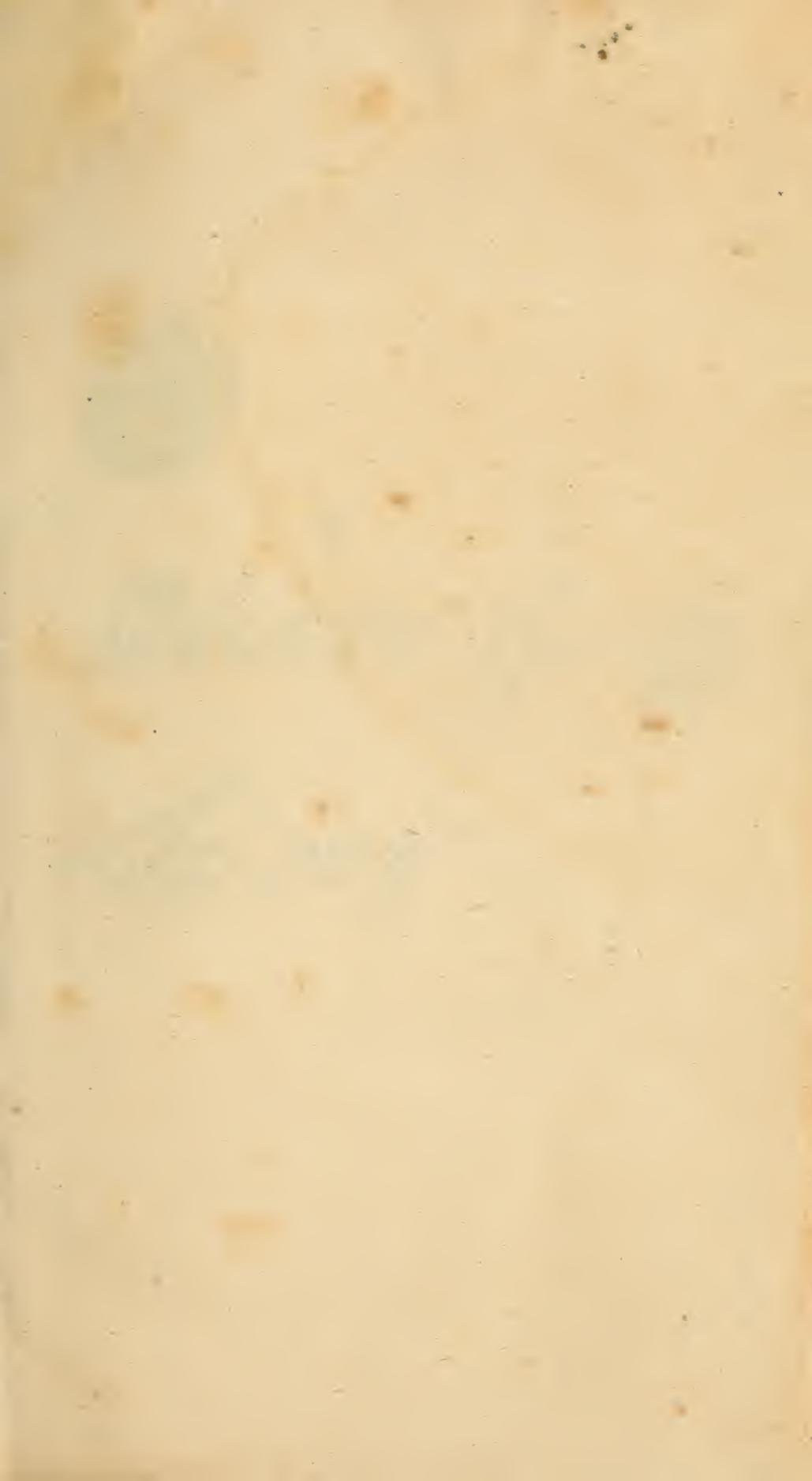








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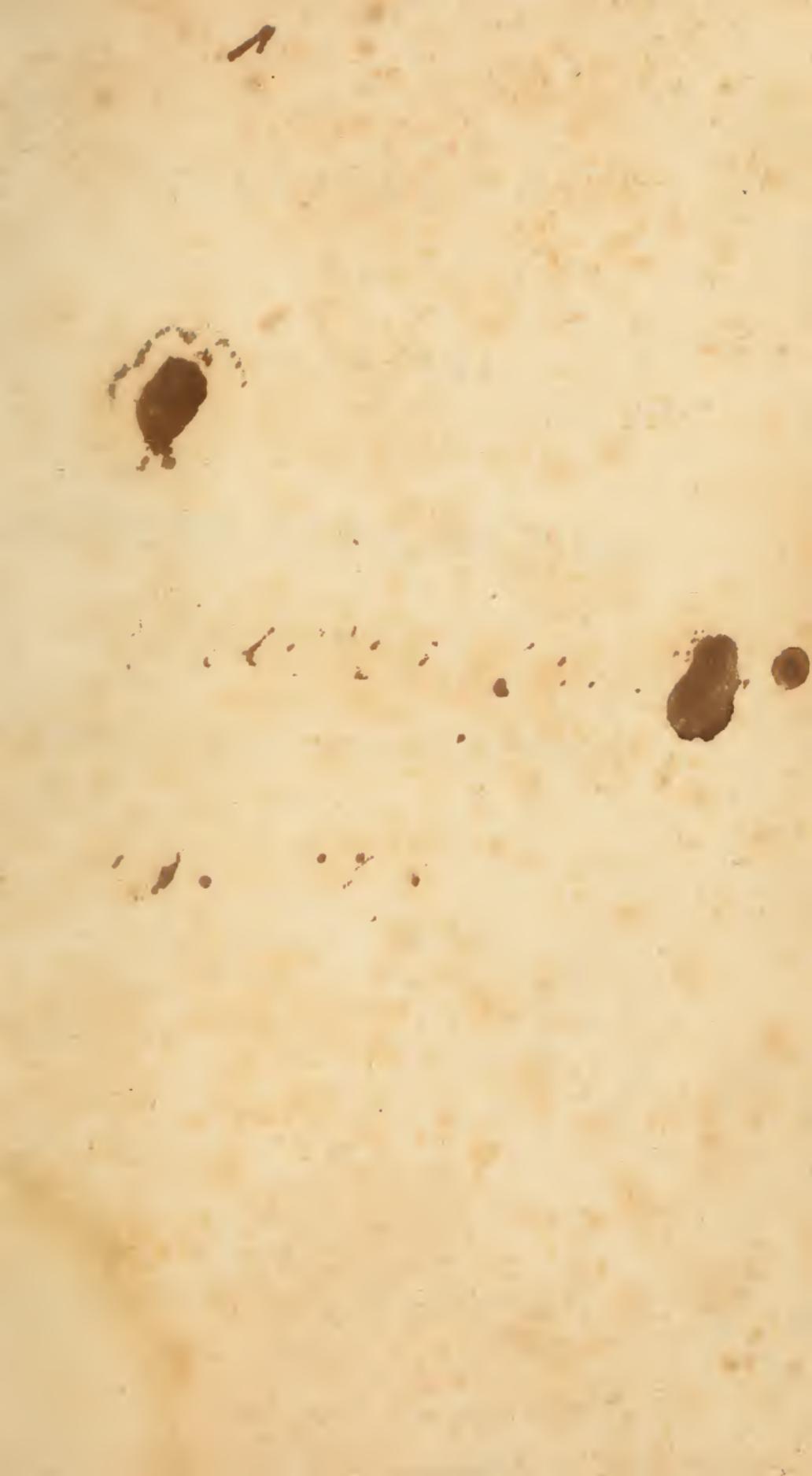


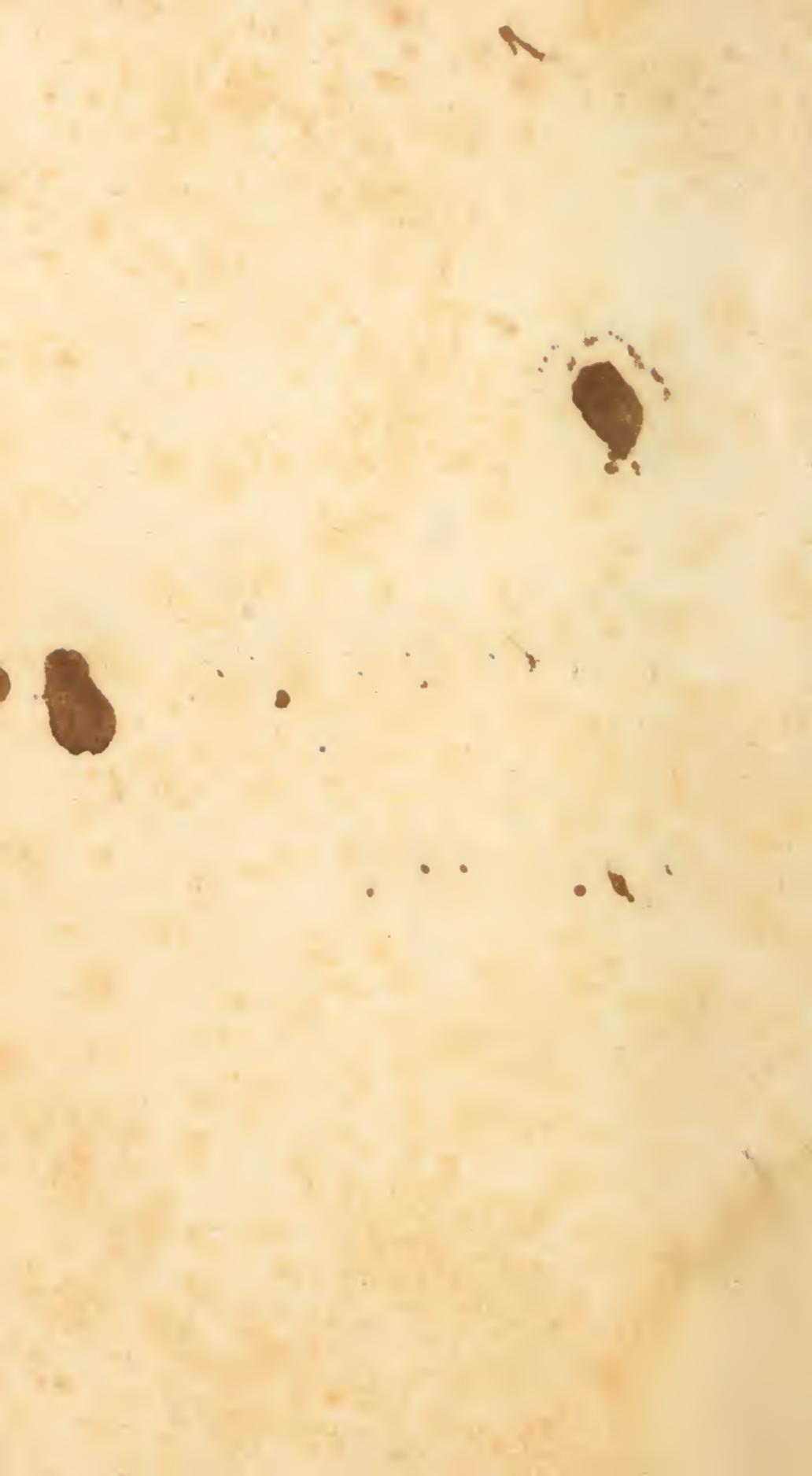
Oliver Gray

Book

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AN
EXAMINATION
OF THE
DOCTRINE
OF
FUTURE RETRIBUTION,
ON THE PRINCIPLES OF
MORALS, ANALOGY AND THE SCRIPTURES.

