws without which men could not live, are but the copy and outcome of the Divine.

But grant once again that man is a sinner; grant that he has a will that perverts his judgment, lusts that seduce his intellect; grant that sin indulged dulls the conscience and depraves still further the heart (and these are lessons of every-day experience); grant that an offender is not an unprejudiced judge in his own cause, and you have abundant, over-abundant reason for distrusting the mere rational estimate of man’s possible future. That he has a conscience capable of being aroused by God’s word, and of responding to His appeal, is of course true. That God challenges man’s understanding and his moral sense, and makes them His witnesses is also true. He will be justified in His sayings, and clear when He is judged. But that those who have never learnt to measure themselves in His presence should arraign His justice because His estimate of sin is different from others, is the height of irrationality, as it is of pride.

Now we are going to look at the doctrine of Scripture,
and to see how far it approves itself to the conscience of men. That it does and must, _where the conscience is alive_, is true.

We happen to know that where the gospel has made its largest and most permanent conquests, the doctrine of eternal punishment has been held and put forth. If Scripture be the word of God -- if even the consciences of men not the worst in life have given a true verdict -- man is a fallen being; and his estimates of sin and its desert are alike faulty. Viewed in this way by the light of reason only, we might well predict that the divine estimate of either would far transcend our own. Consequently that judgment of it which _did_ transcend our own, and _was opposed therefore_ (in the way annihilationists speak) to the moral sense, _would be precisely the judgment most rational to receive as God’s_. Here reason is in apparent opposition, an opposition which the word of God accounts for, if it does not remove. It is false, then, to assert that the gospel has won its way by winning men’s admiration of God in the character of a Judge. Do the judgments which now come on the world from the Governor of it always approve themselves to men similarly, as free from undue severity? No, the gospel has won its own way by _being_ gospel; by exhibiting God as a Savior, not a Judge; by proffering a way of escape -- not a mild sentence; and by the ransom given proclaiming the value put upon men’s souls by Him who made them, and which gives real satisfaction to the awakened conscience by putting the righteousness of God, in the matter of salvation, upon the same side with His love.

But that ransom proclaims no less in its transcendent greatness the divine estimate of sin as equally beyond our own. Nor is it the estimate of an enemy, or of one indifferent, but of Him who at His own cost has provided the propitiation. Who that believes on the one can refuse his credence to the other also, when all that he has to object is but the testimony of a conscience dulled and enfeebled by the very sin which it is called to judge, a heart “deceitful above all things” as well as “desperately wicked?”

We do not believe then that God appeals to man’s heart to decide whether His judgment be such as man can accept. He appeals to it by a love which would save him from it altogether, and presents His word, attested in every possible way as His, to enlighten and purify man’s conscience -- not be judged by it.

Not one of those who lay this stress upon the judgment of “the moral sense” believes in any practical way in the fall, or in sin as defiling the conscience and enfeebling the intellect. One can hardly imagine that they receive the truth that the Light, come into the world, shone upon a darkness which “comprehended it not,” and that the cross was what man adjudged to Christ Himself. Yet judgment was not there meted to man, but God was

in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them (2 Cor. 5:10).

In this form, indeed, “God’s character and conduct were placed before it, _to win_ its faith and love.” The success was not what might be imagined. “The carnal mind” was “enmity to God,” and still is so. By no mere moral appeal could that enmity be changed to love. _Man must be born again._

God has taken care, therefore, to make His appeal to man in another way. Instead of putting before him as a philosopher a picture of rectitude with which he would be charmed, or expecting a criminal to fall in love with his sentence, He has treated him as a sinful but a miserable being, a creature fallen and lost. He puts before this prodigal in a far-off country the bread in his Father’s house -- He appeals to the self-love of an essentially selfish being. He calls to Himself the thirsty, the weary, the heavy-laden, the lost; and the disinterestedness of a love which has come so far to seek, and gives so freely, without any gain but what love alone could count such, is all needed evidence of the truth of the message to the soul that thus finds itself searched out and besought. 37

Beside this God’s Word has its abundant witness, so much the more evident _because_ by no means of a mere moral kind. Prophecy invokes the facts of history, and even the current events before one’s eyes; while in the present day the stones of Egypt and the bricks of Assyria are crying out in ears however unwilling. Thus conscience is appealed to; and it is not put into the critic’s chair, but into the felon’s dock; not to judge, but to hear judgment. If man be a fallen, depraved creature, it must needs be so. If he be not, his existence, his condition, and his end, are alike an insoluble, impenetrable mystery.

Yet it is quite true that to a conscience quickened and enlightened by the Word, God’s ways approve themselves. The light brought in manifests itself as such by revealing to the opened eye the beauty and the deformity of things not before apparent. It is conscious knowledge:

One thing we know; whereas we were blind, now we see. [See John 9:25.]

Still the horizon is limited, and if the true light now shines, the darkness is yet passing only, not passed. He that sees farthest sees most the limit. He that judges himself most truly will own most fully God’s judgments to be a great deep. It is not credulity to do so, but the most clear-sighted wisdom. Reason and faith are not at war. The apparent discords are but the evolution of a more perfect harmony.

In this spirit then we shall seek to examine the objections to the Scripture doctrine of future punishment, objections now on every side being urged. The truth of the doctrine remains, established from Scripture itself, apart from all question of our skill in meeting the objections.

And first, briefly as to one point, which, though it be not a primary one perhaps, or actually a part of the doctrine of eternal punishment itself, is still naturally enough connected with it in men’s minds, and tends to give it additional harshness -- I mean the comparative fewness of the saved. The Lord’s words affirm, as to His people, that they are comparatively a “little flock,” although, when gathered finally together, they may be also “a multitude which no man can number.” The gate is strait, and the way narrow that leadeth

unto life, and few there be that find it. Here Satan is represented therefore to have triumphed, and Christ’s work to have failed.

But does Scripture represent men perishing through Satan’s power or craft, apart from their volition? If not, how is it Satan’s triumph? And as far as he has any part in man’s ruin, will he not have cause to own that apparent victory has been defeat? His success, according to the sure and immutable law of divine government, is to become his degradation. Is it not always so that success in evil is the degradation of the evil-doer?

Man’s damnation is from himself. “Ye would not,” is the complaint in sorrow of the One who came to save. Will men taunt Him with defeat? The legion did not cast Him out of Gadara, but the men for whom He had broken Satan’s power refused deliverance. Did Satan defeat Him there? If it be man’s contrary will that is his ruin, what purpose of God does that defeat? Did He purpose to save all, spite of man’s will? That He would have all men to be saved is the vindication of His heart; there is no declaration of a purpose to save all perforce, no defeat of His purpose if it is not done.

But the shortness of probation, if limited to the present life, and that none, at any rate, is presented as an objection. And it is considered that “there must be some extension of the possibility of development or change beyond the limits of this present life.” . . . “The opening scenes of the next life may be at once the soul’s second probation, and its final judgment.”

This is anti-scriptural, as we have shown, and if unsound, then of necessity dangerous to the last degree. To teach men that they may put off into the future that which must be decided here and now is nothing less than enticing them to self-destruction. Scripture insists upon it that salvation is a possibility only for those who find it in this life, as we have already seen. The denial of it is reckless ignorance or unbelief. It destroys the whole meaning of death as death, the solemnity of the appeal to man founded upon the brevity of his life here; that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, and that now is the accepted time, and now the day of salvation; that

he that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal {John 12:25}. 38

It denies the fact that already in hades is there a “great gulf fixed,” dividing the evil and the good, and that it is when men fail (or die) they are received into everlasting habitations. It is contradicted by the affirmation that the sentence in the day of judgment will be for deeds done “in the body,” and not at all for conduct in the intermediate state. 39 Finally, that the spirits of the unsaved departed are “spirits in prison,” and with whom (if His dealings be the same with all, and we may argue from the case of those before the flood) God’s Spirit will no more strive. 40

As far as inadequate probation or want of development is concerned, as in the case of infants, while with all such the taint of a vitiated nature needs to be removed, those who know how absolutely we are debtors to Divine grace for this in any case will have no difficulty. Those of this class cannot be judged for deeds done in the body, nor condemned finally for a nature which they have without any act of their own will. As to them our Lord has said,

In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven; for the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost {Matt. 18:10, 11}.

And

it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish {Matt. 18:14}. 41

Again, there are those who object to the whole theory of probation, as if it were God’s proving what was a matter of uncertainty to Himself apart from the proof. Why should it be inconsistent for Him to allow man to go through the trial, because He foresees the issue? Such can scarcely believe in the Edenic trial, for the same reason; nor that Moses’ account of the wilderness can be the true one, that

the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness to humble thee and to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no. 42

It is not a denial of divine omniscience, for it is only God refusing to act upon His foreknowledge, or to account that He knows, till man has justified it.

In the same way the law has been the probation of man:

God is come to prove you {Ex. 20:20},

are again Moses’ words. 43 But that trial is over, and the verdict has been long since given:

There is none righteous, no, not one; . . . there is none that doeth good, no, not one {Rom. 3:10-12}.

And

we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God. 44

In this respect probation is passed for all. Israel’s condemnation is not merely a piece of past history; it is of present and universal force by reason of our essential identity:

As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man {Prov. 27:19}.

But in another respect also, and still more solemnly, is probation passed, inasmuch as when

He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His

38. Matt. 9:6; 2 Cor. 6:2; John 12:25.
39. 2 Cor. 5:10.
40. 1 Pet. 3:19; Gen. 6:3.
41. Matt. 18:10, 11, 14.
42. Deut. 8:2.
43. Ex. 20:20.
44. Rom. 3:10, 12, 19.
own received Him not [John 1:10, 11];
so that those who did receive Him (and who do) are by this very fact
born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 45
Thus the cross of Christ was the judgment of the world; 46
and man is convicted, not only of having failed to attain legal righteousness, but of having refused the One who came to save him from the law’s penalty also. This is why I cannot approve the term “probation,” as applying to God’s present dealings with men; while yet it is true that God will not finally treat men as in the lump condemned, but each man for his personal rejection of God’s salvation, which will necessarily be his own reprobation.

Those who believe that God has given His Son for men can rest in the conclusion that not only will He be “clear when He is judged,” but that His long-suffering mercy, and His will that none should perish, will be abundantly revealed in the fast-hastening day of manifestation. Can any believe that the world would be one whit better governed if the secrets of that government were made fully known? The existence of evil is the one real and only difficulty; but it exists: and God has answered the question as to Himself raised by it, not by a logical explanation of the difficulty (which it may perhaps be doubted if we should have ability to understand), but by unveiling Himself in Christ. I see in the cross His holiness, I see His goodness, I see His love; and, if the darkness be only passing, not passed, I can walk amid it without stumbling with a Father’s hand close clasping mine. The darkness that remains is but the necessary school for faith; but a faith which has the surest ground under its feet. “We know” but “in part”; still we know. The imperfection will pass, but the truth now known will abide forever.

Again, some would hold God responsible for the continuance of evil, but this can only be by an argument which throws upon Him equally the responsibility of its present existence. It is easy to assume that God could will it out of existence at any moment if He pleased, but then we must needs assume that He willed it into existence. That He could annihilate (on the principle men are now zealously advocating) the sinful being is, of course, as a matter of power over His creatures, to be allowed. But the necessary limit of even Almighty power is determined by the circle of the divine perfections. That infinite Wisdom could do so we may not assume, except by assuming our own to be infinite. Nay, even reason may argue some things apparently against it. For His gifts and calling would scarcely be without repentance, did He destroy a being naturally deathless, which Himself had given; and such is at least man’s spirit. The only true basis for Annihilation is Materialism. But such a mechanical destruction of evil might well seem to be its triumph in another form -- a confession of His being defeated by it in the creature thus destroyed. If men turn round and ask why He should create a being that He knew would fall, the practical answer is, He has created.

Who art thou, O man, who repliest against God? [Rom. 9:20].

This line of argument Scripture itself suggests to be the true one. The conflict with evil is ever represented in it as a real thing, and a necessary one, not to be dispensed with by the mere fiat even of Omnipotence: and that because Omnipotence in God means necessarily Omnipotent Wisdom, as it does Omnipotent Love. Thus He “willeth not the death of a sinner,” yet they die. Who will say, He wills their sins? and yet they sin. And when we are told of some that it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance, 47 must we not believe that there are moral reasons that Omnipotence of necessity regards?

If we touch mysteries on all sides here (and so we do), all the more must we keep to the simple, plain assurances which are the silver thread guiding us through the apparently, and to us really, inextricable labyrinth. God is God, because God is good: and to this His Word holds us fast.

On the other hand it does not represent Him as baffled by the evil, and having to undo His own handiwork, as it man’s will were thus triumphant above His. The reality of the conflict with evil gives the only basis for the reality of victory over it; and that victory is assured.

The Lord hath made all things for Himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil; 48 not their wickedness surely, but themselves. Praise Him therefore they shall, as all His works 49 do. The vessels of wrath and to dishonour 50 are still “vessels,” and have their use. Who shall say that “to show God’s wrath, and make His power known,” is not such a necessity in divine government as in any other?

The eternity of sin is the real basis of the eternity of punishment. If in this life God has with any spent all available resources in vain for their deliverance, so that He should Himself have to say “it is impossible to renew them,” what less than “eternal fire” can be the award of those of whom He has to say,

He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still [Rev. 22:11]?

We are told: “No subtlety of logic, no weight of authority, will induce rightly constituted minds, which allow themselves

to reason at all, to admit that the sins or failings of time can merit the retribution of eternity -- that finite natures can, by any guilt of which they are capable, draw upon themselves torments infinite either in essence or duration." But, although we must allow that that is the way the doctrine of eternal punishment has been often sought to be justified, it is not the scriptural ground of it. Nay, it is one which has obscured the subject it was meant to clear; for it represents God in judgment as merely exacting the full extent of penalty, even supposing that that were the extent.

What is overlooked is that while sin in act will be restrained by punishment, he that is unjust will not be less unjust, nor he that is filthy less filthy. Restraint is not reformation. The eternal state is one fixed absolutely and bounded on all sides, as perhaps a "lake of fire" may intimate.

We do not accept then the teaching that the punishment of hell is inflicted for the sins of hell. On the other hand we cannot concede that the measure of eternal judgment being the measure of the sins of this life, as it surely is, militates in the least against the doctrine that the eternity of punishment is based upon this eternity of a sinful state. We must distinguish between sin and a sinful state. The everlasting fire is correlative to the undying worm. And here, if we consider a little, there is no opposition between the eternity of the punishment being linked with the abiding of the sinful condition, and the measure of the suffering being apportioned to the actually committed sins.

For the works and the words according to which men will be judged are of course the manifestation of the sinner himself. And such is the actual phrase used in Scripture.

We shall all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, 51 is more literally.

We shall all be manifested.

Our works will bring out our characters -- will exhibit us. If it were not so, such a judgment would be necessarily partial. Inasmuch then as men's works exhibit their character, and that a character which abides forever, they are judged according to their works, and yet with "eternal judgment."

Thus the punishment is not indiscriminate, because in each case eternal. "Few stripes," as compared with "many," may have (and will have) their counterpart in the wrath inflicted, and yet that wrath "abide" on each who has chosen it for his future portion. To this is objected what is really the old heathen mythology, often, indeed, attempted to be Christianized, whereby a man's future lot would be decided according as his bad deeds or his good should overbalance the other, representing the day of judgment as ranging men in their gradations of sin or of holiness, and then breaking the line asunder at a certain point, and sending one part to hell, the other to heaven. Scripture does not allow that in this way a single sinner could be saved. Instead of any going to heaven in this way, all would be alike lost and condemned. The law as the rule of judgment pronounces,

There is none righteous, no, not one {Rom. 3:10}, which Christianity does not set aside, but reaffirms. Hell is the award, not of a certain overplus of sin, but of the rejection of Him in whom alone is help. Heaven is the fruit, not of a little more than semi-righteousness, but of Another's atoning work availing for the confessedly unrighteous.