BY HOSEA BALLOU.

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D E D I C A T I O N .

FROM numerous considerations, which have made a deep and lasting impression on his mind, the author of this work is induced, most respectfully and affectionately, to inscribe it to the SECOND UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY IN BOSTON, to which it has been his happiness, for many years, to minister.

H. BALLOU.

P R E F A C E.

A PART of what is contained in the following work has been before published in the Universalist Magazine, and Universalist Expositor. But as neither of these periodicals ever had a very extensive circulation, the author had a desire of bringing his views on the subject treated on, more extensively before the public, and that in a work by itself; by which means it might be more likely to become a subject of general consideration and investigation.

The first part of the work, which treats the general subject on moral principles, and on principles of analogy, was never before published, nor was that, which immediately follows, what appeared in the Universalist Expositor.

The whole, as it is now embodied, will make the reader pretty well acquainted with the views of the author, on the general subject, and the principles on which he founds them.

If the views maintained in the following essay are any more in accordance with truth, than are those doctrines which oppose them, there is every good reason for laying them before the public, which can be required for so doing. We cannot allow it to be sound argument, to say that truth ought not to be advanced

if it conflict with long established opinions, and tend to give offence to pious minds, who have long been established in the popular doctrines of the day. If we consent to such argument, we thereby pass censure on that divine teacher, who warned his disciples to beware of the doctrines of the Scribes and Pharisees ; and not only do we thereby charge him with fault, but justify his revilers and persecutors. Thus should we take the position occupied by those, in our Saviour's time, who shut up the kingdom of heaven against men ; and who would neither enter themselves, nor suffer others so to do.

If the master spirits, who led in the reformation, in the sixteenth century, had yielded to the fear of giving offence to a church which was imbued with error and corruption, the moral darkness which characterized that age might have constituted a protracted night, and the benign light, which has made such salutary advances, might have been excluded from the Christian world.

Whatever may be said to justify Galilei for abjuring the Copernican system, when his life was menaced, the same could not be urged in extenuation of the impropriety of withholding important truth from society, in times which are not disgraced with offices of inquisition.

Should the reader object to the foregoing remarks, as giving any countenance to the publishing of doctrine so erroneous as he may believe is maintained in

the following pages, he is reminded that such an objection constitutes himself as odious an inquisition as ever was nourished in the bosom of popery. The times in which we live, and the happy government, which guarantees and defends the right of every individual in community, not only justify the honest confession of our religious sentiments, but call on us to discharge such a duty. In addition to this call, a paramount one is recognized from truth itself. To this call the writer of the following essay has been conscientiously devoted for more than forty years ; and he has endeavored faithfully to discharge the duties which it embraced, notwithstanding the many painful conflicts through which they have carried him. Not that he would boast of having advanced nothing but truth ; for experience has often enforced on his mind the truth of the maxim, that ' to err is human.' But such experience has been useful ; as by exposing his mistakes to the investigation of stronger and more enlightened minds, they have been corrected. One consolation he has constantly enjoyed, that of reflecting that his mistakes were errors of the head, never of the heart. It has always remained his fixed resolution, to keep a mind open to conviction ; always active in investigating religious truth ; constantly ready to profess and hold forth any opinion, however unpopular, and however opposed by divines, by the schools, or by his dearest friends, when convinced of its truth. This course has led him to give up many religious tenets,

which were taught him in his youth, and not a few which were embraced by the denomination to which he has from his youth belonged. Travelling this course, he early renounced the doctrine of endless punishment; the doctrine of the trinity; that of native depravity; that of the imputation of sin and of righteousness; that of the vicarious sufferings of Christ; and nearly eighteen years ago, the doctrine of punishment in the future state. It has been his lot to meet with much opposition on most of these points, from various denominations, and not the least strenuous from those of the denomination with which he has been happy to hold connexion. For the painful travail endured from all this opposition, he has been abundantly compensated by seeing the rapid advance of the doctrines which he has embraced, and endeavored to advocate.

The object of the writer of the following pages is to place his views, respecting the doctrine of a future state of retribution, before the public, and to preserve his arguments on that subject, that when the time shall come, as he believes it will, when people in general will number the tenet of future punishment among those corruptions of Christianity, which will then be abandoned, it may be known that the writer disbelieved it in his day; and also that the arguments with which he opposed it may then be known.

Universalists now take a pleasure in looking back and tracing, from Origen down to our time, the progress

of the doctrine which embraces the salvation of all men ; and so they will doubtless continue to do in future ages.

Some may query whether a proper regard to the opinions and feelings of honest, faithful and affectionate brethren, who believe in the doctrine of future retribution, but yet earnestly contend for final restoration, would not incline the writer to be silent on the subject, and not to come out with this publication. To this inquiry it is replied, that such brethren, with their many commendable qualities, are warmly cherished in the affections of the writer's heart, nor are they the less regarded because they do not adopt his opinions. And he feels confident that such brethren will entertain no suspicions of his want of respect for them. They will not fail to consider that the views of the writer, on the subject of retribution, are not so wide from their's, as their's are from the views of those authors whom they quote as authority in support of future retribution. They would doubtless sooner embrace the opinion of no future sin and misery, than defend the doctrine maintained by that good man, exemplary christian, and faithful minister, Elhanan Winchester, which supposed that the wicked in the world to come, would suffer for ages and ages, inconceivable torment in literal fire and brimstone. Such torment is now denied by our doctors, who maintain *endless* punishment, and rejected also by those who believe in a state hereafter of discipline which shall end in an

entire reformation. Such brethren will also cordially respond to the assurance that the writer of the following work will never withhold a sincere fellowship from a faithful brother, because he disagrees with him on the doctrine of divine retribution.

It is very possible that some, who have a strong desire that nothing should be done, which should tend, in the least, to endanger the harmony and cordial fellowship of Universalists, may think that prudence would, at least, plead for a delay, and suggest the propriety of deferring this publication to some future time, when it might give less offence. Such may be assured that their good wishes for the harmony and fellowship of our order, are duly respected; but they cannot be ignorant of the fact that the doctrine of a future state of punishment has been disbelieved, by ministering brethren of our order, for many years, and that much has been published with a view to disprove that doctrine; and, moreover, that now that doctrine is generally disbelieved by Universalists of our connexion; and yet much harmony prevails, and our fellowship remains, and is warmly cherished between brethren whose opinions disagree on the subject of this doctrine. The writer would further remark, that both age and infirmity admonish him that what he feels it his duty to do, he ought not to delay; and he cannot believe that any of his brethren can feel, in the least, wounded because their aged brother should finish his labors in accordance with the dictates of his own un-

derstanding. It is a happy circumstance, that in the denomination of Universalists, no one feels bound to defend and support the particular opinions of another, any further than he is himself convinced of their truth and importance. Our platform of faith is general, and allows individuals an extensive latitude to think freely, investigate minutely, and to adopt what particular views best comport with the honest convictions of the mind, and fearlessly to avow and defend the same.

As the writer of the following pages has, from the commencement of his studies and ministry, asserted, enjoyed, and improved his right to think freely, and to embrace or reject the opinions of others, as the force of evidence appeared to direct, so he wishes to continue to do, the little remainder of his days of labor. And he would assure his brethren, that he has always felt it his duty to accord the same right to others; and this he hopes to continue to do in future.

Feeling an unabated desire for the advancement of divine truth, and the pure religion of the Saviour, he cannot willingly withhold from contributing, what he humbly hopes, may have a tendency to this desired end.

THE AUTHOR.

The first part of the book is devoted to a general
introduction of the subject, and to a description of the
various methods which have been employed for the
purpose of determining the true value of the
gold and silver coins of the different countries.
The second part contains a detailed account of the
principles and practice of assaying, and of the
various methods which have been employed for the
purpose of determining the true value of the
gold and silver coins of the different countries.
The third part is devoted to a description of the
various methods which have been employed for the
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The ninth part is devoted to a description of the
various methods which have been employed for the
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The tenth part contains a detailed account of the
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gold and silver coins of the different countries.

DOCTRINE
OF
FUTURE RETRIBUTION.

THE moral tendency of doctrine, having now extensively engaged the attention of theorists, is fast advancing its interest in the minds of people generally; and divines of different denominations are, therefore, desirous of recommending their respective tenets to the consideration and acceptance of the public, by inducing a belief that they are justly entitled to a preference above all others, on account of their evident tendency to moral virtue.