Of course, the judgment of sin is recompense, retribution. Is there, or is there not, implied in this, righteousness in exercise? If God be a Moral Governor of His creatures, can He at His option dispense with this punitive exercise of righteousness? Can He blot out penalties from His statute book, and yet leave intact the laws which the penalties accompany? Certainly not, if Scripture be true; or where would be the meaning of its doctrine of sacrifice?

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.

It became Him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 52

If retribution be not needful, if the mere benevolence of God could have dispensed with it, Christ plainly need not have died at all.

Apart from all purpose it may serve, can sin exist and God ignore it? Can He be indifferent? Can He let it go on and not exhibit Himself in opposition to it -- not show His anger? And that is essentially the fire of hell.

God is

willing to show His wrath, and make His power known {Rom. 9:22}.

There is, and must be, therefore, governmental necessity. In the only world of which we have experience retribution is a manifest law of His government. On the inductive principle, what other can we conclude to be the universal law? And even with regard to those who suffer from it, why should it not be -- nay, will it not be? -- mercy in measure even to them, that judgment is recompensed?

Lastly, I shall notice the objections relating to the tortures of hell being corporeal. The thought of the bodily sufferings of the lost has been one of great perplexity to many who fully believe in the doctrine of resurrection; a perplexity which has been transformed into incredulity by the pictures that have been drawn of them by vivid and sensational oratory.

As Scripture is evidently what has furnished the basis of these descriptions, it will be well to ask just what it conveys. Are these expressions, "undying worm," "unquenchable fire," literal or symbolic? And what proof have we, if we have any, as to this?

In the first place the apostle's language before quoted, that "now we see through a glass in an enigma," seems

51. 2 Cor. 5:10.
clearly to indicate their symbolic character. The descriptions of heaven which are given us, few have any difficulty in admitting to be symbolic. We have none that seem of any other kind. And this argues forcibly that the same thing should hold as to the pictures of hell, which they seem to be.

Further, if the valley of Hinnom be taken (as must surely be done) as furnishing the images whereby the Gehenna of the future is pictured to us -- “worm” and “fire,” which were literal in the first, are manifestly symbols as applied to the second, and scarcely their own symbols.

Again, if Satan be cast into the lake of fire to be tormented there, it would seem that the fire must be other than natural which should torment him. And the same must be said as to the rich man in hades.

Finally, taken as figures, these expressions have a significance and power which fail altogether when taken literally. The undying worm has indeed been commonly held to be the type of remorse of conscience, and this as bred of corruption it would very naturally represent. Then the fire unquenchable would almost of necessity be figurative also, and stand for the wrath of Him who is a “consuming fire.” With this would agree the title given to Gehenna of “the second death,” as being complete spiritual separation, finally by divine judgment, from God the source of life; and this again would give full and terrible typical significance to that millennial judgment with which Isaiah closes, where the subjects of the worm and fire are “carcasses” -- the dead. This explains also why the fire can torment a spirit, and why a corporeal being may exist in it unconsumed; or why the “destruction” brought about by it need be no material destruction. Everything, in short, in this way is consistent and harmonious, which upon the literal hypothesis seems difficult and contradictory.

This does not indeed do away with the thought of corporeal suffering, but it leaves the manner of it unrevealed, and allows room for the difference of few and many stripes which the Lord clearly teaches, and which the conception of material fire for all seems at least to obscure.

But this is not all the picture of the future woe which the word of God presents. “Outer darkness,” as in contrast with the light of heaven, is again clearly a spiritual conception.

Weeping and gnashing of teeth (Luke 13:28), is a different thought from that of active and rebellious evil, which so many connect with the idea of hell. The anguish of seeing Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, while being themselves thrust out, is also spoken of (Luke 13:28).

These are the descriptions given to us in Scripture of eternal judgment. Separation from God and good, the sense of His wrath and the infliction of it, remorse of conscience, hopelessness: these are the main elements in that solemn hereafter. Then “everything which clouded the perceptions, which dulled the vision, which drugged the conscience, while on earth, will be cleared off like a morning mist. We shall see all things as they really are -- ourselves and our sins among the number.” Yes, but too late, forever too late, for those who have refused to face now the reality of what we are, and what things are, as seen by the light in mercy now held out to us. “The long-suffering of the Lord is salvation.” God warns, that He may not strike. Meanwhile man may arraign His judgments and refuse His mercy. They cannot avert the one. They cannot, when once it is passed, recall the other.

Here let us close: it is useless to proceed further. Beloved reader, vicarious sacrifice is God’s only means of blessing as surely as Scripture is true and “cannot be broken.” The faith of a saved man is a faith which can say with the apostle:

Himself bare our sins in His own body on the tree
{1 Pet. 2:24}.

The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all
{Isa. 53:6}.

Jesus is now risen from the dead, and in testimony of the full acceptance of that work accomplished is gone into the presence and glory of God. The sins then that were laid upon Him are gone. Whose are they? Are they yours? Beloved, they are those of all who in the consciousness of sin and helplessness, “have put their trust in Him” for their eternal salvation. Their peace is made. Their sins, borne by Him, are gone. And the coming of Jesus will put them, without question or challenge, into the blessedness of His Father’s house, which He went to prepare as their abiding home. It is yours to choose, reader, whether you will have your “part” in the lake of fire with the devil and his angels, or with the “blessed and holy” of the first resurrection in the real “Eternal City.”

It may suit you, alas, to soften down the terrors of the day of wrath, but what if you should find God is just in inflicting severer punishment than your conscience, or your want of it, now allows as righteous? Oh, ponder those words of the very One who came to save! “Everlasting fire,” “undying worm,” are after all realities. They abide, the solemn figures of judgment to come. On the other hand, God’s grace invites you -- His compassionate appeal is:

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow... but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it” (Isa. 1:18-20),

and Christ says,

Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out (John 6:37).

Reader, if you be one of His redeemed, trifle not with that which undermines the reality of His blessed work, and with that the reality of sin, and of its judgment.

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump {1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9}. 

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"Gehenna of the future is pictured to us -- "worm" and "fire," which were literal in the first, are manifestly symbols as applied to the second, and scarcely their own symbols."

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"Finally, taken as figures, these expressions have a significance and power which fail altogether when taken literally. The undying worm has indeed been commonly held to be the type of remorse of conscience, and this as bred of corruption it would very naturally represent. Then the fire unquenchable would almost of necessity be figurative also, and stand for the wrath of Him who is a "consuming fire." With this would agree the title given to Gehenna of "the second death," as being complete spiritual separation, finally by divine judgment, from God the source of life; and this again would give full and terrible typical significance to that millennial judgment with which Isaiah closes, where the subjects of the worm and fire are "carcasses" -- the dead. This explains also why the fire can torment a spirit, and why a corporeal being may exist in it unconsumed; or why the "destruction" brought about by it need be no material destruction. Everything, in short, in this way is consistent and harmonious, which upon the literal hypothesis seems difficult and contradictory."

"This does not indeed do away with the thought of corporeal suffering, but it leaves the manner of it unrevealed, and allows room for the difference of few and many stripes which the Lord clearly teaches, and which the conception of material fire for all seems at least to obscure."

"But this is not all the picture of the future woe which the word of God presents. "Outer darkness," as in contrast with the light of heaven, is again clearly a spiritual conception."

"Weeping and gnashing of teeth (Luke 13:28), is a different thought from that of active and rebellious evil, which so many connect with the idea of hell. The anguish of seeing Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, while being themselves thrust out, is also spoken of (Luke 13:28)."

"These are the descriptions given to us in Scripture of eternal judgment. Separation from God and good, the sense of His wrath and the infliction of it, remorse of conscience, hopelessness: these are the main elements in that solemn hereafter. Then "everything which clouded the perceptions, which dulled the vision, which drugged the conscience, while on earth, will be cleared off like a morning mist. We shall see all things as they really are -- ourselves and our sins among the number." Yes, but too late, forever too late, for those who have refused to face now the reality of what we are, and what things are, as seen by the light in mercy now held out to us. "The long-suffering of the Lord is salvation." God warns, that He may not strike. Meanwhile man may arraign His judgments and refuse His mercy. They cannot avert the one. They cannot, when once it is passed, recall the other."

"Here let us close: it is useless to proceed further. Beloved reader, vicarious sacrifice is God’s only means of blessing as surely as Scripture is true and "cannot be broken." The faith of a saved man is a faith which can say with the apostle:"

Himself bare our sins in His own body on the tree
{1 Pet. 2:24}.

The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all
{Isa. 53:6}.

Jesus is now risen from the dead, and in testimony of the full acceptance of that work accomplished is gone into the presence and glory of God. The sins then that were laid upon Him are gone. Whose are they? Are they yours? Beloved, they are those of all who in the consciousness of sin and helplessness, “have put their trust in Him” for their eternal salvation. Their peace is made. Their sins, borne by Him, are gone. And the coming of Jesus will put them, without question or challenge, into the blessedness of His Father’s house, which He went to prepare as their abiding home. It is yours to choose, reader, whether you will have your “part” in the lake of fire with the devil and his angels, or with the 'blessed and holy” of the first resurrection in the real “Eternal City.”

"It may suit you, alas, to soften down the terrors of the day of wrath, but what if you should find God is just in inflicting severer punishment than your conscience, or your want of it, now allows as righteous? Oh, ponder those words of the very One who came to save! “Everlasting fire,” “undying worm,” are after all realities. They abide, the solemn figures of judgment to come. On the other hand, God’s grace invites you -- His compassionate appeal is:

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow... but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it” (Isa. 1:18-20), and Christ says,

Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out (John 6:37).

Reader, if you be one of His redeemed, trifle not with that which undermines the reality of His blessed work, and with that the reality of sin, and of its judgment."

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump {1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9}. 

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Appendix 1:
Scriptural Enquiry as to the
Doctrine of Eternal Punishment
Contained in J. P. Ham’s Theological Tracts

I beg my reader who may not know Greek not to suppose that I have any thought of unsettling his mind as to the plain English words in scripture. My object is just the contrary. In the English Bible, there are no doubt defects, as in every human work. I have found passages which I think might be more exactly translated, and have taken the pains to translate for myself the whole of the New Testament, save a few chapters. But I am sure of this, that the more intimately a person is acquainted with the idiom of the language -- the more he is familiar with what the learned call the usus loquendi (that is, the customary forms of speech) -- the more he will see how thoroughly well acquainted the translators were with the language they were dealing with. I can confidently affirm this to be the case in the New Testament; and as far as I can pretend to judge of the Old, I can bear the same testimony: so that, on the whole, while admitting some human defects, the reader who knows neither Hebrew nor Greek may be assured he has the sense of the original. Taken as a whole, it is the most perfect translation of any book I have ever read. I am told the Dutch translation is very good: I cannot compare them, but of those which I can, the English Bible is by far the best. Forty-six or forty-eight of the most learned and capable men were long engaged in it -- divided into classes of six, who did the part they were most competent for; and then it was passed to the others, and revised by all, and compared with translations in other languages. My object then is, not to lead you away from your English Bible, but back to it with confidence. When persons object to a doctrine, that the original word has not the force ascribed to it in English, one is obliged to enquire what is its force in the original: but my object in this is that the humble English reader may be assured he has God’s mind in what he reads. I add the Greek quotations, that those who know that language may see all is well founded and fair.

I now desire to notice two points, which I omitted in my former tract, as deserving to be taken up distinctly. I mean the force of the word Eternal in the original, and the real scriptural doctrine as to Christ’s death. I shall say a few words on the first, from its close connection with the whole subject, and because the denial of the force of the word “eternal” is always connected with low views of sin, and a false estimate of Christ’s death; and ends in a practical denial of it. Though I have found such loose notions as to what “eternal” means, always accompanied by unbelief in the real atoning efficacy of the sacrifice of Jesus, still, the latter lying at the foundation of all relationship as Christians with God, I shall treat it last, and more fully than the first; and I shall show, as I did as to the former points, so as to this yet still more important one, that you have garbled the scripture you quoted by important omissions, denied some of its plainest statements, and left aside a mass of the plainest truths it teaches.

I turn to the word “eternal.” The word used in the Greek Testament, as it is well known to those familiar with it, is aionios, formed from aion. This latter word is used in classical Greek writers for “man’s life,” and in scripture for “a dispensation” (or course of events in this world ordered of God on some particular principle), as well as in the sense of “for ever.” Homer, Herodotus, and the Attic poets use it in the former sense, and say, he breathed out his life [aion]. In this sense, evidently, we have nothing to do with it. It has the general force of one continuous existence on a given principle of life. Again, it is figuratively used for the continuous subsistence of a given system going on in the same principle -- as for example, the dispensation which was to close by Christ’s coming. Hence the word is used for the course of this world, as always going on in the same uniform manner. But its proper force being continuous uninterrupted existence, it is particularly applied to that in its highest sense; that is, to eternity and to God. That this is its real sense, I shall bring the best authority to prove, and then examples from scripture in which it is so used, and in which it is impossible it should be taken in any other way.

Thus Aristotle declares that its force is aion on, always existing: we could hardly have a clearer expression for God or eternity. If anything can be more express, it is Philo’s explanation of it. Philo was a Hellenistic Jew, who flourished in the time of the apostles, and hence is the best possible authority for the force of words used in the New Testament, when it is a mere question of Greek. He says, en aioni de ou te pareleluthen ouden ouden melelli alla monon uphesteke: “in eternity [aion], nothing is either past or to come, but subsists.” Nothing can more fully show that this word, in its own simple full force to a Hellenistic Jew of that age, meant eternity in the strictest sense.

Nother remarkable proof, that this was the force of the word, is its being the term used for certain imaginary beings, of which oriental philosophy (which had adopted some names and natures from the Christian revelation, and in this shape sought to call itself Christian) made the main fabric of its theories to consist. They were called aiones, because they were immortal and unchangeable. The following is a part of Mosheim’s note on this subject, whose learning no one, I
suppose, will dispute. “Aion properly signifies indefinite or eternal duration, as opposed to that which is finite or temporal. It was, however, metonymically used for such natures as are in themselves unchangeable and immortal. That it was commonly applied in this sense even by the Greek philosophers at the time of Christ’s birth, is plain from Arrian, who uses it to describe a nature the reverse of ours, superior to frailty and obnoxious to no vicissitude: ou gar eimi Aion all anthropos meros ton panton os ora emeras enstenai me dei os ten oran kai paretethin os oran. I am not an Aion, but a man, a part of all things, as an hour of a day, I must subsist as an hour, and pass away as an hour.” This contrast of aion with such passing away gives the clearest possible proof of the received force of the word. Thus its natural force, and the use of it in the time of Christ and the apostles, is clearly proved. I shall now show from scripture that the word is there used properly and distinctively for eternal; and this by passages in which it can have no other meaning than that, and only that. 2 Cor. 4:18:

The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal [aiōnia].

Can anything be more positive than this? In the verse preceding: “an eternal [aiōnion] weight of glory.” 2 Cor. 5:1:

A house not made with hands, eternal [aiōnion] in the heavens;

where the same contrast is maintained. Phil. 15:

Departed for a season that thou shouldst receive him for ever [aiōnion].

1 Tim. 6:16:

To whom [God] be honour and power everlasting [aiōnion].

1 Pet. 5:10:

The God of all grace who hath called us to his eternal [aiōnion] glory.

So Heb. 5:9: Salvation is called “eternal”; Heb. 9:12: redemption is “eternal,” and that in contrast with what was only temporary; and again, Heb. 9:14:

Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God.

So Luke 16:9:

When ye fail they may receive you into everlasting [aiōnious] habitations.

Now these passages show in an unequivocal manner, that the word, taken by itself in its proper sense, meant eternal or unchanging, unceasing duration, in contrast with temporary.

That examples may be found in which the word when, connected with another, may have the sense of unchangeableness during the whole existence of that other, is true; but that in nothing alters its own proper meaning, where used to express that. Thus in English, if a child asks me, have I lent him something or given it him for ever, I may say, I have given it you for ever; yet the perishable thing will not last for ever: it means the gift is not to be recalled; it is given with a constant and unchangeable purpose, as long as the thing lasts. Does that produce in the mind of any English person any doubt as to what “for ever” means, as to the proper sense of the word? It confirms that sense, though there be a modification of it by the application of the words. So it is in Greek, aiōnios means eternal: it is used in a way which can leave no doubt of this.