This state of things ought not to be considered as undesirable, for it will eventually lead to most salutary consequences. In fact, it shows, most evidently, that moral virtue is held in such high estimation, that it is worthy of being made the umpire, to whose decision contending theologians must submit their respective theories. This must be a subject of congratulation to every lover of moral virtue; for here he sees all, who are engaged in disputes about their varying and conflicting creeds, paying a voluntary homage to what he so warmly loves, and to which his heart is sincerely devoted. It is true that the good, of which we here speak, must be found mixed with some evil, as are all

other favorable things and circumstances, enjoyed in this world. There will be found in the many pleas which are, and will be offered by partisans in favor of their respective, darling tenets, some unkind insinuations, some uncandid representations, some violent thrusts, which will indicate a greater love of party than of truth and morals. But after all, the balance will be favorable; truth will be sifted and better understood; and though the evil may be bitter, like the bud, it will soon give way to fruit which will be desirable. It would be expecting too much of men, so imperfect as we know the leaders of the different denominations are, to think they will always treat each other as they would be willing to be treated, or refer to each other with that respect which they love to have shown to themselves. Though it is pleasant and agreeable to hope for such a state of religion, as will make all its votaries love each other as they love themselves; we must not forget that the due exercise of charity for man, even in the present state of things, is a virtue which is entitled to precedence above all others. Let this virtue be as extensively exercised as the calls for it occur, and let the controversy go on till the legitimate relation between the doctrine of divine truth and those sound and wholesome morals, which are its natural fruits, shall be clearly understood. Truth will then shine in unborrowed lustre, and virtue attract by its native beauty and moral worth.

The two theories of doctrine, which at present seem most to call the attention of the public to a candid investigation of their respective merits, on those grounds which we have before noticed, are distinguished, the one by depending on a belief in a fu-

ture state of rewards and punishment, to guard us against the practice of vice, and to induce us to obey the precepts of religion and morality; the other, by teaching that all the reward we ought to expect, for a faithful discharge of our duty to God and our fellow-creatures, is found in the enjoyments which are necessarily connected with religion and duty, in the present state, where our obedience is practised; and that all the retributions for wrong-doing, in the present world, are the infelicities which cannot be separated from the vices, which bring them upon us. The former directs us to look beyond the grave for the rewards of our virtues, and for the punishments of our vices; the latter teaches us to expect both these in the present world. The statement here made of the two theories, and of their respective marks of distinction, is thought to be sufficiently definite, as the subject is pretty well understood by people in general.

Our object in the present disquisition is to try, in a candid manner, the claims of these two theories, not only in reference to their moral influence, but also with regard to some other arguments, which are urged by their respective supporters, in their defence.

It has long been believed and taught by the learned doctors of the Christian church, that man being so constituted as to be persuaded by the two principles of hope and fear, our Creator has seen fit to promise us a reward, in the future state, for the faithful performance of our duty in this; and that he has threatened us with punishment, in the future state, both for our neglect of obedience to his requirements, and for those acts in which we violate them. Thus it is contended that reason and experience teach the doctrine of fu-

ture rewards and punishments, as analogous with our moral constitution. The advocates of this view of the general question are confident that if the hope of future reward was removed, and the fear of future punishment done away, religion and virtue would no longer attract man's attention, nor aught remain to restrain him from indulging himself in all the vices and abominations which are forbidden.

That those views and arguments should be satisfactory to people who are taught them from childhood, need not excite our wonder; nor need we, for a moment, withhold our charity from those teachers, who are now engaged in defending them. These teachers were, from their infant days, taught those opinions. Nor is it at all difficult to account for all the zeal which seems to animate those who are making every possible exertion to keep those sentiments in credit, and to prevent the prevalence of the opposite doctrine. On general principles, we are perfectly safe in supposing those to be honest and sincere, who are thus employed, and that they have the good of mankind in view.

But, notwithstanding we feel bound to respect the honest and sincere, and to treat their doctrines and arguments with candor, it seems, in every view of the subject, a reasonable duty to examine carefully, not only the premises on which doctrines are predicated, but also the legitimacy of inferences which are drawn from them.

As to the fact, that man is influenced and persuaded by the opposite principles of hope and fear, it seems reasonable that it be allowed. It seems very evident that we always act with a hope to gain some benefit, and thereby to avoid some evil; but does it

necessarily follow that the benefit which we hope to gain must be in a future state, and that the evil we hope to avoid must be there too? This is directly denied by those whose views we are now examining. They say, if the fear of future punishment were removed, and the hope of future reward taken away, there would be nothing to induce us to be religious and moral, nor any thing to prevent us from running into the practice of every vice and abomination. Then surely we could *act* without being incited by considerations of a future state. It would be no easier for us to commit sin without a motive, than to practise virtue without a motive. But where lies the expected benefit, which induces the vicious to sin? Does it present itself to the imagination in a future state? No one will pretend this. Then it must be given up, at once, that in order to induce men to act it is necessary to place the object to be obtained in a future world. The candid reader will now see, that the doctrine we are examining is unsound; for it depends on the supposition, that as we act from hope and fear, the good hoped for, and the evil dreaded, must both be in a future state.

If, in order further to maintain the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, its advocate should say, that although men may be induced to sin, and may become as active in so doing as possible, without the expectation of any good in the future state, yet without such expectation they cannot be persuaded to become religious and moral, he is called on to find out and assign the reason.

We have now arrived at a spot where we should do well to pause and duly consider. All the professed friends of religion and moral virtue will allow that the

wicked are too active in committing sin, that they run too greedily in pursuit of forbidden indulgences; but none of them suppose that these wicked thus act in expectation of obtaining any good in a future state. Where then do the wicked expect to receive the enjoyment which they are pursuing? In this present state, to be sure.

Reader, be cautious! If the wicked are induced to commit all manner of iniquity, and to practise every forbidden abomination, by no expectation of any enjoyment but in this life, can there be any other reason assigned why they do not forsake the ways of impiety and vice, and become religious and moral, than because religion and morality do not promise them so much happiness and enjoyment, in the present world, as does the course they are now in? No one will or can doubt on this subject. Then let us ask, whether the view which the wicked have of religion and morality is a right one? To this question all will answer in the negative. We are then ready for a general and a safe conclusion. There is no necessity of promising a reward in a future state for the practice of duty in the present. All that is wanting for this purpose is to understand and to be persuaded that righteousness brings an ample reward, in the present life.

This conclusion is abundantly justified by the fact, that in room of obtaining the good which the wicked promise themselves in the paths of vice, they always meet with that degree of trouble and infelicity which constitutes a just recompense for their disobedience to the commands of God, and the dictates of conscience.

In our investigation of the force of motive to induce the wicked to push forward in wrong-doing, we must not neglect to notice the counteracting power which is overcome by it (according to common opinion). It is a fact, with which all are acquainted, that nearly all the vicious have been educated in the belief of a future state of rewards and punishments; yet notwithstanding the apprehensions which they have entertained, that by the practice of the vices in which they indulged their passions, they were exposing themselves to inconceivable miseries hereafter; the expectation of enjoyment in the present state, has carried them on in the strong current of sin, which has broken down every barrier, and furnished conclusive proof that no motive is so sure of inducing to action, as the expectation of immediate happiness.

In view of these facts, who will wonder that in these times there should be some engaged in laboring to convince men that present happiness can be obtained by being faithful in the discharge of our duty to God, to our fellow-creatures, and to ourselves, by doing justly, loving mercy, and by walking humbly, and by no other means; and that however flattering sin may appear, and however strongly our blind, fleshly passions may tempt us from duty, moral death, condemnation, and misery will be the immediate and sure recompense for unlawful indulgence?

We maintain that this view, and all the facts which we can find connected with it, are in accordance with the laws of the human mind, and will be found to agree with universal experience. By these views we arrive at the desideratum long sought for, the reason why the promises of complete bliss, in the future world, and the threatenings of most dire torments, have not

accomplished the design for which they were so vehemently urged on the people. Yes, we here discover the reason why such doctrines have not been able to restrain their most zealous believers from the very sins, for which they believed these threatenings would be executed on those who practised them. Deceive ourselves as much as we may, whenever truth appears we find ourselves in pursuit of happiness, in the present world; and if we are vicious, it is in consequence of an erroneous expectation of obtaining it by wicked means; and if we are pious and virtuous, it is because we love to be so, and find ourselves richly rewarded in keeping the divine commands, and in obedience to the dictates of conscience.

We would not be understood, to suppose that the divine light, which shows us these invaluable truths, has never shined in the understandings of our divines, who so much depend on future rewards and punishments to support religion and virtue; for they frequently discover this light, and communicate it to the public. But they do not appear to enjoy its steady rays, nor do they conform their doctrine to its directions. If we ask them what constitutes true religion, they tell us it is the love of God in the heart. If we ask them what constitutes genuine morality, they will tell us that it is the natural fruit of true religion. Ask them whether we can either love God, or practise morality, by being induced by the hope of future rewards, or the fear of future punishments, and they will answer in the negative, with great assurance. But by the force of tradition, and by the influence of habit, together with some other causes, they will continue to advocate the notion that religion and morality would quit our world, if the hopes and fears of future re-

wards and punishments were not kept up, and caused to act on the mind.

We have a remarkable instance of the foregoing inconsistency in Professor Stuart's Letter to Dr. Channing. He says, — '*Religion, all true religion, is a voluntary offering on the part of man to his Creator. A forced creed is no creed. Belief, from its own nature and the very constitution of the human mind, must be free, spontaneous, induced by argument, not compelled by fear or by threats. All professed belief of this latter kind is utterly unworthy of the name. It is an object of abhorrence to God, and of loathing to men.*'

After reading the above quotation, and after duly considering the unquestionable truth of every thing there stated, who could reasonably expect to find the learned professor endeavoring to induce the human mind to search for religion, and the true faith of the gospel, by urging the terrors of future misery? Yet we find him, in the same Letter, holding the following terrific language:— '*As an immortal being, I look forward to the time when myself and all around me are to enter on the "recompense of reward," a final eternal one. If I am serious in my religious views; if I am well persuaded that they are true, and this, after repeated, protracted, and patient examination; then I must be utterly destitute even of the spirit of common humanity, if I do not desire others to participate with me in this persuasion. Were it a matter pertaining merely to their temporal interests, most of my fellow-beings would pronounce me destitute of humanity, in case I should not warn those around me to escape from it. But O the never dying soul! The awful tribunal of "eternal judgment!" "The fear-*

fulness of falling into the hands of the living God, who is a consuming fire !” If I believe that there are unequivocal declarations in God’s word (as I truly do) in respect to these tremendous subjects ; if I believe that the impenitent are surely exposed to endless misery ; that those who reject the Saviour as he is offered in the gospel, “ shall not see life, but that the wrath of God will abide on them ;” can I, as a man of any pretensions to benevolence, refrain from telling all this to others, from urging it upon them, and from warning them of the danger in which I sincerely believe them to be ?’