There are passages where its connection gives it a modified force, as applied to what is of unchanging character and existence, while the thing subsists which is spoken of. After all, there are but three such. It is used seventy-one times in the New Testament. Besides these I have mentioned (in which its sense is not only beyond dispute, but in some of which it is contrasted with partial duration), it is used forty-four times with life, to signify the portion of the blessed. No Christian, I suppose, doubts what is the duration of eternal life. That is, in fifty-four cases it certainly means eternal in the common English sense of the word. And God is called everlasting, Rom. 16:25: Consolation is said to be everlasting, 2 Thess. 2:16. The glory of the saints is said to be eternal, 2 Tim. 2:10. Judgment is said to be eternal, Heb. 6:22: that is in contrast with temporal judgment. In Heb. 9:15, the inheritance is said to be eternal. I may remark that, in all these passages of the Hebrews, eternal is really used in contrast with the temporal dealings of God with the Jews as a nation. Heb. 13:20, the covenant founded on Christ’s blood is said to be eternal in the same way. 2 Pet. 1:11, the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is spoken of. Rev. 14:6. The gospel announced by the angel is said to be eternal. Now these passages certainly do not weaken the proof of the word; many of them confirm it in the strongest way. We have now sixty-two, out of seventy-one times it is used, in which the plain meaning of eternal is not to be disputed. That from Rev. 14:6 alone may be said to be obscure, though I have no doubt myself of its force. In three passages, in one and the same peculiar phrase, it has a special force, pro chronon aiōnion -- before times. Here it is used with a word, “times,” which necessarily modifies its sense, and it may be taken for “before these times or distinctive periods in which God has been acting continuously and without change on special principles.” That is, His unchangeable purposes unfolded themselves in created time in certain forms which displayed what He unchangeably was. Before all these various displays of God’s nature in His ways, eternal life was ours in His purpose, before and independently of all these. The doctrine of the Church preached by Paul had been kept secret during all these developments of what God was in His ways; life was given us in Christ before -- it was promised before.

Now beside these three very special passages which I have noticed, and which certainly do not affect the general meaning of the word when used in its own proper sense in the ordinary way, there remain five which speak of punishment. Matt. 18:8:

To enter into life maimed than to be cast into everlasting fire.

Matt. 25:41:

Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire;
and Matt. 25:46:

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal

-- where the same word is applied to both life and punishment, and surely in the same sense. Mark 3:29:

Is in danger of eternal damnation.

2 Thess. 1:9:

Punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.

Besides, there is Jude 7, where the cities are said to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. On this passage, which is no doubt figurative, I would remark that the cities are spoken of as still subsisting before them, under judgment, as a present manifestation of the consequence of sin: prokeintai deigma puros alioniou diken upechousai. They are now suffering continuously (for that is the undoubted force of the Greek word, which is in the present tense), as an example before your eyes. No doubt in speaking of cities, it is figurative; but the figure used is present continuing consequences of sin before their eyes, as an example, to warn those before whom they then lay under its effects. Having said thus much (and I do not think any Greek scholar will venture to deny that the force of prokeintai upechousai diken), I leave what I have said as to this word to its own proper effect in the conscience, as pronounced of God.

I omit many passages which, though not using the word, have the same effect -- such as “hath never forgiveness”; because Mr. Ham’s doctrine would not, I apprehend, deny their force, though it leaves them out. But the last example leads me directly to enquire the force of these words on which much is rested; that is, perishing, destruction, etc. Now that it would be a dreadful thing to be destroyed by the judgment of God, no one will deny. Still, man is so perverse, that he will calculate with that, and loves sin so, that he will sin on. Now though, alas! he may forget eternal punishment; or his passions hurry him on; though he may hope for forgiveness after all, and go on in sin, miserably abusing a goodness, as to the true nature of which he deceives himself, he will not calculate with eternal punishment. Passion may govern, lusts may enslave; but one cannot quietly prefer an eternal misery one thinks of and believes in.

Does then destruction, as used in scripture, mean the extinction of being? Let me turn to examine, by the word of God, your tracts which present this notion to me. They declare that all the terms used concerning future punishment convey the idea of complete extinction.

Before proceeding farther, I set aside the idea that if it [eternal punishment] exceed the capabilities of our mental apprehension, it loses its hold on our moral being.

If you merely mean that eternity is beyond the grasp of a finite mind, no doubt that is true; but it is nothing whatever to the purpose, because that is as true of eternal life. I suppose you will not deny that, if we believe it, has a hold on our moral being. On the other hand, it is an incontestable fact that the thought of eternal punishment has, and has had through ages, an immense hold on men’s moral being; and through grace the announcement of it has had the effect of leading men to flee for refuge to the hope set before them in Him who saves us from the wrath to come. You would not have to complain of the common Protestant doctrine (and every one knows it is not confined to Protestantism), if the doctrine you complain of had not been universal. Exceptions did but prove the rule. It had been preached, and very loudly preached, and insisted on by some, and held by all, whose very name of orthodox proved -- to say the least -- the universality of their opinions. They believed it, and it did affect them. It had a moral hold on them; nay, in a vast number of cases, probably a vast majority of cases, the belief of it was that which first had such a moral hold on them, that they turned to God, and found refuge from the expected (and as they thought, deserved) eternal misery, in the atonement which you deny. To deny this, in the face of the universal experience of ages, and the known history of thousands of souls, and of the whole Church of God, and all professing Christendom, is a mere absurdity. It has a hold on our moral being. Your putting on paper that it has not, will not destroy the fact that in men’s souls it has. You, dear sir, would not like to be eternally in misery, and you know very well what it means; and so does every poor man that may read this tract; and so does every one of my readers, high or low, rich or poor, one with another. No; you oppose it, because it has too strong a hold on our moral being. Man will settle non-existence with himself, or temporary purgatory with his priest, or perhaps his own imagination; but he must settle eternity with God; and man does not like that. Anything but God for him who is not reconciled with Him. But what brings us into God’s presence is that which has real hold of our moral being.

But to proceed. If I examine scripture, I find that your assertion, that the terms of scripture concerning future punishment all convey the idea of complete extinction, is totally unfounded. Being tormented for ever and ever does not; everlasting punishment does not; being punished with few and many stripes does not; weeping and gnashing of teeth when cast into outer darkness does not; being lost even while we exist here does not; the smoke of torment rising up, though a figure no doubt, does not convey this meaning; an undying worm, though also a figure, does not. I do not know whether you consider these as similar terms and words to those you have selected; but you have, either from prepossession, forgotten them all save the last, or been very culpably remiss in omitting them, and saying, “All of which convey the idea of complete extinction.”

Besides, I have another remark to make. You speak briefly and vaguely and give no citations here; so that one must search for oneself in replying to you. But several of the words you refer to, as, “plucked up root and branch,” “thorns cut up,” “consumed, burnt up,” are either not found at all, or drawn from the Old Testament, and apply to temporal judgments executed on the earth. Thus the men of Belial are as thorns, and the man that would touch them must be fenced with iron, and the staff of a spear, and they shall be utterly
burnt with fire in the (same) place. This surely refers to an earthly judgment, and while a figure, alluding to thorns, surely does not unfold the ultimate results of God’s judgment about them. It is found in 2 Sam. 23:6: “Plucked up root and branch” is not, that I can remember or find, scriptural. Mal. 4:1 speaks of leaving neither root nor branch; but this is an earthly judgment, and a different thing entirely. When these wicked ones are cut off out of the earth, they shall not leave successors or sprouts after them of the same kind.

“Consume,” is not used in the New Testament that I am aware of, save in 2 Thess. 2:8, where the wicked one is spoken of, and where also an earthly judgment is spoken of: “Whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of his mouth, and destroy by the brightness of his coming.” This wicked one is spoken of as subsisting afterwards, first for a thousand years and then as still with the devil in the lake of fire. You would find it difficult to prove, from this passage at least, that “consume” meant to cause existence to cease, and the being to become extinct. In the Old Testament I read of consuming off the earth. But while used in very various senses, as the zeal of God’s house is said to have consumed Christ, I do not see any place which touches the question of subsequent existence. Earthly destruction is often spoken of -- of peoples, kingdoms, circumstances, prosperity; but I see nothing said of the soul nor of the body even, but of a visible state of being upon earth. Now the Lord has said that destroying the body on earth does not destroy the soul. I find no passage where “consume” is used which goes any farther. Judgment on earth is the natural subject of the Old Testament.

“Burnt up,” is not used of people in the New Testament, that I am aware of, or can find. Nor is it used of people in the Old, save of the two captains who came to take the prophet by the king’s command; so that I hardly know why you have brought it forward. Certainly there is no passage in which it is used which bears in any way on the subject before us.

“Ground to powder” is used once in the New Testament by the Lord, and spoken of as accomplished by Himself “He who shall fall on this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder.” I confess my inability to discover how this shows that a man on dying becomes extinct. It is in contrast with being broken by a stumble over it; and seems indeed to express very vividly the different fate of the Jewish people, as rejecting Messiah when here, and their judgment when He returns. Though as a general principle it may be more largely applied perhaps; but if it proves anything, it proves degrees of judgment, not common extinction. But even suppose it does apply, the crushed person has ceased to live, but he physically remains; for being “ground to powder” is a change of state, not absolutely ceasing to exist. But, as I said, it is a figure, and to be interpreted by more direct instruction. There we find torment, everlasting punishment. Now torment, weeping and gnashing of teeth, certainly are not meant to represent that those who are tormented and weep have ceased to exist.

I have followed then your references to these passages, and sought out some others you have omitted; and I have found they entirely subvert your statements. A search into scripture, to which you refer, does not the least bear you out: indeed some of the words one is at a loss to find there, or are found only in a single passage to which I have referred, and which cannot be applied to the subject you treat. The wicked are compared to chaff burned in unquenchable fire, by John Baptist (in Isa. 5 it is a mere comparison, and the judgment of the wicked otherwise expressed), and nowhere else that I am aware of. So thorns burnt up are only in 2 Sam. 23:6; already considered. We will consider the words of John the Baptist a little farther on.

Let me now turn to the use of the words “perish,” “destroy.” Now in usual English it is quite certain that in speaking of these subjects, these words do not convey the idea of extinction. When it is said, “They shall without doubt perish everlastingly,” this is not meant to convey, nor is it received as meaning, that they will cease to exist, but that they will be utterly cut off from the presence of God for ever. When Judas is said to be “the son of perdition,” it is not supposed to mean that he would cease to exist, and that like other people who are not saved, but that, as Peter expressed it, he would go to his own place. Punishment is spoken of -- being beaten with many stripes: this is not non-existence. But it is certain that “perish,” and “perdition,” and “everlasting destruction,” when used about the things of the soul, do not convey to an English reader, nor do those who use them mean to convey, the ceasing to exist. Even when I say, “the world that then was perished,” I do not mean that it ceased to exist; but that its then state and form was ruined by the flood through God’s judgment. To judge of the force of the word more exactly, we must of course seek its use in Greek. Now it is an entire mistake to suppose that it means always to cease to exist; other passages will prove to us that where it refers to the subject we are treating of, it does not.

I quote the following passages to prove the Greek translated “destroy” or “perish” does not by any means simply mean to cease to exist, or to cause to cease to exist.

Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 10:6).

The Son of man is come to save that which was lost” (Matt. 18:11).

Every time “lost” is used in the parables of Luke 15 this is the word employed. So in many other passages. Again, read 2 Cor. 4:3, where it is certainly applied in the sense of morally condemned, and not in the sense of having ceased to exist; and its meaning here goes farther than in the passages just quoted, which declare that men were in a ruined state, but God could save them. This passage speaks of them as finally condemned: “If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.” It is used by the apostle John (ch. 18:14): “That one man [Christ] should die for the people,” where Caiaphas had used the ordinary word die -- John 11. Indeed it is constantly used for dying without an idea of ceasing to exist by it. So it is used of marring bottles. So the devils (Mark 1:24): “Art thou come to destroy us?” Now it was not ceasing to exist they dreaded. They say in another Gospel, “Art thou come to torment us before the time?” Now these passages show clearly
that the word does not necessarily nor simply mean “cease to exist,” or to cause to cease to exist; but also to be ruined while we exist, whether as a present moral condition or as a final and eternal state.

But other passages will prove that it was not the intention of the scripture to attach the sense of ceasing to exist to the word where the final state of the wicked is referred to. Thus it is called everlasting punishment as well as everlasting destruction. It is said of the devil, and the beast, and the false prophet, that “they are tormented day and night for ever and ever.” This, mark, is in the lake of fire. It is said of those who receive the mark of the beast, that

the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.

Now I am not here arguing the doctrine of scripture on the subject, because I much prefer to leave it to its natural effect on the conscience. But I say that these passages amply show that when the scripture speaks of perishing and being lost, of everlasting destruction, it does not mean to convey the idea of ceasing to exist. And mark, these passages speak too of the lake of fire, which you say is to destroy the wicked. Again, at the close of all (Rev. 21:8), when the new heavens and the new earth are there, and all things are made new, the wicked have their part in the lake of fire which burneth with fire and brimstone.

It is not then a fire which simply burns up the present world like a lake: such an idea indeed is as foreign from that of a lake as can possibly be. The lake of fire is never connected with the elements burning with fervent heat. Note, too, that the words “for ever and ever,” which are applied to torment, are those which are applied to the duration of the life of God -- “who liveth for ever and ever.”

If I take the noun “perdition” or “destruction,” the result is the same. It cannot be shown by a single passage that it means ceasing to exist; in many, it means turning to a bad account, and the like. I will note some of them. “To what purpose is this waste [of the ointment]?” (Matt. 26:8). “Why was this waste of the ointment made?” It is a bad use of it here, Mark 14:4. Judas is “the son of perdition.” Now it is certain, as we have seen, this does not mean cease to exist (John 17:12). Deliver to die (Acts 25:16). “An evident token of perdition” (Phil. 1:28). Now the courage of the Christians was no sign that their adversaries would cease to exist, but that they would be ruined, God being with the Christians. “The son of perdition” (2 Thess. 2:3). He does not cease to exist when judged, he goes into the lake of fire a thousand years before Satan, and is thereafter tormented for ever and ever. (See Rev. 20:10; 2 Pet. 2:1.) “Dannable heresies” (heresies of perdition); the heresies did not make men cease to exist. I am fully satisfied that in other passages the word does not mean ceasing to exist, but these show it does not.

The conclusions drawn then by you from the supposed force of the word are entirely unfounded. The word in a great many instances cannot mean this, and that even when it is used in reference to our eternal ruin; for we are said to be lost, while we certainly are existing (the word “lost” being the same in the original as that translated “perish” or “destroyed”); while other passages applicable to those said to perish or be destroyed, prove that they exist still (showing that it was not the intention in scripture to attach this sense to it).

We have already seen, in a former paper, that the soul does not cease to exist, with the body; and that the parable of the rich man certainly teaches that the wicked exist in misery.

The consequence of sin is not ceasing to exist -- it is death, and after that, judgment. It is not appointed unto men to cease to exist; “it is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment.” That cannot be, if they have ceased to exist. Is there any sense, or possibility even, in making people cease to exist, because it is their natural condition to do so; and then making them to exist again (though, mark, it would not be them, but others), in order to make them cease to exist again; this last being the dreadful judgment of God? Yet this is your theory. When they die they are, you say, extinct; then they begin to exist again for the judgment of the great day; the effect of which is that they are burned up and cease to exist again.

I have examined, then, all the words referred to. Some are not used in scripture, some not in connection with the subject we are speaking of; others have decidedly another sense than that you have attached to them; while passages and expressions you have omitted expressly contradict your views. Forgive me if I say there is a little carelessness in dealing thus with scripture on so solemn a subject. It is too serious a one to deal so lightly with.

Now as to the passages on which you reason in detail.