It seems impossible to arrange two paragraphs so as to exhibit contradiction more plainly than is manifested by the two above quoted from the learned professor. In the first, he assures us that a religion, or a professed belief induced by fear or by threats, is an ‘ object of abhorrence to God, and of loathing to men.’ In the last, he presents us with the wrath of God and eternal misery, as the fruit of his benevolence. He holds up the Saviour, in one hand, and makes an offer of him for our acceptance ; in the other, he presents the wrath of God and eternal misery ; if we receive the Saviour we escape this eternal misery ; but if not, then this misery surely awaits us. These are the terms on which the Saviour is offered by a divine, who tells us that our profession of the Saviour, compelled by fear or threats, is an object of abhorrence to God, and of loathing to men ! Thus he would endeavor to set up and establish the very thing which God abhors, and which men loathe !

There is no man so entirely ignorant of the laws of the human mind, as to suppose that we can be induced to love our Creator, either by a promised re-

ward, or by threatened torment ; and yet these motives are constantly urged on the people for this very purpose ; and the arguments we are examining, in defence of a future state of rewards and punishments, contend that religion and morality depend on them.

If our Creator is worthy of the love and devotion of his rational offspring, a fact which none will deny, it must be on account of his real goodness to them ; and if his requirements are worthy of our careful observance, which none will question, it must be because the keeping of them is enjoyment to us. With these simple, self-evident propositions in clear view, why should we have recourse to hereafter rewards and punishments to incite us to love God and to keep his commandments ? To induce us to love God, nothing is necessary but to make us acquainted with his real character ; and to persuade us to keep the divine commands, no argument need be used but to show us the interest we have in obedience.

We should not do entire justice to this subject, should we neglect to show, that it is morally *impossible*, by the promise of a hereafter reward, and the threatening of hereafter punishment, to induce any one to love God and to keep his commandments. Should we so far deceive ourselves as to suppose we had complied with these duties, from such motives, we should at once see our mistake were we asked the question, whether it were our *Creator* which we felt a love for, or that *reward* which influenced our affections ? If we try the subject by attending to any circumstance within the wide range of common life, we shall at once see, that we are incapable of loving any object we can name, either by the expectation of obtaining a recompense therefor, or of escaping the greatest ca-

lamity thereby. Keep this truth in mind, and then observe that the whole, which God requires of us, is to love him with all the heart, and our neighbors as ourselves, and that no acceptable service can be rendered to our Creator, but on this principle of love, — and our whole subject is perfectly clear, and free from the least obscurity.

But we must carry this research still farther. For it is necessary for us to understand that the preaching of future rewards and punishments, for the purpose of inducing people to love God and moral virtue, is not only *useless*, but *pernicious*. All such preaching, be it ever so well intended, not only amounts to a declaration, that God and moral virtue are, in themselves, unlovely, and unworthy of being loved, but, as far as it is believed, serves to alienate the affections from these most precious objects. We may illustrate this subject by the use of figures furnished in the Scriptures. There God is represented by a fountain of living waters. Divine truth, by waters, by wine and milk, by bread, &c. Should we be offered an immense reward for accepting these nourishing aliments, and should we be threatened with severe punishments if we refused them, — it would be natural for us to suppose, that the person who should make such proposals, and state such conditions, did not believe these things to be of any value in themselves; and the greater the zeal manifested by him from whom such proposals should come, the stronger would be the evidence to us of this forbidding fact. We see, then, that this kind of preaching is not only useless, but that it is, in fact, of a tendency the most pernicious.

As it is confidently believed that the arguments, to which the reader has just been attending, are so clear

and self-evident, that no well-informed divine will ever attempt to disprove them, it seems almost needless to attempt to pursue the general subject, to which they relate, any farther; but it being a fact that the human mind, even when convinced of the truth of important doctrinal propositions, may have been so enfeebled by the force of tradition, and may still remain so limited as to mental vision, as to be quite unable to trace out the relation of some of the first inferences which those propositions afford, it is thought expedient to go on and show such relation, at least in regard to some things which are often brought against them.

No question seems to be resorted to, by the opposers of our views, more frequently than the following:— If I am taught to fear no punishment for sin, in a future state, what am I to fear, that I may be thereby deterred from the commission of sin? It is true, that this question is not usually put in the first person singular, as here stated; it is pretty uniformly stated in relation to the wicked, who are a class of people to which our opposers do not belong. But we think whoever asks the question, should ask it in relation to himself. But this he is loth to do; he is not willing to imply that he is so much in love of sin, as to need the fear of punishment in another world to deter him from committing it. This opinion, that we are so different from other people, that we need not the same inducements to influence our conduct as they do, is one of those extraordinary things, which blind bigotry alone is able to produce. In every thing, which does not come within the compass of our rank superstition, we feel perfectly safe, in calculating that other people may be influenced to act from the same motives which influence ourselves. We safely calculate all our labor,

all our traffic with the world, all our national policy on this principle. On this principle the most wealthy are not afraid to venture their whole estates; on this, no man is afraid to risk all he has, and even his life. In the concerns of commerce and wealth, we know that people aim at profit therein; and in relation to personal safety, we fear nothing among those who are interested in our lives, either by love or profit.

Having thus corrected the error of supposing that it is necessary to induce others to avoid sin and to practise virtue, by an influence which we do not ourselves need, we may go on to answer our question as it is stated in the first person. The question is, What am I to fear, in order to prevent myself from doing wrong? Answer: That very wrong itself. By wrong, we mean sin, or the transgression of the rule of moral right. Fear of sin itself is the only fear that can prevent my committing it. Should that superstition which speculates in the imaginary torments of the damned, in the invisible world, fill me as full of its fear as a live coal is of heat, still, if the love of sin is in my heart, I am, for all this fear, none the less a sinner. Will it be asked whether this fear, though it cannot purify the heart, may not prevent the outward act of sin? Answer: No. For this very superstition, which is the author of this fear, always presents to the mind ways and means whereby the sin may be committed, and the punishment avoided. There is scarcely an instance known, of the execution of most notorious criminals, who suffer death at the hand of the public executioner, but the wretch is first furnished by the clergy, who preach the terrors of hereafter misery, with a confident hope of escaping the wrath and torment which were held up by them to in-

duce him to repentance. In this country, as well as in Catholic countries; in our religious communities, as well as in communities which are Catholic in their creed and customs, the ministers of religion are careful, by the terrors of damnation, to save from damnation the most vile of the vile; even those, who, according to their own creeds, most justly deserve it! In fact, it is a truth, which stares us in the face, that, according to the preaching and conduct of our clergy, who dwell so much on the retributions of eternity, the morally honest and industrious citizen, who does not profess their creeds, is far more likely to suffer the pains of their hell forever, than the assassin, who sheds innocent blood! These facts are not mentioned with a wish to prejudice the mind of the reader against the honest intentions of those ministers of religion, of whom we speak; their delusion may be strong enough to hide from their understanding the utter impropriety of their doctrines. What we wish to do, is to show that these terrors of future damnation do not prevent crimes. In Catholic communities, the priest can give absolution to the murderer. He has, therefore, no terror of future punishment to prevent his committing the crime. All he fears is, that he may lose his life. Among us, our clergy repair immediately to the prison, as soon as the murderer is lodged in it, for the purpose of preparing him for heaven and everlasting bliss; and it is a very rare circumstance that they fail of their purpose. Who, then, has occasion to fear this hereafter punishment? If the fear of being detected and punished, in this world, where all know that the laws must have their course, were taken entirely away, it is altogether likely that overt crime would thereby be increased; but if the

prison and the gallows could be avoided, as easily as the punishments of the other world can, by due submission to the clergy, then would prisons and gallows be no hindrance to crime.

But let us go back to our question, which has been answered, and see if the answer given be correct. The answer is, I must fear *sin*, in order to prevent me from sinning. Will it be asked why I should fear sin? Answer: Because it will make me miserable if I commit it. There is no priest that I can apply to, who can prevent my suffering, if I am a sinner. If I fear a prison or a gallows, or a punishment in the future world, I may flatter myself that some way may be provided, by which I may escape them; but if I fear sin itself, I know, if I am a sinner, I must endure that evil. It is perfectly natural for a person to endeavor to avoid an evil, in proportion to its magnitude, as viewed by the mind. This being safe ground to reason on, we see at once, if we could believe that sin is the greatest evil to which we are exposed, we should be more cautious to avoid it than any other. The great and pernicious mistake, which our divines have fallen into, is that of supposing that the evil of sin is not in sin, but in a punishment which may, or may not be suffered, in the future state. It is impossible for them to exonerate themselves from having fallen into this error; for the very argument which they endeavor to maintain, and which we are now examining, is a full confession of the fact. They contend that if the fear of future punishment be removed, restraint against sin is gone. So fully confirmed are they in this most lamentable error, it is not uncommon for them to say, both in public, and in private circles, that if there be no hereafter punishment it is no matter

what we do, and that if they believed in no such punishment, they would commit the worst of crimes. It is granted that they seldom go so far, unless they first become somewhat irritated in their feelings; but after all, it is only carrying out, to its full extent, the enormity of their error. What we here state we know to be true. But we do not mention it from unkind feelings towards our brethren; but solely for the purpose of making the merits of the subject plain to the reader.