“The wicked,” you say, “are compared to chaff, to thorns cut up for rapid consumption in unquenchable fire.” As regards the latter, it is taken from Isa. 33:12. But this only speaks of a present external judgment which would fall on the enemies of Jerusalem who came to spoil the Jews: they would perish on the earth, instead of executing their purpose. This is so entirely the case that, though in English translated “the people shall be as the burnings of lime, as thorns cut up,” it is in the original “ammim” [peoples]. This therefore has nothing whatever to say to the matter. It does not touch in the smallest way the question of the existence or state of a soul after death.

Next, you say they are compared to chaff. This, as we have seen, refers exclusively to the language of John the Baptist:

Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Remark here that the whole is simply a figure, and, indeed, applies to the Lord’s dealing with Israel, His floor. The good grain would be gathered into His garner; the chaff would undergo punishment, as chaff is burned in the fire -- hopeless and impossible to escape from.

Whether this figure means ceasing to exist is to be judged from other passages. Now we have seen that the Lord speaks of abiding torment in the lake of fire. And in Matt. 13 when He speaks of the tares being burned, He says, The wicked shall be cast into a furnace of fire: “there shall be
wailing and gnashing of teeth.” They were not extinct then; they had not ceased to exist; so that I have the word of God declaring that it does not mean extinction. There are those who are tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Now this mere figure -- for the words are spoken of chaff, not of men, your interpretation of which is contradicted by a number of passages -- is really all you have to produce. You do not tell us so; we might suppose there were many such; but there are not. The same state is represented by being cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Here there is no idea of extinction, or ceasing to exist.

Now as to an undying worm, and fire unquenchable: they are figures, you say, borrowed from Isaiah. But figures of what? Extinction and ceasing to exist! Far from it. Exactly the contrary. It is a perpetual shame and judgment kept up, subsisting before other people’s eyes, as a warning of the effects of sin, and a solemn testimony of God’s judgment. No doubt in Isaiah it is applied to bodies, and is used by the Lord figuratively; but the perpetuation of the punishment is the point insisted upon in Isaiah. These are His words:

For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make, shall remain before me, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

Now does this passage teach continuance, perpetuation of their state, or sudden consumption? It carefully teaches its continuance, its perpetuation. This is its specific object. No doubt it is referred to carcases; it says so. But what it takes pains to show is, that the judgment exercised upon them would be a perpetual abiding testimony before the eyes of men. The Lord borrows this figure, as He does the word gehenna, translated hell, to carry it far beyond carcases. But the figure is of the abiding of the judgment: hence, their worm does not die -- their fire is not quenched. It would be absurd to use such a figure to mean that the worm and the fire were there, but there was nothing for them to act upon. But the fact is, the statement of the prophet is precisely that it would not be a sudden consumption, but always there -- as showing the effects of sin from moon to moon, from sabbath to sabbath, when men came up amongst that people, who were to remain before the Lord. The carcases would be there -- the gnawing worm there -- the fire unquenched still. And this is adduced to show it means sudden consumption!

I am not now discussing the doctrine. It is grace which warns us of it, that we may not be obstinate sinners, adversaries of God. It is that dark and solemn back-ground, which brings out the grace that saves us from it. But I deal with your statements as to scripture; I search the word: they fall to pieces at its touch.

Let us refer to the passages:

It is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire (Matt. 18:8).

Why everlasting? Do you really believe the Lord meant to alarm us with this word, when it meant nothing? What matters its being everlasting, if we are to be instantly consumed by it? Everlasting fire (and this [see v. 22] is hell fire) has no real meaning, if I ceased to exist; it may as well go out. But, according to you, it is the fire that consumes the world. Is this, then, to be everlasting? Is it hell that is to consume this earth, and that by a fire that is never to be quenched? Besides, why would it be better for him to be cast into the sea with a millstone round his neck? He might as well, according to your interpretation, live on. It would be but to exchange instantaneous consumption by fire for drowning: and if left for the fire, he would have a much longer life to please himself in. Is that the force of this most solemn warning of the Lord? Again, when in Mark the Savior insists in His warning that the fire never shall be quenched (alluding, as you say, to the passage in Isaiah which pressed the perpetuation of the punishment, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched), you would have me suppose that He meant that for all that they would after the first moment be perfectly insensible to it. The worm might live -- to do I know not what. They would have ceased to exist: the worm would have nothing to gnaw upon. Is this what the Lord presents? Is it what is presented by Isa. 66? Is it not solemnly and urgently the contrary? Let any honest mind, who would think it blasphemy to charge the Lord with trifling on any subject, especially on this, judge. How solemnly does He repeat it!

Let me quote to you a passage from the book of Revelation, which I have already alluded to.

If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night.

If this be figurative, as doubtless it is, it is not a figure of the extinction of being -- of ceasing to exist.

You say, “We are likewise assured that the agent by which the destruction of the wicked shall be effected is fire, and that it will be that fire which shall consume the heavens and the earth”; and you quote Peter as proving it. Now all that Peter says is, that the earth will be given up to fire in the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men; but not a word of the men being subject to it then. Now I believe, from Rev. 20, that the wicked congregated against the camp of the saints and the beloved city will be judged by fire coming down from heaven. But then the earth is not burned up. The lake of fire is there spoken of distinctly as something else (which, remark, has already subsisted for a thousand years, at any rate), the devil being then cast into it, and the beast and

53. There is another from Revelation, which I shall consider farther on. It will be seen then why I treat this as really the only one.
the false prophet being there, and to be tormented there for ever and ever. The lake of fire is certainly not then simply the consuming of the elements in a given day by fervent heat. The wicked, some of them, were in the lake of fire before, and it is another fire which comes down from heaven and consumes the wicked on earth—a fire by which the world is not consumed. Nor are the wicked dead yet even raised. The apostle then sees a great white throne, and One that sat on it, before whose face the earth and heaven fled away; and then the dead, small and great, stand before Him (whereas the previous fire which destroyed the wicked on earth, had come down from heaven on the hosts on earth, who had gone up over the breadth of the earth), and they are judged out of the things written in the books. For this, the sea gave up her dead—death and hades gave up theirs. They were judged; and there was a new heaven and a new earth; but the wicked have their part in the lake. Thus neither the living nor the dead wicked are consumed in the fire which melts the elements.

Every part of your statement is, in the most positive way, contradicted by the text of scripture. The lake of fire existed at least a thousand years, and some were in it before the end. At the close the wicked in rebellion are destroyed on the earth by another fire which does not destroy the earth. The dead are then called up to be judged before the great white throne; the heaven and earth (which gives up its dead) fleeing from before the face of Him that sat upon it. Moreover, the resurrection of the just, or the first resurrection, is placed in this chapter a thousand years before this event; and it is at that epoch that the living wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction from His presence. See Revelation 19, where He comes forth to execute it. For it is at His coming back from heaven the saints are raised to meet Him, and then appear in glory at the end (says the Lord) of this age; not when seated on the great white throne. Then heaven and earth flee from before His face: then He does not come to the earth. Remark further, both Peter (in the chapter preceding the one you quote) and Jude declare that the wicked mockers are reserved—the former, for the mist of darkness for ever; and the latter, for the blackness of darkness for ever. I repeat, then, your doctrine on this subject is utterly contradicted by scripture, and that in every particular. I prove it, and it crumbles to pieces before the word.

One or two texts, cited in the “Leaves for Truth Lovers,” remain. But I must repeat here a remark already made: except one, which I will notice, they are all taken from the Old Testament. Now it is the positive doctrine of the New, that life and immortality (incorruption) were brought to light by the gospel. Why then, to prove your point, do you have recourse to what was professedly dark on the subject? Besides the one I shall just now notice, and that alluding to John the Baptist, you have quoted only one from the New; and to explain this you have recourse to the Old; and you have omitted all the positive instruction of the New on the subject. And let me recall to your recollection, and to that of my readers, that your doctrine applies to saints as well as sinners. Those who have eternal life, those who live because Christ lives, those who are in paradise with Him, whose spirits He has received, as well as mere natural men—_all perish alike, are extinct. And you bring your proofs from the Old Testament, in which, we are assured by the apostle, the full revelation on this subject was not given, the truth about it was not yet brought to light. Is not this a strange way of getting at the truth? the rather, as the Lord Himself declares that the soul does not perish with the body—a passage which you have not thought it necessary to notice. Now the Old Testament saints had to do with a manifest exercise of the judgment of God on the earth, of a God enthroned at Jerusalem; or who had promised the land to those He had called out from their country and kindred (or even elsewhere, as in the case of Job). In the midst of the confusion and disasters occasioned by sin, and the delays of God’s judgment by patient mercy, they looked sometimes by grace through the veil, and saw that city which hath foundations—as Job 19, Psa. 16. But in general they were occupied with the present government of God, and it was meant that they should be; and beyond that, habitually all was dark and the shadow of death. You would bring us back to this—deprive us, yes, even the saints, of the doctrine of life, if not of future incorruption.

Now you will find that what I have just said is plainly shown in the passages of the Old Testament which treat of it; and that they close in the human view by the boundary of death. You quote, for example, Eccl. 9:5: “But the dead know not anything”: now how does this go on? “Neither have they any more a reward.” Do you believe that applies to anything beyond this world? You know well you do not; you teach the contrary. “For the memory of them is forgotten: also their love, and their hatred, and their envy is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in anything that is done under the sun.” Is it not as clear as the sun, that all this applies to this world, as does the whole book—speaking of what is under the sun in the days of the life of our vanity?

You quote Psa. 146:4. The psalmist is contrasting the help of man on the earth and the help of Jehovah. Men are not to trust in princes, for their help is vain. Once dead, all their plans and projects are over: happy is he that has the God of Jacob for his help. He turns the way of the wicked upside down. He shall reign for ever, Zion’s God to all generations. Now what have the thoughts of man on earth perishing to do with the state of his soul after death?

But you chiefly rely on Job 14:12: nor are you singular. It has been at all times the resort of those who have gone even farther than you; and, with much more consistency, when they had extinguished body and soul, left them there; instead of creating a new person for a few minutes, as if he were the same, to extinguish him again in still less time. Thus speaks Job:

Man lieth down and riseth not till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.

And if they do not, what does that prove? I believe that fully; but I would remark, that we cannot take all that Job says in the vexation of his spirit as revelations, any more than all his friends say, who did not speak rightly of God as he did. They
all utter many acknowledged truths which no Christian doubts, and the writer of the book was inspired to give them; but it is only when we come to Elihu that we have an understanding of the case, which is in the inspiration of the Almighty, and perfect in wisdom by knowledge fetched from afar. This I say, not as my opinion, but as the declaration of the inspired Elihu himself.

We must remember that an historical book being inspired does not mean that what every one has said in it is, but that the writer was inspired to give it to us. We learn the speeches of wicked men, the acts and deceitful words of Satan, recorded by inspiration; now they clearly were not inspired. God has given us a full picture of man and his ways, and of His own ways in patient mercy with him, till the full truth was revealed in Christ. But then man’s ways were anything but inspired of God. The imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil, and that continually. To have a true inspired history of him we must have him as he is, not flattered by his own vanity; and hence the painful and frightful pictures we have in scripture. It tells the truth. Man hides it, because he is ashamed of himself; while he does for pleasure the thing he is ashamed of.

But in this case I see no reason to attribute the words to the unbelief working in Job’s heart by the side of much right feeling. It was the evident apparent effect of death. A man died, and man saw him no more till the close of all. So it will be; he will not rise (he does not say live), but “they shall not awake nor be raised out of their sleep.” But what is that sleep? That he cannot tell you: only he uses terms which, while they are consistent with the ignorance of another world and of the intermediate state, certainly do not say the dead have ceased to exist, and imply the contrary. For when I say they shall not rise, they shall not awake nor arise out of their sleep, these words suppose some one who is asleep, who will not awake till a given time. It is not a statement of non-existence, but the contrary. Great obscurity, save by some special revelation throwing its sudden light in on the soul-such was doubtless their state. It would have proved the book not genuine, if we had the doctrines and notions even of the apocryphal books in it; but it is left in this obscurity by the God-fearing though harassed spirit of this holy man, painfully learning what his own heart was. He does not go beyond his measure. As to this world, man is gone; he himself desires even to be hid in the grave. “If a man die, shall he live?” he says. Now if you do not apply this to living again in this world, you contradict your own doctrine, and make Job an absolute infidel as to any resurrection, as to any living again at all. But Job is speaking, as all Old Testament saints speak, in view of this world in which they had to say to God: the other was undoubtedly dark to them. But all he says is, that man will not rise again (that is from the grave), till the close of all things. I believe so (not speaking now of the special revelation of the first resurrection, of which Job, of course, is not speaking here, but of man as such). I believe just what Job believed, that when man lies down “they shall not rise, nor awake, nor arise out of their sleep, till the heavens be no more.” What difficulty then can it give me?

Job does not reveal to me what comes of his soul meanwhile. I do not expect him to do so. The Lord tells me it is not destroyed with the body. The apostle uses this same word “sleep,” adding “in Jesus” for the saints, who have their gain in death, because He receives their spirits. Can its use in Job create a difficulty? No, all is exactly in its place.

You add, “St. Paul says, to die is gain—not because he expected to live in a state of glory when dead, but because he knew that he should rest from toil and suffering—he would be taken away from the evil to come” (Isa. 57:1). Forgive my saying it was because of nothing of the kind. He says (it is found in Phil. 1: 21-23), “having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.” To live was not such a weariness: he says, “to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” You have entirely misrepresented the passage: he does not talk of avoiding the evil to come, but of the good to come in being with Christ, when he says death is gain. Your remark is very unfortunate; because, in another place, he does speak of rest, but there it is not connected with death: “To you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.”

And if I turn to Isaiah — which you patch on to Philemon, to explain a clearer revelation by one less full—I find what we have seen already, only in even a more remarkable way, and certainly as far as possible from extinguishing the righteous: he has done with the trouble of this world, and, in this sense, he is at rest. But is that all the prophet tells us? Here is the passage. “The righteous perisheth” -- mark the word -- “and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.” Now, I ask, does this encouraging revelation, “he shall enter into peace” -- mean he shall be extinct? No. It is not so clear as the New Testament: of course it is not. How could it be as clear as when Christ had lived through death, and risen out of it? But while the general subject is the government of this present world, as it ever was amongst the Jews, it consoles the righteous with the thought, that in dying he would enter into peace.

But you quote, as I stated, one more passage from the New Testament: “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, for they rest from their labors.” No doubt. We all believe that. But is that the whole passage? No. First there is added, “and their works do follow them.” Are they then extinct? But suffer me to ask you further, how I can think or pronounce people blessed who are extinct, or have ceased to exist. And mark, he does not (if I follow the way you quote the passage) say, Blessed are those who have risen again, but, “blessed are the dead.” Now it is impossible to conceive that a person who does not exist is blessed: indeed it is simple nonsense to say so. But the emphasis is on “who die in the Lord.” Now, if they are extinct, the same as ungodly people, why are they more blessed in death? for that is the time you refer it to. But, besides all this, you have not quoted the passage as it is in scripture—a serious thing, it seems to me, when you profess to teach from it as God’s word. The passage runs thus:
And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth.

Now of two things one: either, “from henceforth” refers to a particular prophetic moment, and therefore has nothing whatever to do with the extinction of a soul by death; or it is a positive revelation that people are immediately happy on their death. And when it is added, “and” (though they rest from their labors on earth), “their works do follow them,” being connected with “from henceforth,” directly contradicts that for which you quote it. Why did you leave out these words?

You also quote the passage from the Psalms: “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hades,” and argue that the application of it to Christ, is a proof that David’s soul being left in hades, had ceased to exist. I should have thought that a soul’s being left in hades, if it proved anything, proved that it did exist, or it could not be left there. The difference as to Christ was, that it was not left there; but both are supposed to exist, or they would not be thus reasoned about. It is quite true that David is not ascended into heaven. That expression is not applied to souls, nor does scripture speak of their being glorified; but it does of their subsisting after death, and of their being in hades. And when it says, “David was buried, and his sepulcher there,” it speaks of him as a known man on earth being dead and buried: not of his soul surely being buried: his soul is left in hades: be it so: it subsists then. What Peter would not do, as you say, I cannot tell: but I know, he does adduce his body being buried-which his soul, at any rate, was not, and his sepulcher being there -- as a proof that David was not ascended. What other proof does he bring?