As the subject we are now laboring is of the utmost consequence to the religious and moral interest of community, we feel justified in endeavoring to illustrate it to the understanding of the most feeble minds. For this purpose we will make use of a melancholy circumstance, which has greatly agitated the people of New-England, and carried grief and deep sorrow into many thousands of hearts. We mean the murder, which people generally believe was committed at Fall River. Perhaps few men, in their preaching of future punishment, have been more zealous than has been the man who people believe committed that deed; and as to fear from the arm of justice, in this world, the uncommon efforts which were made to throw some possible doubt on the case, show that it was great enough to accomplish any purpose that fear is capable of accomplishing. Look now at the facts of the case. Of what benefit was the doctrine of future punishment to the man, who had so long preached it, and who committed the murder? Again; of what use was the fear of punishment, in this world, to him who flattered himself that he could commit the murder, and yet screen himself from the penalty of the law? It was not in the power of the fear of future

punishment, nor of punishment from the laws of the land, to prevent the crime. But had that man been half as fearful of committing that crime as he was of being found out, and punished according to the law, the poor girl, whose sad fate we deplore, would not have lost her life by his hands. Let it be understood, that it is no part of our design, in using the foregoing case, to induce any one to believe that the man who was accused was guilty, or not guilty; but only to show that, if he was guilty, neither the fear of future punishment, nor the fear of temporal punishment, was of any avail; while it is perfectly clear, that had the crime itself been the object of fear, he would not have committed it.

By the light, in which we now stand, we see that the only fear which can be sure to prevent crime, is the fear of committing it; and therefore, that sin itself ought to be considered as the greatest evil, and the evil most to be dreaded.

The momentous truth, which we have now before us, is not altogether unknown to our clergy, who insist so much on the doctrine of future punishment, and the fear thereof, as a guard against sin; but yet, it is a truth which they rarely point out to their hearers, and a truth, too, which seems to give little or no direction to their doctrines or discourses.

We have noticed one instance, in Professor Stuart's Letter to Dr. Channing, in which we found the Professor to be totally inconsistent with himself; and we may now avail ourselves of a case, in which we shall find Dr. Channing to have fallen into as great an inconsistency. In his sermon on the Evil of Sin, he has done, in an able manner, excellent justice to the subject on which we are now laboring. Speaking of

natural and moral evil, the Doctor says,— ‘ By the first, I mean the pain or suffering which springs from outward condition and events, or from causes independent of the will. The latter, that is, moral evil, belongs to character and conduct, and is commonly expressed by the words, sin, vice, and transgression of the rule of right. Now I say, that there is no man, unless he be singularly hardened, and an exception to his race, who, if these two classes or divisions of evil should be clearly and fully presented him in moments of calm and deliberate thinking, would not feel, through the very constitution of his mind, that sin or vice is more to be dreaded than pain. I am willing to take from among you the individual who has studied least the great question of morality and religion, whose mind has grown up with least discipline. If I place before such a hearer two examples in strong contrast, — one, of a man gaining great property by an atrocious crime, and another, exposing himself to great sufferings through a resolute purpose of duty, — will he not tell me, at once, from a deep moral sentiment, which leaves not a doubt on his mind, that the last has chosen the better part, that he is more to be envied than the first? On these great questions, what is the chief good? And what is the chief evil? We are instructed by our own nature. An inward voice has told men, even in heathen countries, that excellence of character is the supreme good, and that baseness of soul and of action involves something worse than suffering.’ A little further on, in the sermon, the Doctor says, — ‘ I now add, in the second place, that sin, though it sometimes prospers, and never meets its full retribution on earth, yet, on the whole, produces more present suffering than all things else; so that expe-

rience warns us against sin or wrong-doing, as the chief evil we can incur.'

If we except from the foregoing quotations, what the Doctor says of the prosperity of sin, some times, and his assertion that it never meets its full retribution on earth, we have the sentiment for which we contend, most clearly set forth, and in a very striking manner. He takes the man, who is least disciplined in morals as an example; and he justly contends that this man, from deep moral sentiment, which leaves not a doubt on his mind, will give the preference to virtue, though it labor under great sufferings; to vice, notwithstanding it succeeds in obtaining great property, provided these two extremes are clearly set before him. On this indubitable fact we are willing to rest our argument. We contend that man would commit no vice, if at all times he had clearly set before him its odious character. And the Doctor allows this to hold good, even with the man who is least disciplined in morals. - Let us try the Doctor's man again. We will present to his view a scheme by which he can come into possession of a great estate, by an atrocious act of wickedness; and at the same time discover to him an opportunity of doing an act of pure justice, which moral right requires him to do, but which will subject him to severe sufferings; will he now give the preference to virtue, do the just act, and open his bosom to the consequences, and forego the acquisition of the great estate, by an act of iniquity? We say he will, if there be real soundness in the Doctor's argument. If, from a *deep moral principle*, the man gives the preference to virtue, he would stand the test of this last trial. If the reader should doubt our last conclusion, and think that man is too selfish a being

to stand such a trial, we reply, that according to a fact which the Doctor has laid down, the more a man is attached to himself, the more he prizes his own happiness, the more likely he would be to stand this trial; for the Doctor says, and we say so too, that 'On the whole, sin produces more *present* suffering than all things else.' Is it possible that any man could choose, on selfish principles, the greater sufferings, in preference to the less? If this is possible, it would certainly be dangerous to make him believe that the greatest sufferings are in a future state! It would seem that we had now brought this subject to a fair issue. And yet it is possible that the question may arise, What is the reason that men ever do wrong? The answer is, The truth which we have, by the assistance of the Doctor's sound argument, brought to view, is not at all times realized.

But we suggested that Dr. Channing has fallen into an inconsistency; this we now proceed to make evident. What we have before excepted from what we quoted from his sermon, seems very inconsistent with the rest of the quotation; for if sin itself is 'more to be dreaded than pain,' it is absurd to say that it 'sometimes prospers.' Would it not be absurd to say that pain *prosper*s? If so, according to the Doctor's argument, it is still more absurd to say that sin, which is more to be dreaded than pain, ever *prosper*s. But he has said more in the same sermon. For the purpose of making out a worse punishment for sin in another world, than the evil which it brings with it in this, he really inculcates the opinion that sin brings some enjoyments to the wicked, 'in the present life. He says, 'Accordingly, sin, though, as we have seen, it produces great misery, is still left to compass many of its objects, often to prosper, often to be gain. Vice,

bad as it is, has often many pleasures in its train. The worst of men partake, equally with the good, the light of the sun, the rain, the harvest, the accommodations and improvements of civilized life, and sometimes accumulate more largely outward goods. And thus sin has its pleasures, and escapes many of its natural and proper fruits !' Does this agree with the Doctor's declaration, before noticed, that on the whole, sin produces more *present* suffering than all things else ? No ; it is so far from it, that it amounts to the very argument, which temptation to sin always uses to ensnare her wretched votaries ! If we ask the vilest sinner what inducements have led him along in his wicked course, it would puzzle him to return a more ample reply than the Doctor has here furnished. If men could not be persuaded to believe what the Doctor has here taught, they would never seek happiness in the ways of vice and wickedness. This every candid person will acknowledge. How much is it to be lamented that ministers of religion, those who are looked up to as the guardians of morality, should use the only arguments with the people, by which they can be encouraged to persevere in wrong-doing ! We would, by no means, be understood to insinuate that Dr. Channing, or any other preacher, does this unhappy work, knowing its tendency. No doubt is entertained that he designs it for the best of purposes ; but his means are at war with what he designs to effect.

In relation to the arguments we have been laboring to lay before the reader, we have selected those inconsistencies from the writings of Professor Stuart and Dr. Channing, particularly, because they are prominent leaders of the two denominations to which they belong ; and therefore, their contradictions may be

taken as a fair sample of the common preaching of these two sects. These doctors, as well as all who preach the doctrine of future punishment, have relied on the terrors of that punishment, to induce men to be pious and virtuous; and yet they know that the most vicious and most abominable, in all Christian countries, have been brought up from childhood to believe that doctrine; and at the same time have been educated in the belief, that sin brings many enjoyments in this world, and is attended with great prosperity in the very things which they are taught to love; and to complete the work of iniquity, they are furnished with the means of escaping all punishment hereafter!

Thus far our investigations have been directed to ascertain, by a careful and studied reference to the moral constitution of man, and the laws by which the human mind is governed, whether true religion and genuine morality have need of the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments for their establishment and prosperity; and we feel satisfied that the indisputable truths, which have most evidently appeared, all harmonize in their testimony against the utility of such doctrine; and moreover, that they show, beyond a reasonable doubt, that such doctrine and preaching are of an injurious tendency. To show, still further, this unhappy tendency, on the principles of the law of mind, on which reliance may safely be placed, we here add but one fact more. It is well known, and will be acknowledged by every candid person, that the human heart is capable of becoming soft, or hard; kind, or unkind; merciful or unmerciful, by education and habit. On this principle we contend, that the infernal torments, which false religion has placed in the future world, and which ministers have, with an over

flowing zeal, so constantly held up to the people, and urged with all their learning and eloquence, have tended so to harden the hearts of the professors of this religion, that they have exercised, towards their fellow-creatures, a spirit of enmity, which but too well corresponds with the relentless cruelty of their doctrine, and the wrath which they have imagined to exist in our heavenly Father. By having such an example constantly before their eyes, they have become so transformed into its image, that, whenever they have had the power, they have actually executed a vengeance on men and women, which evinced that the cruelty of their doctrine had overcome the native kindness and compassion of the human heart.

Another ground, on which the advocates of a future state of rewards and punishments place much dependence for the support of that doctrine, they denominate *analogy*. We think it too hazardous to attempt anything like an accurate statement of the particular arguments, which are made to depend on this principle, in favor of this doctrine; for we might be liable to some mistakes, which would represent the views of its advocates differently from their mode of representing them. Our liability to misrepresent in such an attempt, seems unavoidable, on account of the fact that there has been nothing like a system of reasoning yet exhibited on the general subject. We feel safe, however, in saying, that, as far as we have been informed, those who rely on what they call analogy to support the doctrine of future retribution, hold that in all respects, which are necessary to carry sin and its miseries into the future state, that state will be analogous to this mode of being. So that, reasoning from analo-

gy, as moral agents sin, and thereby render themselves miserable in this world, the same moral agents may continue to do the same in the world to come. In connexion with this argument it is urged, that as it is evident to our senses that sin often escapes a just retribution in this world, it must be recompensed in another state, or divine justice must forever be deprived of its claims.