As to Psa. 17: “I shall be satisfied when I awake with the Lord’s likeness,” and never till then. But I am always confident-blessed be that grace which has pardoned and received and quickened me-knowing that if I am absent from the body, I shall be present with the Lord. So Paul, at Antioch, is insisting on Christ’s not seeing corruption, and that the psalm does not apply to David, for he has seen corruption. Does he say anything about his soul? Not a word. Stephen fell asleep -- the word used by Paul as to David -- but Christ received his spirit.

You quote the case of Samuel. Error always loves obscure passages. But this proves the contrary of what you quote it for. How could Samuel be brought up, if he was totally extinct, and had ceased to exist? How could he be disquieted, if he were not? I agree with you, that Samuel meant that Saul would be among the dead, as Samuel was; but Samuel’s being there proved he had not ceased to exist when he was among the dead.

You quote Psa. 16 as referring to David, to prove that he expected nothing before his hope in Psa. 17; but you cannot use Psa. 16 as referring to David in one place, and in another prove, from Peter, that it does not. “In thy presence is fulness of joy,” comes after “thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; thou wilt not suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.” Thus, if it do apply to Christ’s ascension, it certainly does not show the soul to be extinct in the meanwhile; for Christ certainly was not extinct; so that your reasoning from it is demonstrably false. Christ was in paradise before His ascension to the right hand of the Father, of which He speaks here: but the whole path was a path of life to Him: “In him was life.” To say He was extinct, would be to give up being a Christian altogether, and yet worse than that.

I have now gone through all your statements on this subject, in which your great resource is the obscurity of the Old Testament on this point, an obscurity of which the New informs us; and, avoiding reference to the passages, and where you merely reasoned from a word, and sometimes one not used at all, or quite to another purpose, I have been obliged to examine the passages, and their context. But if the examination has been necessarily longer than the statement, it was worth while, for the sake of the souls of many poor sinners and saints too, not only to show the positive statements of the New Testament, but to follow you through your assertions and quotations, and see what they were worth.

I have again proved your doctrine by the word. I find that you omit all the clear positive statements of scripture; that your statements contradict them; that you assert, as to the use of words, what is not borne out by the fact; that you quote passages in part, or without the context, to prove your point; that your reasonings will not bear the light the moment the passages are consulted; and that what you do quote proves the contrary of what you quote it for. I reject your statements, therefore, when I have examined them, as unworthy of being entertained a moment longer. I only pray God heartily that you may be delivered from the snare into which you are fallen; and that He may preserve others from that which your words lay for them.

You have got some truth as to the importance of resurrection which others have not, but your own reasonings have carried you away. I cannot think you have examined the passages you refer to, or the use of words in them. Did I think so, I must judge you hardly honest in your reasoning, which I am not willing to suppose; but is it right thus carelessly to throw notions before others without carefully searching out their truth by the word? Why did you leave out “from henceforth” in quoting Rev. 14? Why do you speak of plucked up root and branch? I have searched concordances, lest my memory should deceive me-I find none such. Why speak of “burnt up,” when it is only used of the captains who would take the prophet? Is this serious enquiry into truth?

I shall show in another paper that your statements as to the “Atonement” -- a yet more important subject -- subvert, even in a more open way, those of scripture (see Collected Writings 7:63-86).

Collected Writings 7:40-62.
Appendix 2:

The Immortality of the Soul; An Enquiry into the Meaning of the Words, The True Force of Which is Denied by Such as Reject the Immortality of the Soul

There is nothing new under the sun. The Jewish Mystics and Cabalists and the Gnostics of the second and third centuries (against which last Paul warns us, and who, though beginning earlier, were then fully developed) held the doctrine of the non-immortality of the soul and its end, just as heretics on these points do now. They were divided even into the same two classes as now; that is, some held that the soul died with the body, others that it would be cast into the fire afterwards on being judged, and then consumed. Not only so, but they founded their teaching on the same reasonings as to nephesh, psuche, chaia, and ruach, &c. It may be well therefore, after showing the facts to be so, to examine the various words and ascertain their use in scripture, as well as that of some others sought to be employed to the same end.

The doctrine of Jewish Rabbis was not, as is evident, that of Jesus Christ being eternal life, or they would not have been Jewish Rabbis. But wherever they found it, basing it on the merit of works and keeping the law, as we may suppose, they taught that the higher spiritual life was a distinct thing from the animal life, and received at a distinct time. Their system is not uniform; more scriptural, but in many parts the same as our modern doctors, and the Gnostics completely so. The records of Jewish mysticism are comparatively of late date, but they record early opinions, many of which are found in early christian fathers, such as Origen, Jerome, and others, and in Philo and even Josephus. The Gnostics formed their systems in the same countries, Syria, and particularly Alexandria the great seat of all these opinions. My impression is that all these views came from the East. But I have not used research enough to verify this, nor is it necessary for the reader. My object is to meet from scripture the assertions of ancient and modern error in the present case by enquiri into the use of words.

The Jewish doctors distinguished three souls: the nephesh, the ruach, and the neshama. The nephesh they held, as our moderns also tell us, to be the animal soul, the soul by which the body lives; ruach is the spirit suited to the middle world; neshama that suited to the upper, and in which was the image of and union with God. Thus in the book Sohar 54 we have:

Let a man sanctify himself and they shall sanctify him more, and when a man is sanctified with the holiness of his Lord, he is then clothed with a holy mind, which is the inheritance of the holy one, and then he becomes heir of all things, and such are called the sons of the holy blessed God, as is written in Deut. 14:1, “Ye are the sons of Jehovah your God.”

This doctrine of the three souls or parts of man pervades the Sohar. Nephesh, the animal soul, is annexed to the body; the spirit to the soul, ruach to nephesh; and mind, the neshama or superior spirit, to the ruach. Some of them held that, if the child at least behaved well, having only the nephesh, he got the ruach at thirteen years and a day old, and the neshama at twenty or twenty-one: otherwise not. Some held there are those who never had any soul but the nephesh; others, that and the ruach; and others, again, the neshama also -- and these would be with God. If they had only the nephesh, it remained in the grave with the body-ended with it.

There was another system, which Origen applied even to Christ, that the higher soul could not come into this world without taking a secondary soul, and so, consequently, the body. 55 Indeed, according to him, they are born here according to their conduct in a previous existence. Josephus says the Pharisees held the metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls. It would seem that this trinity of the soul was someway connected with their speculations about the Godhead, the Memra, Shekinah, and a tissue of irreverent absurdities, which I need not enter into here.

In all ancient mythology and tradition, heathen and Jewish, will be found the craving of the human mind after truths which revelation gives as in their perfection. Infidels have consequently alleged that these truths were borrowed from the traditions, than which nothing can be more false. They were the source of Arianism and Gnosticism, Universalism and Annihilationism. Thus Rationalists tell us that the doctrine of the λόγος, or Word, was derived from the Alexandrian or even Palestinian Jews. These had their Memra, those their λόγος; and Philo speaks largely of it, and makes the visible world itself an expression, so to speak, of the λόγος, a living expression of it. But mark the real bearing of this. The reason was, that the supreme God could not by any possibility be in connection with matter. The mystic Rabbins held God for a kind of non-existence, because

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54. I make use of Größer in all the Jewish part of my subject, the only one I can at this moment refer to.

55. He held this, which the Alexandrian fathers considered to be the fall (not, of course, in the case of Christ), from Philo and the Alexandrian Jews. It was also Platonism.
there was no such connection with what we hold to exist.\textsuperscript{56} Hence there was a secondary God, the \(\lambda\)\(\gamma\)\(\omicron\)\(\omicron\)\(\varsigma\) or Word, which partook of His nature but was not the Supreme, and He then revealed Himself and was in communication with the creature. Yet in general, matter (\(\Upsilon\\Upsilon\)) was a thing evil in itself, a bond to the soul, and eternal too.

Now Christianity teaches the exact contrary of this doctrine of the \(\lambda\)\(\gamma\)\(\omicron\)\(\omicron\)\(\varsigma\) (word). The \(\lambda\)\(\gamma\)\(\omicron\)\(\omicron\)\(\varsigma\) is God -- created everything; and the very essence of Christianity is the immediate personal connection, in incarnation, between God and the creature -- God and man in one person. All the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily. “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,” that Word which, in the beginning, was, when all began. In eternity He was God, and personally too with God. By Him was everything made, and the Father dwelt in Him and He was in the Father. “We know him that is true, and are in him that is true, in his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.” One of the striking facts of the First Epistle of John is that it is impossible to separate Christ and God. It is one Person, one Being. Thus,

And now, little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming (1 John 2:28).

Whose coming? Clearly, Christ’s. Continue:

If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

Of whom? Of God; and so it follows,

Beloved, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God . . .

Beloved, now are we the sons of God.

Here, clearly, the person or being of whom he speaks is God. But continue:

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him.

Here it is again Christ; for it is, “Christ our life shall appear.” And “He was manifested to take away our sins,” continues John himself. That is, the apostle, the Spirit of God, does take up, and in a great measure anticipatively, the question of the \(\lambda\)\(\gamma\)\(\omicron\)\(\omicron\)\(\varsigma\), and gives us the exact opposite to the Platonic and Alexandrian doctrines— the full divine truth, in answer to all the wanderings and speculations which the cravings of need and the glimmerings of tradition had led men’s hearts to suggest to themselves and systematize.

The other form these speculations took was wilder, if not worse. There was a \(\pi\lambda\theta\rho\omicron\omega\alpha\), a fulness, of Godhead, which, in spiritual abstractions, of which depth, man, church, wisdom, and other scriptural subjects, formed part in male and female characters: an idea which entered into all Brahminical, Rabbinical, Egyptian, and Gnostic theology, the Egyptian being nearest to the Rabbinical. The \(\pi\lambda\theta\rho\omicron\omega\alpha\) was limited by \(\delta\rho\omicron\omicron\) (boundary). The \(\pi\lambda\theta\rho\omicron\omega\alpha\) was within; outside was \(\Upsilon\Upsilon\), or matter. The male and female of each pair were called \(\sigma\upsilon\varsigma\gamma\upsilon\epsilon\varsigma\) or yoked pairs. \(\Sigma\omicron\psi\omicron\omicron\alpha\) (wisdom), one of the lower members of the \(\pi\lambda\theta\rho\omicron\omega\alpha\), wanted to unite herself with, penetrate into by research, \(\beta\dot\varepsilon\theta\omicron\omicron\), or depth, the first origin of the whole \(\pi\lambda\theta\rho\omicron\omega\alpha\). She got outside the limit (\(\delta\rho\omicron\omicron\)), and hence this world, a mixture of matter and spirit. Christ, a new member of the \(\pi\lambda\theta\rho\omicron\omega\alpha\), came out to disengage what was spiritual from what was material, and bring it back within the limit or \(\delta\rho\omicron\omicron\). This branched out into a thousand forms and speculations useless to follow here. It connected itself with Manicheism in Persia, and reached on to the Bulgarians and Albigenes in France and Italy. But for a long time it was a great plague for the Church. They forbade to marry; commanded to abstain from meats. Christ had no real body (there was no atonement—could not be, if He was not a man). Abstinence and disengaging spirit from matter -- that was really saving. This also the Spirit anticipated. The apostle John carefully tells us that confessing Jesus Christ come in flesh was essential to Christianity; that the Word was made flesh, that they had touched Him with their hands; and Paul, that all the fulness (\(\pi\lambda\theta\rho\omicron\omega\alpha\)) was pleased to dwell in Him; and He was not an ajwvn, as they were called, but that all the fulness (\(\pi\lambda\theta\rho\omicron\omega\alpha\)) of the Godhead dwelt in Him bodily; that every creature of God is good and to be used with thanksgiving -- marriage honorable in all.

It may be asked why I refer to all this. First, the divine perfection of scripture is interesting. It anticipated and met all the wandering speculations of the human mind. But there is another reason. The doctrines of the soul’s mortality and of annihilation have their origin in these speculations—were the doctrines of the Rabbis and Gnostics, of whom we have been speaking, and are met by the scriptures also. Some of the Rabbis, holding a little more to scripture, were not so far gone in their speculations as their fellow doctors and modern Annihilationists. They held that it was by the communication of the \(\text{neshama}\), the highest kind of life, that man became a living soul; but that if he was not faithful, denied this life, he lost it.

I shall now give the passages from Rabbis and Gnostics which confirm what I have just said. First, the general idea from the Rabbins. Rabbi Abr. Seba says,

God has created three parts [souls] of men, the \(\text{nepesh}\), the \(\text{ruach}\), the \(\text{neshama}\).

In another mystic book,

Three forms of souls are in men: the first, the \(\text{neshama}\), the intelligent soul; the second, the \(\text{ruach}\), the speaking soul; the third, the \(\text{nepesh}\), the animal soul, which always lusts.

There are other passages to which I have already alluded, but these will suffice to give the idea. The doctrine was, as I have already remarked, largely developed in the mystic Jewish

\textsuperscript{56} All this is wonderfully like Brahminism, modified by going West, and was connected with theories of male and female being, the moment anything was to exist; which was equally Brahminical. But this is not the place to pursue this. The Brahmins were really more philosophical. But they and the Buddhists held nirvana, entering into non-existence, as supreme bliss, or, as some would say, into the abstract Deity, who never feels nor thinks; which, to me, is tantamount. All the rest is \(\text{maia}\), or illusion.
writers. There were rewards suited to each. The Gnostics added their notions as to the evil of matter. The fleshly (σαρκικός) connected itself with the soul life ψυχικός; translated “natural man” in scripture, and “flesh.” For scripture, as I have said, meets all these questions, and gives the divine answer to them. Truth is one, but it meets consequently all error -- all that is not truth. The simple soul has only need of the truth itself-thank God. But there is in it what meets gainayers. So we read in Jude, “sensual [ψυχικόν], not having the spirit.” The Gnostics treated the question according to their views of matter, using scripture of course. Man was ὑλικός, material ( ὑλικ -- from ὑλή, matter), χοϊκός, from χόος (1 Cor. 15:47). “The first man,” translated “earthly,” literally “of dust,” from Gen. 2:7; 3:19. Then ψυχικός “having a soul,” and πνευματικός, “spiritual.” But all this with them was man as man; for they held, as Origen and Grecian philosophers, that the spirit, or neshama, being from the upper world, could not be connected with matter without taking the cover or embodiment of a soul -- a ruach, to speak with the Rabbins. This took then a nephesh, or animal soul and body. If this last soul (here was their religion) was not spiritually married to that above it, it remained a mere beast’s or animal life, and died. The mystic Rabbis and Gnostics were exactly on the same ground here as modern deniers of immortality.

My reader will now see why I have referred to all these views. We are now exactly on the ground of modern Annihilationists, and, as will be seen, of both classes of them; for they differed then as now. The mystic Rabbis say men who have only nephesh die simply. The nephesh goes down and remains in the grave: if it got united to the ruach, then it did not. “There is a garment,” they said, “which subsists and which does not subsist, is seen and is not seen; with this the psuche [animal soul, or nephesh] is clothed.” But the nephesh was not for them immortal, and where this only was there, the life of the soul was in the blood, and, as an infidel would draw from Ecclesiastes, “That which bealleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing bealleth them. As the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they all have one breath. So that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast; for all is vanity. All go unto one place, all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.” That is, indeed, all that is seen “under the sun,” as to “the life of our vanity.” The Positivists, as one class of infidels are called, go no farther. They have not the sense to add with the Preacher, “Who knoweth the spirit of man? it goeth up on high; and the spirit of the beast? it goeth downward to the earth.” So one modern class believe death is simple death-ceasing to exist. If a man has not received the divine life, the neshama, his nephesh dies with his body like a beast. They have answered the “Who knoweth?” of the Preacher-have taken, as the Positivists, the ignorance they are in as a proof that there is nothing beyond it. The beast ceases to exist, and so does the man; nephesh is all one has, nephesh is all the other has, both go to dust alike. They lie in the hell like sheep: death gnaws upon them. The mystic Rabbis are found again and the ancient Gnostics. The nephesh has not put on the ἐνδύμα αἴσθαροις, the garment of incorruptibility and immortality. It has gone down under death, and there it lies. So in the Clementinae, 3:20 (early Gnostic writings pretending to be Clement’s), on Gen. 2:7, he attributes to the breath of God, θεοῦ πνεύμα, as an indescribable clothing of the psuche, its being able to be immortal.

But I shall be told that all do not hold this. They believe in resurrection, judgment, punishment, and then destruction, or, if preferred, as one of their teachers once put it, “the soul will lose its personality and individuality and pass off into its elements; for nothing is ever annihilated.” It is true there are the two classes, and so there were then. Hear the Clementinae, 3:6: “Those who have not repented will come to an end (τὸ τέλος ἐξουσιασμός) by the punishment (χολάσεως, the word in Matt. 25) of fire. They will be put out (extinguished), becoming extinct by eternal fire: πυρί; αἰωνιόν ἀνέπθεντες ἀποσβήσησίτες.” Here is exactly the other class of modern Annihilationists, the intellectual and theological children of the mystic Rabbis, and the Gnostics of the early ages, the object of special warning on the part of the Spirit of God in the apostles Paul and John, as the special power of evil in these days.

If we examine scripture, we shall see it furnishes the simple truth, and, at the same time, by its statement of it, meets all these human wanderings. It speaks of nephesh, and ruach, and neshama, but it speaks in a way which, in a few sentences, sets aside all the speculations of men. In the leading text on the subject, the revelation of God on the subject, we read, God formed man (as a potter, ὑμίκος) from the dust of the ground, and blew into his nostrils a breath of life (a nishmath chaiart), and man became a living soul (nephesh chaita). Here we find that it was by God’s breathing this highest power of life from Himself that man became a living soul. He had formed his body before, as he saw good, and it was by the communication of life from Himself that He animated the form He had made. The animals had issued by His will from the earth. He had said, “Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind [a nephesh chaita came forth (γογγύ]), and it was so.” Not so with man. God consults solemnly as to his creation, and resolves to make man in His image, after His likeness. So God created man in His image, and gave him dominion, and God blessed him, and God said to him and gave him to know his place, his food, the beasts’ food. He was the vessel of divine communications, as of the divine breath of life, and the object of divine counsels. He was to have a help meet for him, as an intelligent and affectionate and devout creature. God made a paradise, a dwelling for him, and for none else, gave him his easy and pleasant service, putting him into the garden.

But more than this, He put him into conscious relationship with Himself, as son of God, and put him under responsibility, giving him a law not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. That would bring death in. The sea monsters were made to multiply themselves, beasts created after their kind; and we know they multiply; and it is enough. But not only God formed the human form, and animated it from Himself, of which there is no hint as to beasts, but He formed (builted) the woman too, by a
mysterious process, which gave her a simple and the closest tie to the man -- built her, as the word is, Himself, and when He had, presented her Himself to Adam.

Man is said to be of the race -- the offspring -- of God (Acts 17:28); and Adam is called son of God (Luke 3:38). "In him we live, and move, and have our being," and, though fallen, are still recognized as made after the image of God (James 3:9). So God, though He found him lost, could come down and walk in paradise and have intercourse with Adam. And it is the more important to recognize that he was fallen, because it gives the distinct and definite witness, that, though death had come in, man was still the responsible being he was before, having to say to God in a double way -- the exercise of present government in the earth, and exclusion from God's place of blessing and His presence.

The case of Cain shows us the same thing, the responsibility and its results being distinctly stated: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? if ill, sin (or a sin-offering, which I doubt not is the sense) lieth at the door." Man's relationship, and responsible relationship, with God is thus clearly placed before us. The whole history of scripture up to his rejection of Christ is the development of it. Sin, from the entrance of lust up to hatred of God, is as fully as sadly brought out. He had a soul capable of affections towards God; for it was found that the mind of the flesh was enmity against God. This, mark, was the unregenerate man, the man with only a psyche, a nephesh chaia, if they will have it so. He, God's offspring, had a soul capable of feelings towards God in this relationship. Alas! enmity was his state.

But I am told that Hebrew will tell us wonders, and I have only to make some square Chaldaic letters and immortality disappears. Let us follow the scripture use of these Hebrew words. Now I think it will be found that neshama is the act of respiration, or breathing-if from God, in the power of the life in Him -- but breathing. Ruach, spirit (but used for the Spirit of God, a wind, or other spirit, the spirit of man, or even of beast, in Ecclesiastes), is that by which man or beast breathes, the life which expresses itself in breathing. Hence, in the flood, all wherein was the nishmath ruach chaiim, the breath of the spirit of life, died, man or beast, all whose present life was sustained by breathing. Nephesh chaia is the actual result in a living individual. The man or beast doing this is a nephesh chaia, a living soul, any living animal, man or beast. And nephesh so fully gives the idea of what is individual (seen and known, moving about, represented to us by bodily presence) that it is used for a dead body, because the same once living form is there. An Israelite was not to profane himself by a dead body (nephesh), rightly so translated, but there is no neshama or ruach. So we should call dead relatives by their names and show their corpses as themselves, though we well know there is no life in them. It is called nephesh meeth, a dead body, or simply nephesh. Priests were not to profane themselves by it unless for their nearest of kin.

But the scripture rejects the thought of the soul's not living distinct from the body, where it uses nephesh properly for the soul of a man, as it does (see 1 Kings 17:21, 22), where Elijah prays that the child's soul may return to him again, and the Lord heard him and it returned. On the contrary, but proving the same point, Paul says of Eutychus, "his soul is in him" (Acts 20). What the creation, therefore, affords us is the most careful elaborate distinction between man and other animals: they, by God's will, springing up out of the earth to live by breathing, and being nephesh chaia, a living individual being with a body having breath, neshama, and a ruach, a life which lived by breathing; man having all this too, as every one on the face of the earth knows, without knowing Hebrew at all. But it teaches us that man got to be such on the earth in a totally different way from other living animals, namely, by God's breathing from Himself into him, when He had formed his body of the dust, a breath of life, and thus he became a living soul. Hence he was the offspring γενος, offspring, race, kind, generation, is the only true meaning of this word, and it is so used in Acts 17) of God, lived and moved and had his being in Him, and was in responsible relationship with Him, intelligently subject to a law, and alas! not only disobedient, but capable of hating God, of such an apprehension of Him as ought to have drawn out love, but from his moral state brought out hatred; capable of receiving communications from God as in nature and place in relationship with Him; and that he has, in fact, received these communications, and God has dealt with him as acceptable, if good, or, if sinful, the object of a provided sin-offering when in that natural state, no question of the gift of eternal life having been raised. The whole scripture proceeds on this ground exactly, where the gift of eternal life is not spoken of. That is a new thing given, but man is dealt with all through as a responsible being where it is not given, and this, whether (to use the first grand statement of it) you say, sin, or as I should a sin-offering, lies at the door. The death of Christ (though surely means, and in fact a needed means of it) applies not to the gift of eternal life in the first instance, but to a responsible sinner, a child of Adam.

The Old Testament saints, however obscurely, did gather to the truth of the subsistence of the soul after death, and the resurrection too: I admit obscurely; but they gathered it. Abraham looked for the city which hath foundations. The Preacher speaks of the spirit's returning to God who gave it. The Psalms told of the King's soul not being left in hades, nor His body seeing corruption; and in God's presence fulness of joy (Psa. 16); and being satisfied when one awoke after God's likeness (Psa. 17). Many suffered, looking for a better resurrection, to say nothing of Job's hope shining through his wasting disease. And the Lord's judgment is pronounced on the Saducees, that they greatly erred, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God; and we read in Luke, not only there was a resurrection, but "all live unto God." They are dead for man, they are not for God.

But eternal life, we are told, is "God's gift in Christ," and so only. Admitted fully. But first, then, let it be admitted that "eternal" emphatically means eternal; for otherwise, after the reception of eternal life, a man may as little have immortality as before; and after its reception even, in the
scripture use of immortality, that is true; for mortal applies to his body, and it is only in resurrection that the saint ever puts on immortality. But that (the gift of eternal life in Christ alone) has nothing to do with the question of the immortality of the soul. It neither proves it nor disproves it, save only that, in a very vague way, it suggests immortality; because the gift of eternal life to a beast would make him a wholly new kind of being. Eternal life, though above and out of the reach of man’s responsibility, yet is connected with it. It is grace to a being capable of it, while remaining the same being, and dealt with on the footing of his previous responsibility. Were it given to a beast, it would have no connection at all with it as a being, nor have anything to say to its previous existence. It would be itself simply a new being. But while eternal life is a new gift to man, in Christ, and comes in Christ become man, yet it is fully connected with, and refers to, man as previously existing, is, by the word acting on his mind, heart, conscience, and, while a new thing, in itself, wholly acts in and connects itself with him to whom it is given, so that he remains the same person, and by it recognizes and takes notice of all that he was before, as a responsible and the same person. The “I” remains the same. The nature is acted on, and by it judged and condemned, and the “I” for so acting in it.

The gift of eternal life proves, as far as it goes, an immortal soul that has relationship to God, not a beast’s estate -- “made to be taken and destroyed” -- “the beasts that perish.” Indeed, why should such language as I here quote be used if man were just the same? But scripture does not so speak. It does express the darkness of man, who sees his present life disappearing and knows nothing beyond; but even then it carries him onward in thought and hope -- cravings, not knowledge -- that the spirit returns to God who gave it. It does not know, but asks “who knoweth the spirit of man? It goeth up above.” There is not knowledge here; there is the heaving desire of what was breathed from God -- not the answer to it. Man had plunged himself in darkness. Death was there -- what beyond? Hope, saintly confidence in God, a deliverer and a deliverance to come which would not leave believers without hope. But life and incorruptibility were brought to light by the gospel; they were not brought to light before (mind, he does not say, did not exist). The poor and shallow sophistry that would use this to say they began to be then must deny that saints had life from God, were born of God, or that Enoch and Elijah were other than fables, or exceptions to the truth as to others even in their souls, and say Abraham’s faith was vain, and that God was the God of the dead, not of the living. They were brought to light then in the gospel revelation, because they were there to be brought to light, though the incorruption had only been wondrously exhibited, the life dimly apprehended, though certainly there, and not the subject of the immediate government and revelation of God. In Christ life has become the light of men; and we have the light of life, we do not walk in darkness.

But I am told, God only has immortality. Undoubtedly. But if this use be made of it, the saint has not it. The angels are mortal too. But both statements are clearly unscriptural: see Luke 20:36, not to cite other passages. It is not therefore what the passage means. It is a false use of it. God only has, possesses, immortality in Himself independently. But we -- all men, live, move, and have their being, in Him who is so. None of us have it independently in ourselves. All things subsist in Him. But whether a being is perishable or not by His creation is a question of fact. The angels do not die. God only possesses in Himself immortality. On the other hand, ὁνείμοσις (mortal) is never applied to the soul, always to the body, as Rom. 6:12; 8:11; 2 Cor. 4:11; 5:5; 1 Cor. 15:53, 54, and (which is the important point here) man is mortal when he certainly has eternal life and his soul will never die. Mortality applies to his body. He is only called mortal in the New Testament, when, by the confession of all, he has a life which can never die. That is, mortality does not apply to his soul at all, as used in the New Testament, where the truth is brought to light. So as to death: in the Old Testament it is applied to the fact of dying, and generally darkness lies beyond.

It is sought to use “The soul that sinneth it shall die” as meaning that the soul shall die after death, or, as the out-and-out Annihilationists would say, in death itself. These last fly in the face of scripture, because, to say no more of it, after death comes judgment. But if it is not in death, then death does not mean ceasing to exist -- as, in fact, it never does-but ceasing to exist in the way and relationship men were living in. Of the second death we will speak farther on. Man ceases by death to be a nephesh chayâ -- a living soul and body in this world, and becomes, as to this world, a nephesh meeth -- a dead body, or body of death.

But, if we turn to the passage in Ezekiel where the expression is found and whence it is taken, we shall see that it has nothing to do with the death of the soul as apart from the body, but a man’s death as living in this world. Such a use of soul for person is common now. I say, It is a town of fifteen thousand souls. Who misunderstands me? Israel complained that they were in trouble and cut off for their fathers’ sins, that the fathers had eaten sour grapes and the children’s teeth were set on edge (Ezek. 18:2), and, such was the law, the son bore the iniquity of the father-the iniquity of the father was brought upon the children. This should no longer be done. As the soul of the father, so the soul of the son was Jehovah’s. The soul that sinned, it should die. A devout father had a wicked son: “Should he live? (ver. 13) he shall not live; he hath done all these things; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him.” So when the righteous turned away from his righteousness and committed sins, he should die in them. As the Lord said, “If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.” “Our father” (says the daughters of Zelophehad, Num. 27) “died in the wilderness; he died in his own sin.” But with a wicked father, if the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father.

Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God, and not that he should return from his ways
and live?
So if the righteous turn from righteousness, in his sins that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

What light may be thrown on the final result by the New Testament is another question. But in Ezekiel what is spoken of is a man belonging to this world dying in his sins. Death never means ceasing to exist. It is used for other things than physical death. The woman that lives in pleasure is dead while she lives. The believer has passed from death unto life. He who loves the brethren has passed from death unto life. That is, when applied to the soul, it has nothing to do with ceasing to exist, but separation of the soul from God, as a state of a soul which was alive as to existence, not possessing divine life, but as much alive as a being as when he had. So Rom. 7 (10, and v. 24) teaches us the same truth. Paul found the commandment to be to death; but he was just as much alive, as to existence, as ever. The sin unto death is physical death. In a word, death means either simple physical death as we see it, or separation from God -- not having divine life -- when a man is alive.

We have now to see if physical death is the extinction, or even the sleep, of the soul. 57 And, further, we must search the New Testament, where these things are brought to light. First, it is stated that all live to God. This is given as a general principle, when the living state of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is declared to the Sadducees, who held annihilation doctrine. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Thus far it may be reasoned that it only applies to the saints, whose God God is. The Lord therefore adds “For all live unto him.” It is a general truth, not merely applicable to Abraham and those that had his faith. It is true of all: πάντες γὰρ ζῶντες ζῶντες. And this, the more important because the Lord is speaking of saints. For, though they were born of God, He does not rest the truth of even their being alive on that, but says “God is not the God of νεκρῶν, but of ζωντῶν” -- not of dead men or bodies, but of living persons. What is the great principle on which it is founded? -- “For all live unto him.” No one is really dead as regards God. Accordingly, the Lord charges His disciples not to fear them that can kill the body and have no more that they can do, but Him who, after He has killed, can cast into hell. That is, death is positively declared not to be the end or cessation of existence. Death means “men killing the body,” and no more. Killing (ἀποκτείνω), θανατοῦ is more to have a person put to death, as in a persecution, or judicially) and death are fully correlative, as may be seen in Rom. 7. Further, the parable of Dives and Lazarus plainly pictures the same truth. Death is no ending of existence for wicked more than for just. Hades was known to the Jews, and hades was owned of the Lord as true.

And this leads me to the question: Is the state after death, for just or unjust, a state of unconsciousness? Is the soul asleep? The reader has the answer from Luke 16 already. But a word more. It is never said nor hinted that the soul sleeps after death. That is all a fable. Death is called sleep, or falling asleep, as to the just. But there is not the most distant suggestion that the soul sleeps. When Christ told His disciples “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth,” He explained the word: Lazarus ἀπεθάνε, has died. “He spake,” we are told, “of his death,” not of his state after death. Falling asleep is a man living in this world’s dying, not his state after dying. Stephen fell asleep, not Stephen’s spirit, which surely was received up by Christ, as Christ’s had been by the Father. Did He cease to exist, or was He unconscious?

Again, the Lord said to the thief, replying exactly to the point in question, “To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.” Did that mean he should go to sleep and know nothing? Paul thought it far better to depart and be with Christ. Did that mean, go fast asleep and know nothing? To be absent from the body and present with the Lord—which meant, that he should be fast asleep and not know whether the Lord was there or not! I have said the thief’s case applies directly to the point. The thief, in his bright faith owning Christ to be King when all had forsaken Him, asked, thinking only of this, that the Lord would remember him when He came in (not into) His kingdom. The Lord’s answer is “You shall not wait for that happiness. I have a heavenly place for my people’s souls meanwhile: to-day thou shalt be with me in paradise.” Which means, I promise you, you shall be fast asleep and know nothing till the kingdom comes! Are we to be mocked with such interpretations?