On reasonings of such a character we shall use the freedom to say that they appear to have no higher authority than mere human speculations injudiciously managed. That they are nothing more than simple speculations, is evident from the fact that they are not founded on any divine authority. We presume that their own advocates never ventured to support them by scripture authority. And that they are managed injudiciously is very apparent from the circumstance, that while they profess to be justified by the principle of analogy, they are a direct denial of the very analogy on which they depend. Theologians who endeavor to exert an influence over the minds of people, by means of these speculations, are constantly urging that in this world we see sin procuring for its agents the riches and honors of the world, while it escapes judicial detection, and goes unpunished. Now if they were consistent with their analogy and with themselves, they would see at once, that in the next state of existence sin will procure for its agents the riches and honors of that world, and there as well as here, escape judicial detection, and go unpunished. They would likewise see that as divine justice can quiet its own claims in this world without administering a full and adequate retribution of human conduct, it may do the same in the future state. In this way we might pro-

ceed and make the future state precisely like the present ; for we have no more authority for carrying sin and its miseries into a future world, than we have for carrying all other things into that state which we find in this. Reasoning from all that we know, we must believe that so long as men sin they will do so from the beguiling power of temptation. If then we believe that sin will exist in the future state, we must suppose that temptations will there act on the mind with a deceiving influence. In this world the wicked are allured with the hopes of temporal gain, and these attractions are strengthened by the belief that crime will not be detected, and that punishment will be avoided. Were it not for these hopes and allurements no wrongdoing would be practised in this world ; and to suppose that we shall transgress the law of God in the future world, without any temptation, is a speculation altogether arbitrary and capricious, as well as contrary to analogy.

If we allow the doctrine of future retribution to stand on the principle of analogy, we must also conclude, that as those who are called good men, and pious saints in this world, often forsake the right way, turn from the holy commandments, and fall into divers sins and temptations, and become wretched in wickedness, — so, in the future world, the saints may depart from the path of divine rectitude, and debase themselves in the moral defilement of all manner of iniquity. It is only necessary to allow that the temptations which allure men in this world, will exist hereafter, and exert their influence there as they do here, in order to establish the opinion that saints will fall into sin in the future world, on as good authority as stands the opinion that sin will in any case be found in that

state. Moreover, as it is true that in this world, many are every day becoming more reformed, and are engaging in the good work of emendation of life; and others are seduced from virtuous sentiments and moral habits into the paths of sin and vice, — so we may expect to find the same versatile state in the world to come; some growing better, and some worse, and these same changing characters and pursuits, from time to time, forever and ever.

If we allow this doctrine of analogy, we shall not only maintain that the wicked will continue to sin in the future state, but that the righteous, who may remain steadfast in holiness hereafter, and even advance continually in moral purity, will there suffer, and suffer forever, as they do in this world, the just for the unjust. This suffering is necessarily connected with the sentiments and virtues of the religion of Jesus Christ; and is now embraced in the professions of religionists of all denominations. If the pious in this world are so distressed, as they profess to be, with the apprehensions which they entertain of the future sufferings of their wicked fellow-creatures, what must be their anguish hereafter, when they shall see, in awful reality, the sufferings, which they now have only in prospect! On this principle of analogy, parents, who shall be pious and holy in the world to come, will suffer forever, by beholding their own dear children pressing forward in the ways of iniquity, and suffering the dire retributions of sin. Children, also, who shall there be righteous, must suffer continually by seeing the parents, whom they love, plunging into wickedness, and enduring the torments which divine justice shall there inflict.

We must consider it unaccountable, why the advo-

world to come, on the principle of analogy, while they cates of future sin and suffering carry them into the are unwilling to carry into that state the Christian virtues, on the same principle. They contend that it is entirely inconsistent with the laws of the human mind, to expect that sinners will be so changed at death as to possess hereafter no evil propensities. How, then, can they believe that death will so change the condition of the saints, that they will hereafter be entirely destitute of those Christian virtues, which are here indispensable to the Christian character, and which cause them in this world to feel so deep an interest in the reformation of the wicked? In this world, they allow that the more the Christian is like the divine Master, the more he feels the welfare of sinners pressing on his mind, the more fervently does he plead, in his prayers, for mercy in favor of the wicked. Will death end all these holy desires, and discontinue all these fervent and gracious prayers? If so, death will effect a greater change in them, than the wicked would experience by the discontinuance of sinful propensities. Sinful propensities never have the full and cordial support of the sinner's whole mind. There is always a greater or a less reluctance in the soul that is made a captive by wicked allurements. But this is not the case with the faithful Christian, while pursuing the holy path in which divine wisdom and truth direct him. He feels no reproofs of conscience, for running too fast in the shining way of love to God and good will to man. Should he be so changed, as to feel no holy desires for the conversion and salvation of sinners, while sinners are thick around him, his change would be total. But should the sinner relinquish entirely his vicious desires, he would only conform to

what his conscience always told him was his duty. If then it be unreasonable, and contrary to the laws of the human mind, to allow that man will not continue to sin, after this mortal state of flesh and blood is dissolved ; it must be granted that it is far more unreasonable, and a still greater violation of the laws of the human mind, to suppose that at death those holy affections and divine exercises of the saints, which are both required and justified by the very principles of the gospel of Christ, will be discontinued, when the ' earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved.'

In taking a general view of this weighty subject, it seems impossible to avoid surprise at the zeal which is manifested in support of the doctrine which carries sin and misery into the future state, but resigns at death all those holy feelings, those heavenly compassions, and those merciful desires, which in this world engage the saints in the blessed cause of bringing sinners to repentance. Finding a stream so broad, so deep, and so rapid, it is natural to inquire for the fountain from which it flows. Does it flow from that God who is love ? Can infinite love take pleasure in continuing sin beyond this mortal state, and in discontinuing those compassions, and that heavenly mercy, which so kindly flow towards the unhappy guilty in this world ? In reasoning thus, do we reason from analogy ? No ; we contradict analogy. For, if in this world the love of God, in his saints, regards the wicked with pity, reasoning from analogy, we must come to the conclusion that the saints, in the future state, will exercise the same compassions towards the wicked, if there should be any in that state. In this world, the hearts of the virtuous are constantly bleeding with pity for those whose vices render them

wretched. Do we reason analogically when we say that the vicious will continue their vices in the future world, but that the virtuous will there feel no compassion for them? We feel very confident that the stream, whose fountain we are seeking, does not flow from that God who is love.

Does it have its origin in the gospel of Jesus, whose mission authorized him to bear our sins in his own body, to suffer, the just for the unjust, to wash us from our sins in his own blood, to take away the sin of the world, through death to destroy him who had the power of death, and deliver those, who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage? If in this world Jesus loved sinners, and gave himself a ransom for sinners, do we reason analogically when we come to the conclusion, that by his divine authority sin is to continue in the future state, but that there he will have no compassion, no love for sinners?

Shall we find the object of our inquiry in the natural affections of the human heart? Do the sympathies of our common nature supply the stream, whose origin we seek? Ask those unhappy fathers and mothers, whose hearts have ached for many days and nights, by reason of the miseries endured by their vicious children. Will they inform us on their death-beds, that they hope soon to be free from sorrow, and see, in the coming world, the children, whom they now love and pity, pursuing the paths of iniquity, and suffering the torments of a righteous retribution, without feeling for them the least compassion? Is this according to analogy? Surely, we have not yet found the source of this deep and wide stream, whose waters are so rapid. Should we carefully follow this current

to its fountain, we should find it coming forth from a dark cavern of iniquity, from which divine love and heavenly wisdom are excluded. And as is the fountain, such is the stream.

The object we have in view in presenting this our reasoning on analogy to the reader, is, that it may be seen, that if this scheme be allowed, and sin and misery thereby carried into the future state, we must allow that in the future world there can be no such thing hoped for as happiness for any, without a mixture of mental pain and sorrow, which will be there increased beyond what the virtuous endure in this life, in proportion as sin and suffering may there be greater than are known in this world. If all this be consistent with the gospel and religion of Jesus, Christians have before them a most gloomy prospect.

Let us trace this analogy still further. It is well known, that in this world the wicked are constantly inflicting distressing injuries on the upright and virtuous. According to this scheme of analogy, this practice is to continue in the world to come. This seems to be necessarily embraced in the notion that sin will there be committed; for it would be no small reformation in this world, if the wicked would confine their wrongs to their own circle, and cease to injure the innocent and the upright.

Again: It is contended, by the advocates of the doctrine which carries sin and suffering into the world to come, that the belief that there is no punishment in the future state for sin committed in this, and that sin is fully recompensed in this world where it is committed, is of a licentious tendency; that the preaching of such a sentiment is an encouragement to vice; that to dissuade the wicked from their wicked ways, it

is necessary to hold up the terrors of a future state of retribution. Then, according to analogy, as soon as we find ourselves in the future world, it will then be necessary to inform those who shall be wicked there, that they are in danger of punishment in a future state. It will then be licentious to believe and teach that all punishment for sin is in that state where it will be committed. According to this analogy, sin will never be fully punished in the state in which it is committed, but the transgressor must always look into a future state for retribution. Also, as the righteous are not fully rewarded for their good works in this world, and as they are obliged to look for a full recompense hereafter, without which prospect they would have no inducement to live godly lives, — so, according to analogy, when they arrive to the future rewards, they will have no inducements to do well in that state, unless they can enjoy the prospect of being recompensed in a state beyond that.

Having extended our inquiry into the merits of the arguments in favor of a future state of retribution, which rely on analogy for their support, to as great a length as the nature of the subject seems to render necessary, we may now proceed to call the doctrine in question, by the assistance of the Scriptures, as they relate to divine retribution.

In the following inquiry respecting the punishment of sin, a constant reference will be had to certain doctrines, which are believed in the Christian church, and held to be essential to the faith of the gospel. This being embraced in our design, it may contribute to render our arguments more intelligible, if we first present the reader with a concise statement of those

doctrines which will be called in question ; that having them in mind, he may the better judge of their soundness, by comparing them with such Scripture authority as may be presented.

1. Respecting sin and its punishment, it is believed that our Creator views it to be an infinite evil, being a violation of his infinite law ; and that nothing short of endless punishment can be its just retribution.

2. Consistently with the foregoing, it is believed that the punishment of the sin which men commit in this mortal state, is not inflicted nor endured in this life, but that it will be inflicted and endured in the future, immortal state.

3. It is believed that all those of the human family, who shall finally obtain salvation by Jesus Christ, will be so forgiven their transgressions as not to be punished for them.

4. It is believed that a realizing sense of the truth of this endless punishment is indispensable to true piety, and is the proper support and defence of moral virtue. And

5. This doctrine of endless punishment is one of the principal bonds of fellowship in the church, as no one who does not believe it, is allowed to be sound in the faith of the gospel, or a worthy member of the Christian communion.

Having these sentiments thus before us, and keeping them in constant view, we shall proceed to the consideration of certain facts, and certain declarations of the Scriptures, inquiring, as we pass along, how such facts and declarations can be made to agree with them.

Before Adam sinned, the ' Lord God commanded

the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat : but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it ; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.' (Gen. ii. 16, 17.) The facts which relate to the subject of this divine command and threatening, and which we now wish to have considered, are the following : 1st, It must be allowed that it was, at least, as necessary for man to know before transgression what punishment would be inflicted if he should transgress, as to be informed of it after the offence had taken place. 2d, If the doctrine of endless punishment or any punishment, in a future state, be true now, it was true when the foregoing command and threatening were communicated to Adam. 3d, If a belief in this doctrine of future punishment be now indispensable to true piety, and if it be the proper support and defence of moral virtue now, it was equally so before Adam sinned. The question then occurs, in relation to the subject, and these facts, why did not the Lord God state the doctrine of future punishment in the threatening with which he accompanied his command ? In place of doing so, he mentioned no punishment but that which was to take place in the day of transgression : ' In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.' Here is no intimation of a day of judgment, at the tribunal of which Adam would be brought thousands of years after his mortal days were ended ; nothing here about the intolerable pains of hell in an eternal state, about which there is so much preached in our times. How are these things to be accounted for ? If sin is not punished in this state of existence, but in a future state, can any one conceive why the Lord God should have been so explicit in stating the punishment immediately in the day

of transgression, and why he should have omitted to give the least intimation of its being inflicted in a future world? Did the Creator, in this case, think it unnecessary to present to Adam this indispensable inducement to piety, this defence and support of moral virtue?

It seems worthy of careful notice, that the Creator was as silent on the subject of future punishment, in his communication to Adam and Eve, after transgression, as he was before. After Adam had sinned, the Lord God called both the tempter and the tempted to an account immediately. He did not inform them that he had fixed the day of their trial in eternity, in a future state of existence; but he called them to judgment immediately. To the tempter he said, 'Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow, and thy conception; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake: in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou

return.' (Gen. iii. 14-19.) All which is here recorded, not only belongs to the present state of mortality, but is peculiar to it. Even to the tempter there is no intimation that he had exposed himself to any sufferings beyond that life which was supported by dust. He was not told that he should go on his belly and eat dust after he was dead, but all the days of his life. The Lord God gave no intimation to the woman that her sorrow or conception should be multiplied in eternity, or that she should bring forth children in sorrow in a future state, or that in that state her desire would be to her husband, or that in eternity, thousands of years after their bodies had returned to dust, he should rule over her. Nor was Adam told that the ground should be cursed for his sake in a future state, nor that it should bring forth thorns and thistles in eternity, or that in eternity he should eat the herb of the field, or that in the sweat of his face he should eat bread in a future state; but only until he returned to the ground out of which he was taken.

It seems perfectly reasonable that our professed divines, who consider the doctrine of future endless punishment so essential to piety, as such a pillar in the temple of religion, so essential for the support and defence of moral virtue, should be called on to reconcile the facts which we have noticed, embraced in the scripture account of the first transgression, with their views. Can they inform us why the Creator did not threaten Adam with punishment in eternity, if such punishment was intended? Can they render any good reason why the Creator did not present this *pious* doctrine to Adam, and enforce it on his mind with as much energy as they now endeavor to enforce it? Was it because the Creator had but a small regard to

the support and defence of moral virtue, that he neglected to threaten Adam with any punishment after he should return to the dust from whence he was taken? These queries they ought to solve; and then proceed to inform us what better reason there is now for them to hold up this doctrine of hereafter punishment, than there was for the Creator to make it known in the beginning.

Having noticed the first transgression, and all the retributions which divine wisdom saw fit to award to the offenders, and finding them all confined to the present mortal state of man, we may pass to consider the second sin of which mention is made in the Scriptures, and the punishment with which it was visited. Many and various have been the conjectures respecting what was meant by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; and about what the first transgression consisted in, various opinions have been entertained; but the second sin mentioned in the sacred records is so definitely stated, that no difference of opinion respecting it is entertained. It was the murder of Abel by his brother Cain. For this act of violence the Lord said to Cain, 'The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.'—(Gen. iv. 10—12.)

For this atrocious sin we are informed, in the above quoted passage, that Cain was cursed; but the curse was not put off to a future state; nor was the judgment deferred until Cain went into another world

The day of judgment came immediately, and he was doomed to his punishment without delay. The curse which was denounced on this murderer was from the ground which had received his brother's blood; and it was said to him, '*now art thou cursed.*' It was not intimated to Cain that he would be called to give an account of this murder in a future state; nor was he told that he was in danger of being punished in eternity. He was not told that he should be a fugitive and a vagabond in a future state, but in the earth.

If the preachers of the present day, who so zealously contend for the doctrine of future punishment, and who attach to it those weighty consequences which we have noticed, were as circumspect as the importance of divine truth demands, it is believed that before they would proceed to sentence Cain to a state of endless punishment, they would endeavor to render some good reason why the Creator did not, though he intends doing it hereafter; and also why it is now any more necessary for pious, religious, or virtuous purposes, to hold up this doctrine, than it was when sin first made its appearance in the world.

We have a much more formidable account of sin and its punishment, after the earth became extensively inhabited, than we have in the two instances which we have noticed. The case of Cain was evidently considerably advanced, as to magnitude, beyond that of his parents. It is very evident that the crime of murder committed by Cain, was more heinous in the sight of God, than was the offence of Adam and Eve. This we infer from what was denounced as retributions in the several cases. There is indeed some degree of similarity in these cases, but we are not in-

formed that either Adam or Eve was cursed, or driven from the presence of the Lord, or made a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; but these weighty denunciations on Cain caused him to exclaim, 'My punishment is greater than I can bear.' This complaint, we are not informed, was made by Adam or Eve, or that they had an occasion thus to exclaim. Their condition, under all the inconveniences of the righteous retributions rendered them by their compassionate Creator, was far from being intolerable.

But in the days of Noah, when men became multiplied on the earth, we are told that 'God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord said, I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air.' — (Gen. vi. 5 — 7.)

This determination to destroy the whole race of man, Noah and his family excepted, on account of human transgression, evidently indicates that, in the sight of the Creator, the provocation for severe retribution was, in the case under consideration, much greater than in either of the former. Even in Cain's case, God not only spared his life, but provided for his defence, so that others should not take it. But now, wickedness has arrived to such an extent, has become so general, and wears such an aggravated character, that a besom of destruction is appointed, and men are swept from the earth. 'And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing, that creepeth upon the earth, and every man. All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land died.

And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark.'— (Gen. vii. 21 — 23.)

But in this most deplorable instance of sin, and its truly awful retribution, we find no mention of punishment in the future state. Even to righteous Noah, no hint was given that after the men of that sinful age should be destroyed by the flood from the earth, a punishment infinitely worse would be inflicted on them. Noah is said to be a 'preacher of righteousness;' (2 Pet. ii. 5.) but we are not informed that he either preached the doctrine of future punishment, or believed it.

It is true that preachers of our times profess to be commissioned from heaven to preach the doctrine of future, endless punishment, and to represent it with all the horrors which are frightful to human imagination. But we are persuaded that it is a duty incumbent on them, before they engage in this tremendous work, to be able to account for the entire absence of this doctrine from all the accounts we have of the sinfulness of men in Noah's time, and of their fearful destruction therefor. If the Creator saw fit not to threaten nor denounce future punishment, either in the case of Adam's or Cain's offence, because their crimes were not of the greatest magnitude; and had reserved the manifestation of an infinitely greater penalty for an occasion which might justify its severity, we should suppose that such an occasion had occurred in the wickedness of the people in Noah's day, if such ever existed. If it be allowed that the doctrine of future

punishment is such a principal support and defence of piety and moral virtue, as it is supposed to be by its advocates, does it not lead to the conclusion that the sin of Adam, the murder committed by Cain, and the vast aggregate of iniquity which condemned the old world to entire destruction, might have been nearly, if not wholly prevented, by a full and clear manifestation of this salutary doctrine? In the light of these circumstances, and the reflections suggested by them, it seems altogether unaccountable why no intimation should have been given of this doctrine in the accounts which we have already noticed.

According to Bible chronology, more than sixteen hundred years after the creation of man had passed away, when the Creator manifested his disapprobation of man's sinfulness in the destruction of the world by the flood; still do we find no evidence that he had yet seen fit to make his creatures acquainted with the danger they were in, according to the opinion we are considering, of being forever punished after death. The loss of life was the extent of the retribution for transgression, of which any mention is made in scripture record, up to this time.

We may now notice the remarkable account of the sinfulness of Sodom, and the cities of the plain, together with the truly awful destruction by which they were overthrown. By the account of this memorable case, we are informed that these cities were destroyed by fire from heaven, for the sinfulness of their inhabitants. Let this be kept in mind, while we carefully examine the record, to see if any mention be made of punishing these abominable, sinful people after they were consumed in the flames of their cities. After

the angels had brought Lot and his wife and his daughters out of Sodom, one of them said to Lot, 'Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.' — (Gen. xix. 17.) In this most alarming crisis, when the angel of God was urging Lot to make his escape from danger, it was for his life only. No mention was made of any danger to which his immortal soul was exposed in eternity, whether he left the city or staid in it. And concerning Lot's wife, who, heedless of the angel's express command not to look behind her, looked back, and was turned into a pillar of salt, there is no mention of her being punished in a future state.