Finally, the rich man in hades and the poor man in Abraham’s bosom were very far from being asleep. We are told it is only a picture on Jewish principles. No doubt; but it is the Lord’s picture, who meant to teach us by it, and certainly not that the dead are fast asleep, but just the contrary.

But we are told it is in the second death they are extinct. But this destroys itself, for then death does not mean ceasing to exist; for if death meant ceasing to exist, there could be no second death, for the being would have ceased to exist in the first. It is all a fable, so using death. Christ has died. The saints have died, just as truly as the wicked. They may have a life the wicked have not, but they have as truly died, and they have not become extinct nor ceased to exist. And if the wicked undergo a second death, death does not mean ceasing to exist; for they died the first death, and did not cease to exist, for they have to undergo the second. But then, we are told, the second will be -- not because it is death, we have seen. And we must look to scripture to see if that is meant by the second death (i.e., if ceasing to exist is what is meant). It teaches the contrary. Men at the final judgment are cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death. The second death is the punishment of the lake of fire -- not that punishment’s ceasing by the punished ones ceasing to exist. The punishment destroys them, we are told, as the Clementine Gnostics had told us before. But then, the lake of fire, the punishment, is the second death, not their ceasing to exist so that the punishment ceases. “They have their part in the lake of fire, which is the second death,” existing there in it, having their

57. {See Letters 3:464, Letters 1:387, and Collected Writings 31:182 on the notion of soul sleep.}
part in it, is the time they are in the second death. Their part is not said to be punishment’s ending by death, but the actual punishment of the lake of fire. So the devil that deceived the nations was cast into the lake of fire, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. There is no word of the close of their existence and of torment being the second death. It is the punishment itself, of the lake of fire, which is so called -- the outer darkness, where are weeping and gnashing of teeth.

This naturally leads me to the word eternal (αἰώνιος). We are told it does not mean eternal. If I go out of scripture, I find the fullest proof that it means eternal. Aristotle defines it, αἰών ὤν, always existing. I have found several others, but I quote only one passage from Philo, because it is so directly to the point, and is the Greek used at the time of our Lord: ἐν αἰώνι δὲ ὡς τε παρελήμυνεν οὐδὲν οὐ πέματε ἄλλα ὑψότικε -- in eternity nothing is either past or to come, but only subsists—it is proper eternity. What we have then to look to is how αἰώνιος, the adjective, is used in scripture.

Now I say that the word regularly means in scripture “eternal,” in the sense of contrast with any period of time. “If our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (2 Cor. 5:1). “To whom be honor and power everlasting” (1 Tim. 6:16). “The God of all grace, who hath called us to his eternal glory” (1 Pet. 5:10). “And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:9). “Having obtained eternal redemption” (Heb. 9:12). “They which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance” (Heb. 9:15).

“Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God” (Heb. 9:14). “For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4:18; Rom. 16:26), which is conclusive. Now these suffice to show that the regular meaning of αἰώνιος, in its own plain and absolute sense, is eternal. Where it is used of punishment, in Matt. 25, it is in purpose and expressed contrast used of life: the one have eternal life, the others eternal punishment. The duration of the punishment of the wicked, and of the life of the just, are expressed by the same identical term -- I may add, that of the existence of God Himself; and this term, put in contrast elsewhere with all that has a temporary duration, so that I do not see how it could be stated more plainly.

But we do not escape these efforts to elude what is plain, even by this. Punishment, we are told, does not mean punishment. It means pruning, or I know not what, cutting off a branch -- καλλάσσεις is the word. It is used in one other place in scripture: “Fear hath torment.” Its scriptural sense is torment. So in a passage I have quoted from the Clementineae, it is used as torment. And that is its meaning -- punishment or torment. This, according to this verse, is eternal, not temporal. But the verb κολαζω (punish) is found elsewhere in the New Testament. “Finding nothing how they might punish them” (Acts 4:21). “Reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished” (2 Pet. 2:9). This is the plain sense of the word.

But the word “destroy” also is referred to, to show that, though the punishment is everlasting, the punished are not-a thing hard for a simple mind to understand. For if there remain none to be punished, it is hard to conceive how punishment remains. Hard to suppose that where the Lord uses the figure “their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched,” they die, or cease to exist, though the worm and the fire remain, though it be their worm that does not die. Still we will see if destroy means what is said. It is very hard to understand “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord” to mean that nothing exists. What is out of the presence of the Lord? What is everlasting destruction? If a thing ceases to exist, and destruction means that, it cannot be everlasting. But the truth is, on their own showing, the passage has not this sense at all. For this happens at Christ’s appearing, at the beginning of the millennium, when there is no destruction in their sense of it at all. They are punished with destruction, but in that destruction they still subsist, as is admitted. It is the time of weeping and gnashing of teeth in outer darkness. (Matt. 13.) That destruction is everlasting in which the punished ones subsist.

But the word does not mean the ceasing to exist. The angel of the bottomless pit is called Apollyon, or Abaddon, the destroyer, in Greek and Hebrew words. But he can destroy nothing. It is written, “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help.” “I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” “Destroy not thy brother with thy meat, for whom Christ died.” “And through thy knowledge shall thy weak brother perish?” “If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.” “Zacharias perished between the temple and the altar.” “Carest thou not that we perish?” “The scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him.” “Not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” “Art thou come to destroy us?” (Mark 1:24). In Matthew is an analogous case. They say, “Art thou come to torment us before the time?” This was in the bottomless pit. But Satan, we read, is tormented in the lake of fire “for ever and ever” -- the term used for the existence of God. In Matt. 10:39, “He that saveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.” “For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction shall come upon them” -- confessedly here no ceasing to exist. 1 Tim. 6:9, “Foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.” “They perish in the gainsaying of Core.” “So the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.”

The word then is used for ruin, moral or physical. It is false to say it means simply a ceasing to exist. It may mean a ruin of the state in which a thing existed. Hence the driving a human being from the Lord’s presence, or his present state of alienation from it; and it is so used. I doubt if a single passage could be found which proves it means causing to

58. In Homer αἰών is used for a man’s life often. It is used by Herodotus and the Attic poets so far as to say, ἀνέπνευ σοιν αἰώνα “he breathed out his life,” when eternity was not known. It is used for the whole time a thing subsists -- for ever, as I give a child something for ever.
cease to exist. 59 I have known Annihilationists object to the name, because nothing can be annihilated. But if so, their whole theory falls to the ground. It is merely making a physical thing of the soul, dispersed then into its elements, instead of moral ruin, for which, as to the soul, the word is certainly used, as we have seen. I have cited passages where ἀπολλυμι, ἀπώλεσαι, and ὀλεθροῦν are used. The root is all the same. The statements made on these subjects set aside one another. If death be ceasing to exist, there can be no judgment after. It is in vain to say they are raised; for if they have ceased to exist, there is no one to raise. Nor can punishing or destruction, in the sense of ceasing to exist, come afterwards.

My object has been, to go through the words by which, or as to which, Annihilationists seek to puzzle simple minded Christians -- not to reason out the subject. I add only two or three words to show why their fair words and smooth speeches do not attract me, where they seem fairest. We have seen that the morally dead and the lost may be alive, and that scripture so speaks. But if the soul be simply mortal with the body, and there is no life out of Christ; beyond this, where do sinners get the life they are punished in till burned out? It must be from Christ, for creation has not given it to them. That is, they get (not their wicked life in which they are fallen and enemies to God,) but a new life of Christ in which to be punished in another world! I do not see the moral sense or attractiveness of this doctrine.

Further, I understand an immortal soul that is at enmity with God and excluded from Him, though once formed to own Him, being for ever miserable. But why God, out of pure pleasure, should keep alive a soul to torment it for a time, only to burn it out at the end, for no possible effect, I cannot conceive. It does not alarm men now. For to tell them that they will simply perish in the end, and it is “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die” -- the infidel finds it a very comfortable and reasonable doctrine. It is in vain to say, it is not honest to say, that men fear total destruction and perishing more than anything; for its advocates resist eternal punishment because it is dreadful to think of. They know it is not the same thing. No doubt man does not like dying or perishing in itself as to this world, where he is alive, but to end in a future one, where there is only torment, he likes very well.

My horror of this doctrine is its weakening our sense of the nature of sin, of our responsibility, and of the atonement. If sin means eternal exclusion from God’s presence, it is dreadful enmity against God now, exclusion from God then. If death is the only wages of sin, Christ had no more to suffer for me. Nay, if I am a Christian, He had nothing to suffer, if I die before the Lord comes. I have paid the wages myself. If it be only some temporary punishment I had incurred, He had only that to bear. “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” has lost its force. It is in vain to say, He gives us life.

He can, in itself, quicken without dying. If He died, He died for my sins, and bore them. If death be the wages, millions of saints have paid them. And if a partial punishment be all I had to bear, it is all Christ had to bear. The sense I have of sin and its desert is not, being forsaken of God, shut out from Him when I can know what it is, but a temporary punishment, a quantum of offence, which is all I have to think of, and all Christ had to bear, if anything.

It is alleged, I have been told since I wrote this, that there is another view held, namely, that the soul, having its life in Christ, is in Christ when a man dies, and is, so to speak, lost in Him, and then at the resurrection becomes a conscious person again. This is a mere notion and a foolish one too. It destroys, not consciousness nor has anything to do with sleeping, but personality. It applies only to saints, and as to them is in direct violation of the testimony of scripture, which attributes personality to the saints when gone hence. “To-day shalt thou be with me.” There are the distinct persons present with the Lord. There must be a distinct person to be present with the Lord. And so with other texts. That our life is hid with Christ in God (the only allusion to an idea approaching it in scripture) proves, as far as it goes, the contrary; because it is spoken of saints living on the earth, where their personality is unquestionable. But the best answer to it is, it is a mere human invention. In the hiding in God we are associated with Christ. He also now is hid in God -- I suppose a conscious person; and it is in contrast with our appearing to others when He appears, not to any living personality in which we enjoy His presence. It is, we have seen, spoken of our present state, when living personality is unquestionable.

There is another word I have omitted to notice, βαισανιζω and βαισασιμος, torment. This, we are told, comes from a Lydian stone used to test gold. Very likely; but the conclusion that therefore the words, when passed into common use, meant “to prove,” and not “to torment,” is simply false. Thus Matt. 8:6: “My servant lieth sick, grievously tormented.” What has that to do with the lapis Lydiius? 2 Pet. 2:8: “He [Lot] vexed his righteous soul.” In Rev. 9:5 the verb and the noun are used for the torment of a scorpion’s sting. Matt. 14:24: “tormented by the waves.” So of the men -- Mark 6:49 -- showing how the etymological meaning was wholly forgotten for the fact of torment. Rev. 14:11: those who worship the beast are tormented for ever -- have no rest. Rev.18:15: we read of Babylon’s torment; Rev. 20:10, the devil is tormented day and night. Is he put to the proof as gold by the lapis Lydiius? Matt. 18:24: the unforgiving servant delivered to the tormentors. The attempt to deny that βαισασιμος, (because that in its etymology it is borrowed from the lapis Lydiius) means torment, in the ordinary sense of the word, is a mere fraudulent effort to pervert the plain fact.

There are a number of Hebrew words out of which something has been attempted to be made, in one tract I have seen, as acharith tikvah, opher, etzem and etzem, tzlelem, and others; but what is said of them does not really deserve any notice. It astounds somewhat a person who has the smallest acquaintance with Hebrew, or can use a dictionary and

59. I had thought, from memory, there was a passage “I create and I destroy”; but I cannot find it in the Concordance. I am told it is from Handel’s.
concordance. But I recall the reader’s attention to the fact, that “this mortal” is said distinctly of the body, not of the soul: “this mortal shall put on immortality,” “our mortal bodies,” and the like; that consequently we read of killing the body, and having no more that they can do. We read of God as the “Father of spirits,” “the God of the spirits of all flesh,” and that formeth the spirit of man within him. The fact that the angels do not die and are not mortal is the plain proof that it is a false use of God only having immortality, using it to prove men have not immortal souls; for the same argument would prove angels were also mortal -- which is false. But of this I have spoken. It is immortality in and of Himself.

It has been attempted to say, there is no appeasement of wrath with God. The words ἡλάσκεσθαι, ἡλασμός, ἡλαστήριον, all have exactly this sense. They meet the qualities or attributes in God which are necessary and must be maintained or He is not God as He is (or not God at all), to maintain what He is, His holiness and righteousness. But He is supreme in love.

I press too on my reader, that when a man receives eternal life, he takes notice of all his past evil and sin as that for which he is responsible. If a beast received eternal life -- and the theory makes animal life the same in all -- could a beast hold himself responsible for all his previous conduct as a guilty, responsible soul? Are they to be judged as in their nature capable of guiltily rejecting Christ? If not, the whole theory is a disgraceful fraud on our minds. If ἀθανασία was literally, as to the fact, to be applied only to God when Paul wrote it, then the saints who had got eternal life had no immortality even then, or else mortality applied only to their bodies, which is the fact in scripture; for, as I have said, the saints are spoken of as mortal, like the rest. Thus it is evident that “mortal,” “corruptible,” “death” applies to the state in which we are down here as men living on the earth, where death is entered by sin, and to the separation of soul and body. It is, as scripture speaks, killing the body, and has nothing to do with the soul. A person who in his soul has eternal life has not ἀθανασία more than another -- has still to put it on. That is, it has nothing to do with the dying nature of the soul, or the contrary. It means that it cannot cease to exist in the state in which it exists at present; not that it has it in itself as God, but that it is its condition by His will. What puts on immortality is what was liable to death -- this body, which could be killed in a saint as in a sinner, for the saint lives because Christ lives; his soul cannot die more than Christ now; yet he is as mortal as the sinner; and so, in fact, did Christ die. Did He cease to exist, or did He not truly die? Does it cease to be true that God “only hath immortality” when we are raised, for then we certainly have ἀθανασία?

When I find all these efforts to falsify the use of words, I know the source of this doctrine, and that no lie is of the truth.

*Collected Writings* 10:328-349.
Appendix 3:
On the Greek Words for
Eternity and Eternal

(aion AND aionios)

I have thought that, as one of the forms in which infidelity circulates at present is Universalism, or the Restitution of all things, it might be well to put out clearly and simply some facts (for that is what they are), which may deprive its advocates of one main ground of their reasonings, and that without any reasoning on the general subject of a doctrine, which, when examined, sets aside the truth of Christianity. I refer to the meaning of aion, and also of aionios. We are told by Dr. Farrar, with much pretension to competency in affirming it, that “everlasting” or “eternal” ought not to be found in the Bible; by Mr. Cox, that it means properly an “age” and “age-long,” and that it cannot be right to translate them eternal or everlasting. Mr. Jukes, with a wild imagination, takes the same ground. They simply echo one another. Now all I purpose to do here is to state some passages from other authors, which prove that (while used in other senses, some of which are not found at all in Scripture), it does mean “eternity” and “eternal.” I will afterwards examine some of the passages in Scripture in which it is found.

Aion in Greek properly means “eternity.” I do not dispute here, whether we are to believe with Aristotle, that it is derived from aei einai; or with other modern writers from aio, I breathe, whence it had the meaning in Homer, Euripides, and other authors, of life and breath; or possibly these may be two different words, one from aei on, the other from ao spiro, whence the two very different meanings. This is certain, that the word is distinctly used by Plato, Aristotle, and Philo (and, according to the dictionaries, by Lycurgus, whom I have not the means of consulting) as “eternal,” in contrast with what is of time having beginning or ending, as its definite and proper meaning.

Plato (Timoeus, ed. Steph. 3, 37, or ed. Baiter, Orell. et Winck. 712) says, speaking of the universe:

When the father who begot it 60 perceived that the image made by him of the eternal (aionion) gods moved and lived, he was delighted with his work; and, led by this delight, thought to make his work much more like that first exemplar.

Inasmuch therefore as it (the intelligible universe) is an eternal (aionion) animal (living being), so he set about to make this (the sensible) universe such with all his power. The nature therefore of the animal (living being) was eternal (aionios, before aidios), and this indeed it was impossible to adapt to what was produced (to genneto, to what had a beginning); he thinks to make a moveable image of eternity (aionos), and in adoring the heavens he makes of the eternity permanent in unity a certain eternal image moving in number, that which in fact we call time; that is, days and nights, and months and years, which did not subsist before the heaven began to be, then with its being established he operates their birth” (beginning to be, genesin auton). And after unfolding this, he says (p. 38): “But these forms of time imitating eternity (aion), and rolling round according to number, have had a beginning (gegonen) . . . Time therefore began with heaven. that they having begun with it may be dissolved with it, if there be indeed any dissolution of them, and according to the pattern of eternal (diaionias, in some MSS. aionion or -- as) nature that it might be as like as possible to it. For that pattern exists for all eternity (panta aionon estin on), but on the other hand, that which is perpetual (dia telous) throughout all time has had a beginning, and is, and will be.” And then he goes on to speak of stars and planets, etc., as connected with what was created in time. It is impossible to conceive any more positive statement that aion is distinct, and to be contrasted with what has a beginning and belongs to the flux of time. Aion is what is properly eternal, in contrast with a divine imitation of it in ages of time, the result of the creative action of God which imitated the uncreate as nearly as He could in created ages. It is a careful opposition between eternity and ages; and aion and also aionios mean the former in contrast with ages.

I now give Aristotle peri ouranou, 1, 9 (ed. Bekker, 1, 279): “Time,” he says, “is the number of movement, but there is no movement without a physical body. But outside heaven it has been shown that there is not, nor possibly can come into existence, any body. It is evident then that there is neither place, nor void, nor time outside. Wherefore neither in place are things there formed by nature; nor does time cause them to grow old: neither is there any change of anything of those things which are arranged beyond the outermost orbit; but unchangeable, and subject to no influence, having the best and most independent life, they continue for all eternity (aiona). For this expression (name) has been divinely uttered by the ancients; for the completeness which embraces the time of the life of each, outside which there is nothing, according to nature, is called the aion of each. According to the same word (logon) the completeness

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60. Both Plato and Aristotle treat the universe as a living animal, proved so by its constant movements: from them also Philo.
of the whole heaven, and the completeness which embraces all
time and infinitude is aion, having received this name from
existing for ever (apo tou aeí einai), immortal (athanatos,
undying), and divine." In 10 he goes on to show that that
beginning to be (genesthai) involves the not existing always,
which I refer to as showing what he means by aion. He is
proving the unchangeable eternity of the visible universe.
That is no business of mine; but it shows what he means by
eternity (aion). It cannot be aidion and genesthai at the same
time, when, as in Plato, aidios is used as equivalent to
aionios. Aristotle has not the abstract thoughts of Plato as to
topics, and the paraideigma of what is visible, the latter being
a produced image of the eternal paraideigma. He rests more
in what is known by the senses; and makes this the eternal
thing in itself. But the force of aion for both is a settled point;
and Aristotle's explanation of aion as used for finite things, I
have long held to be the true one; that is, the completeness of
a thing's existence, so that according to its natural existence
there is nothing outside or beyond it. It periechei the whole
being of the thing.

As to Philo, the sentence is in De Mundo, 7, en aioni de
oute pareleluhen ouden, oule mellee, alla monon iphhestekin.
Such a definition needs no explanation: in eternity nothing is
passed, nothing is about to be, but only subsists. This has the
importance of being of the date and Hellenistic Greek of the
New Testament, as the others give the regular, and at the
same time philosophical force of the word, aion, aionios.
Eternity, unchangeable, with no 'was' nor 'will be,' is its
proper force, that it can be applied to the whole existence of
a thing, so that nothing of its nature was before true or after
true, to telos to periechon. But its meaning is eternity, and
eternal. To say that they do not mean it in Greek, as Jukes
and Farrar and S. Cox, and those they quote, is a denial of
the statements of the very best authorities we can have on the
subject. If Plato and Aristotle and Philo knew Greek, what
these others say is false. That this is the proper sense of
aionios in Scripture, is as certain as it is evident. In 2 Cor.
4:18, we have ta gar blepomena proskaira, ta de me
blepomena aionia. That is, things that are for a time are put
in express contrast with aionia, which are not for a time, be
it age or ages, but eternal. Nothing can be more decisive of its
positive and specific meaning.

I will now quote various passages of Scripture to show
aion or aionios has the definite meaning of "for ever," or
"eternal," in English. No one who has examined its use in
Greek questions that it is used for life, or the whole period of
a man's existence till he breathes his last; nor that it may be
used for ages or periods, looked at as a whole. The question is,
Does it not properly mean eternal or for ever, and that
where age and age-long would have no sense? Thus Matt.
21:19, of the fig-tree: Let no fruit grow on thee eis ton aiona.
"For the age" has no sense. It never was to grow. So Mark
11:14. That eternity is not grasped by man as a definite idea
is true, because definite is finite, and man, being finite,
cannot grasp what is in-finite. It is known only as that which
is absolutely; or negatively as that to which end is denied.

Again, Mark 3:29, oik echei aphetin eis ton aiona. What
age? It is not in the age, as some have fraudulently translated
it, but "has not ever forgiveness." It is not any particular age;
the eis allows no such sense, and the ton would require some
particular age, which even so would leave no sense to eis. It
can only mean here "for ever." There was a present age and
time to come, o aion autos, and o aion o mellon, and well
known to the Jews, the olem hazeh, and the olem havo; and
an increased measure of forgiveness was looked for in
Messiah's age. This sin could be forgiven in neither; no
additional increase of forgiveness was looked for beyond
Messiah; and each measure belonged to its own age; it was
not a prolonged process, but what occurred in each as proper
to it. But eis ton aiona, can only mean "for ever," though
"for ever" may be used metaphorically when there is no
withdrawal of the gift or promise, and the effect cannot last
longer than that to which it applies. The gift has no limit (it
is, as Aristotle says, apeiria), the existence of that to which
it applies may. I do not lend it, I give it for ever; yet what I
give, or the person to whom it is given, may cease to exist;
but the gift is for ever, without repentance, out and out.

So John 4:14, shall not thirst "for the age": is that the
meaning? or never? John 6:51, 58, "live for ever"; John
10:28, not perish "to the age": is that the sense? John 13:8,
thou shalt not wash my feet "to the age!" A multitude more
may be quoted to the same effect; some with the modified
sense I have spoken of above of absolute gift and calling
never to be retracted. But eis ton aiona never means "to the
age" in any case.

Take 1 Pet. 1:23, 25, logou zontos theou kai menontos
eis ton aiona. Does it last only "to the age" (applying it to
the logon, not to theou as some do)? So verse 25, rema menei eis
ton aiona. So 2 John 2, the truth shall be with us "to the
age!" So Jude 13, wandering stars, to whom is reserved the
blackness of darkness eis ton aiona. Here again "to the age"
has no sense.

The case of aionios is just as strong. It is used
seventy-one times in the New Testament. Of these it is
connected forty-four times with life, where "for an age" or
"age-long" is just nonsense, as believers to have age-long life
and shall not perish. It is in contrast with ever perishing. The
knowledge of the Father, and of Jesus Christ, whom He has
sent, is life for the age. Is that all? The words of Jesus were
remata zoes aioniou not tes zoes. It was that in its nature, not
a specific period: indeed believers have it now. In Rom. 6:22
the end is everlasting life. So that the life of that age, though
no particular one is ever spoken of, is the end of the matter.
It is not merely dark beyond as to a Jew, but there is no
object beyond. My object is not to argue the point, but to
consider the words here; but I must say that, if anything could
lower and degrade the hope and present joy of the Christian,
it is this miserable notion that "eternal" does not mean
eternal.

But, farther, Christ was that eternal life, which was with
the Father, and was manifested to us; 1 John 1:2. He is our
life; he that hath the Son hath life. He is the true God and
eternal life. Five, I may say six, times it is used of "eternal
fire,” or “punishment.” The rest are various, glory, salvation, redemption, inheritance, Spirit, God Himself. But none of them is eternal! All belong to this wonderful unknown age, and no more. But the eternal weight of glory is that of which the apostle speaks, when he says that the things are not for a time, proskaire, but eternal, aionia, chapter 5: I going on to say that he was looking for a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. We have the word used with chronon (times) in plural for the times of God’s active dispensations. Before anything was created, this life was given us in Christ; putting it in its nature out of time.

Read these passages, and say if (while no one denies that there are ages and dispensations in which God has wrought and works), it be so that eternity is excluded from the revelation given to the Christian, and from the rest of God (for the promise is left us of entering into His rest), and that eternal glory, the eternal God, only means a God that has to say to that age. That God having called us to His own kingdom and glory, specifically that as our calling, this means a temporary period, an age which characterizes Him, so that the eternal God is only the age-long God. That this life promised before the ages (chronon aionion), and which Christ is in His Person as with the Father, is only a life in one of these ages; and that when I read that the God of all grace has called us to His eternal glory by Jesus Christ, for which we may suffer a while, it is only a temporary glory of His for some special age; 1 Pet. 5:10. That the glory of God, for which we hope in contradistinction to the peace and favour we possess, is only a temporary thing, for I suppose His own glory is the glory we boast in Rom. 5. That language of exuberant apprehension is used, such as “ages of ages,” and all the “generations of the age,” or “eternity of ages,” we know. But this does not alter the meaning of the word: aionios is properly the opposite to proskairos.

Collected Writings 31:124-129.
Appendix 4:
Dr. Farrar on “Everlasting,” “Damnation” and “Hell”

Dr. Farrar, with a great deal of pretentious language, appealing to his own perfect knowledge, his own deep sense of responsibility, and speaking in the sight of God (he says) and of the Savior, perhaps of angels -- he would hardly be so narrow-minded and illiberal as to speak of “elect angels” with Paul -- and of what never crossed Paul’s narrow mind, “the spirits of the dead” -- declares that not one of the words, “damnation,” “hell,” or “everlasting,” should be found in the English Bible.

Now with (I dare say) less knowledge than Canon Farrar, no unusual conscientiousness, still in the fear of God, I beg leave to say that what Canon Farrar says is entirely unfounded, and say if everlasting should not be there. And note, “everlasting” in the Person of Christ was with the Father; 1 John 1: 2. Is “eternal Spirit” wrong? (Heb. 9:14.) God has called us to His eternal glory; 1 Pet. 5:10. God lives for ever and ever (Rev. 5:14), the everlasting God; Rom. 16:26, I might multiply quotations; but these suffice to prove, or even the first alone, that the statement of Dr. Farrar, with all his boasted knowledge and conscientiousness, is, as to this word, either ignorance or dishonesty. Would Dr. Farrar in the Old Testament change the word “everlasting” in Psa. 90, “From everlasting to everlasting thou art God”? is “eternal power and Godhead” wrong? (Rom. 1:20.) Is “eternal glory” (2 Tim. 2:10), eternal salvation, eternal redemption, wrong? Is “everlasting God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth,” wrong?

As to “damnation,” the English word was used more loosely when the Bible was translated than it is now. In 1 Cor. 11:29, it is used in contrast with final condemnation. The translators, where one word was used in Greek, took pains to use several in English, and thereby disfigured the sense of many passages, or at least obscured the connection. Thus in John 5 we have “judgment,” “condemnation,” “damnation,” all used for krisis, where “judgment” is the only true translation; but this does not affect the substance of Canon Farrar’s assertion. He speaks of the word in its ordinary modern acceptation. “Damnation” is used frequently in the English New Testament for judgment, as in Matt. 23:14; Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47; Rom. 3:8; Rom. 13:2; 1 Tim. 5:12; and this is the sense of 1 Cor. 11:29, in contrast with condemnation with the world. Now, even if this “judgment” be everlasting condemnation, still the word means judgment.

But there is another and a stronger word than krima used, even in express contrast with it, so as to plainly mean final, absolute, condemnation. The word is katakrima. What a man is condemned to must be known by the sentence. We have both words in Rom. 5:16, “For the judgment (krima) was by one to (katakrima) condemnation,” and in v. 18. So, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,” Rom. 8:1. “God justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?” (vv. 33, 34). “When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world” (1 Cor. 11:32), where partial earthly judgments are contrasted with a final absolute condemnation. It is not therefore the mere word “damnation” for which I contend, nor to which Dr. Farrar objects, as all his sermon proves; for it is used in the English version many times, not in the sense of eternal condemnation; but that eternal condemnation meant by the word in modern times is spoken of in contrast with judgment, and as a distinct thing. Hence the apostle speaks of “eternal judgment” (Heb. 6); “eternal punishment” (Matt. 25); “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord”; and (Mark 3:29), “hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of (enochos, subject to) eternal damnation.” And where the wicked have their part in the lake of fire it is said, gegone. It is done, when Omega is written on all things.

Now it is not the use of the mere word “damnation,” which had not then the definite force it has now which is insisted on or objected to. In Mark 3:29 it is krisis, judgment; but it is eternal, conclusive, absolute, and final. The objection made is to what is meant by the modern use of the word, and that is definitely stated in Scripture.

The other word is “hell.” Now, unfortunately, two words are translated “hell” in the English Bible -- Hades and Gehenna: one meaning the temporary state of departed spirits, the unseen world without saying more; the other used for the fire that never shall be quenched. Its meaning is, etymologically, the valley of Hinnom, where people offered their children to Moloch, and which was defiled by Josiah; and, it seems, a fire kept up to consume what was filthy and unclean out of Jerusalem and called Tophet. Hence we have in Isaiah.

For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large; and the breath
of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it (Isa. 30:33).

And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh (Isa. 66:24).

This is, on the face of it, a material fact; there was a constant fire enduring continually, to which those bodies were enduringly subjected. Now Sheol, or Hades, is never confounded with this. It was an actual valley between Zion and what is called the Hill of Evil Counsel, south of Jerusalem, where tradition places the house of Caiaphas, if my memory serve me. This valley, where the unquenched fire consumed what was unclean, which yet, according to Isa. 66, should remain in the consuming fire unconsumed, an abhorring unto all flesh, was used for an image of a sorer punishment, and was called Gehenna (Anglice, “hell”); that is, literally, the valley of Hinnom. Now this word is found in Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; Matt. 10:28; Matt. 18:9; Matt. 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6.

In Matt. 5 the statement is general: danger of hell-fire-thy whole body cast into hell; referring to sacrificing one member rather than sin; clearly not the valley of Hinnom. “Fear him which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell,” Matt. 10:28. It is not the valley of Hinnom. They do not put souls there. It is metaphorically used for the place of final judgment and punishment. Matt. 18:9 is as in chapter 5; in Matt. 23:15, a child of hell -- one who is the natural heir -- belongs to this place. That it is the place of condemnation in judgment Matt. 23:33 shows:

Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the judgment (kriseos) of hell? (Mark 9:43-48).

We have solemnly repeated the call to sacrifice the dearest thing that is a snare to us, under penalty of being cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. It is a judgment, a judicial punishment, for which there is no relief, of which there is no cessation.

In Luke 12 it is used as a known thing, a place, the effect of divine judgment. James 3:6 is only of importance as showing that it is connected with pure unmitigated evil; where nothing else is. Now a person who reads all this cannot doubt that that which the word “hell” is used for in English is fully contemplated. The desirableness of not confounding it with Hades, the vaguest possible word for the unseen world, no reflecting mind would deny. It is a place into which God’s judgment casts the unrepentant and rebellious wicked, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched. That human figures of fire and worms are used may be; but the force of it is plain enough -- it is the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels, where God casts in judgment those that are rightly rejected, where there is no remission, when God says gegone. It is done; and without are whoremongers, and all who love and make a lie. Hades is not Gehenna, and Gehenna in the New Testament is never used as the valley of Hinnom. The proper English word is “hell”; that is, the place where pure evil, if such a phrase may be used,
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