Respecting the destruction of those cities, we read, 'Then the Lord rained upon Sodom, and upon Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.' — (Gen. xix. 24, 25.) Here we find no intimation concerning any punishment inflicted on those wretched sinners in a future state. More than two thousand years had now passed away after man was created; four very particular accounts are recorded of instances of very heinous transgressions, and also of due retributions inflicted by God himself, and yet no hint is recorded of any punishment after man's mortal state was ended. No, the time had not yet come in which the all-wise Creator saw fit to induce man to be pious and virtuous by the influence of the doctrine of a future state of retribution.

A few years before the overthrow of Sodom, we are informed, that God communicated to Abraham certain things which were to take place respecting his descendants, in the then future ages; some of which we may notice as having a relation to our present subject. 'And he said unto Abraham, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years. And also that nation whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterwards shall they come out with great substance.' — (Gen. xv. 13, 14.) This prophetic declaration was evidently fulfilled by the sojourning of the Israelites in Egypt, the hard servitude to which they were subjected, and the memorable plagues which a judicial Providence brought on their oppressors. Of these circumstances, two will be here noticed, as particularly relative to our present inquiry. The first we shall notice is the time when God judged the Egyptians, and punished them for their cruel oppressions. According to the common doctrine concerning a day of general judgment at the end of this natural world, and in a future state, we should expect to find that the judgment of the Egyptians would take place at that time. If not in this world, but in the next the sins of men are to be judged, God has not yet judged that nation which oppressed Israel. But if we are careful to understand the divine declaration above cited, we must duly notice that God judged that nation *before* the Israelites left Egypt; for the text says, 'And also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge; and afterwards shall they come out with great substance.' Thus we find that the day of judgment, in which God rendered to the oppressors of the descendants of his servant Abraham, the just retributions

which their unrighteous oppressions deserved, was before Israel went out of Egypt.

The second particular in the circumstances of this case, which we shall here notice, regards the nature of the retribution rendered. This inquiry brings into view the plagues with which Pharaoh was threatened, and which his hardness of heart and stubborn rebellion against God, brought upon him and his people.

The plagues which Moses and Aaron were authorized to announce to Pharaoh, to induce him to let the Hebrews go out of his land, and which were actually brought on the Egyptians, though they were fearful signs and grievous judgments, were all of a temporal nature, were inflicted on the people and on the land in the sight of living men, and were all ended before Israel left Egypt. The river Nile and all the waters of the land were turned to blood; frogs were sent in judgment; lice also; flies, and murrain on cattle; boils breaking forth with blains; a grievous hail mingled with fire; locusts; darkness, and the first born of the Egyptians slain. These ten fearful judgments seemed to exhaust the treasures of wrath which had accumulated against the Egyptians in consequence of the cruel bondage imposed on the Hebrews, and in consequence of their unmerciful oppressions. But what are all these in comparison with the terrors of the day of judgment, which are now announced by the Christian doctors! and what are they when compared with the endless sufferings which these doctors say they are authorized to hold up to the people, as inducements to piety, religion and virtue!

Was it because Pharaoh and his people had sinned so little, that God threatened them with no punishment in the future world? and was it because their

wickedness was so slight that nothing but temporal judgments were inflicted? Will our doctors plead that in those times, of which we are now speaking, piety, religion, and moral virtue could be supported by milder and more gentle means than in our days? Or will they attempt to assign some good reason why the Creator should then withhold the only means which he knew would ever prove efficacious in turning men from their wicked ways to serve him? Two thousand five hundred years, and more, had passed away, from the time man was created to the time of the plagues and judgments of Egypt; Adam's transgression had received the retribution which God threatened, Cain's murder had been punished by God himself, the old world for its abominations had been swept from the face of the earth, Sodom and the cities of the plain, for their wickedness, had been overthrown by fire from God out of heaven; and now is fulfilled the tenfold vengeance of heaven on sinful Egypt, and yet not one allusion to a future state of punishment! We know that our doctors profess to be fully authorized to doom Pharaoh to a state of endless punishment, and that they quote the word of God to him, in support of their judgment in the case. See Exodus ix. 15, 16: 'For now will I stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth. And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.' It is true that our doctors are too cautious to attempt to prove that they have any authority for applying this passage to the support of punishment in another world; and if they were half as prudent in their endeavors to understand its true

sense, they would see, at once, that in place of ever alluding to punishment hereafter, *pestilence*, which was inflicted in this state, is specified in the text, and it is asserted that Pharaoh should be 'cut off from the earth.' This is the extent, the utmost reach of retribution. And it is of importance to remark that the whole was ordered by the Divine Being, not for the purpose of making his vengeance known and felt in the eternal world; but to make his power and name known and 'declared throughout all the *earth*.'

We shall not release our doctors from what we deem their duty in respect to our general subject. We do most solemnly demand of them to assign some satisfactory reason for the entire omission of their indispensable doctrine of future retribution for so long a time. They will not allow that men can be duly prepared for happy existence hereafter, unless they fully believe in this doctrine. How then was it in those times to which we have alluded? Did all who lived and died in those ancient times, leave the world unprepared to meet their final judge? Even the doctrine of a general judgment, in the future state, is nowhere hinted in a single passage relating to the wickedness of mankind in those ages. When the Creator called Adam and Eve to an account, and pronounced on them such retributions as his wisdom dictated, he did not inform them that the final judgment of their conduct was reserved for a future world. So likewise when Cain, for the murder of his brother, was judged and condemned, and when the retributions of divine justice were specified, he was not informed that all this was only a foretaste of something future, and that he must await his trial at the general judgment, when, in a future state, all mankind would be brought to

judgment. Nor have we any information which would justify the belief that Noah ever informed the wicked people of his day, who were destroyed by the flood, that they would have to answer for their sins at the bar of God in a future state, after the approaching flood should take them away. A similar neglect is evident in the account we have noticed concerning the judgment of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zebaim; no intimation was given that another trial, another day of judgment awaited the inhabitants of these cities, in a future state. So also, in all that is said to Pharaoh, and of the punishment of his iniquities and the sins of his people, no hint is given that they would be brought to another trial in a future world, for which occasion God had reserved the most severe of his judgments. So far from this, God said to him, Exodus ix. 14: 'For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth.' This is a very different doctrine from that which teaches that God reserves infinitely worse plagues for men in a future state, than any they endure in this.

If a more genuine piety, a more refined morality could have been produced by a knowledge of this doctrine of future judgment, of future rewards and punishments, than existed in those ancient times, it was certainly needed for the moral and religious improvement of righteous Noah and Lot, the blemishes in whose characters might thereby have been prevented. But it is believed that a judicious comparison between the piety and virtue of these men, and the piety and virtue of those who are rendered religious in our times by the influence of this doctrine, would result neither

to the advantage of the latter, nor to the support of the pretended claims of this doctrine.

We may now take our leave of Egypt, and travel with God's chosen people towards the earthly Canaan, in hope that if any improvement is to be made in religious and moral instruction, if the wisdom of God is pleased to add more severe sanctions to his law, than in former times, if now the time has arrived when a future retribution, in all the horrors in which our doctors have dressed it, is about to be manifested to his own chosen people, we may find it, understand it, and avail ourselves of its advantages.

Let us go with Moses and the congregation of Israel to the fearful mount from whence the law was given. Surely the cloud that rests on this Sinai, that cloud from which such thunders roll, in which such lightnings blaze, must contain the whole artillery of retributive vengeance. We shall now learn, no doubt, the mind of God respecting the demerit of sin and the severity of its just punishment. We can hardly expect to go from this mountain ignorant of those divine sanctions which will best serve the cause of piety, religion, and moral virtue. The lightnings have flashed! the thunders have rolled! God has spoken! the verdict of heaven is registered! Come, ye doctors, who insist that neither judgment nor punishment is in this world — and who, without hesitation, doom your fellow-sinners to endless wo, — come and read the following verdict: 'Life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.'—(Exodus xxi. 23 — 25.) All this is evidently in this world, where life can be taken, where eyes can be destroyed,

where teeth can be extracted, where hands and feet can be amputated, where burnings, wounds, and stripes can be inflicted.

Will it be contended that the retributions which are here specified are those only which God has authorized men to render to their offending fellow-men ; but that he reserves to himself the office of inflicting retributions infinitely more severe ? We will then bring to view the punishments which God told his people that he himself would inflict upon them for their stubbornness, and their rebellion against him and his statutes. And here we beseech the reader to look carefully, having reference to two questions ; first, Is there, in all the dreadful account, any intimation of punishment in a future state ? secondly, Is it possible to conceive of sufferings more severe, that can be suffered in the present state, than those which are here described ? ‘ But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments ; and if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant ; I also will do this unto you ; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart : and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies : they that hate you shall reign over you ; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you. And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. And I will break the pride of your power ; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass. And your strength shall be spent in vain : for your land

shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits. And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you, according to your sins. I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your high-ways shall be desolate. And if ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me; then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins. And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant: and, when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you; and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy. And when I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat and not be satisfied. And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me; then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat. And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you. And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation, and I will not smell the savor of your sweet odors. And I will bring the land into desolation; and your enemies which dwell therein shall be astonished at it. And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword, after you; and your land shall be desolate, and your cities

waste. Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her sabbaths. As long as it lieth desolate it shall rest; because it did not rest in your sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it. And upon them that are left alive of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth. And they shall fall one upon another, as it were before a sword, when none pursueth; and ye shall have no power to stand before your enemies. And ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. And they that are left of you shall pine away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them.'—(Lev. xxvi. 14—39.) Will the advocates of future judgment and retribution carefully survey all these specifications of punishment, and deliberately consider the intenseness of their severity, and then gravely say that God does neither judge nor punish the wicked in this world? In the scripture just cited, God says, verse 21: 'I will bring seven times more plagues upon you, according to your sins.' Will any one be bold enough, while this passage is in view, to assert that no punishment endured in this mortal state is according to men's sins?

However important the doctrine of future retribution may be, however essential to promote and defend true piety, religion and morality, however dangerous it may be to the souls of men not to believe in this doctrine, we find we are now compelled to leave Moses, Sinai, and the law given to God's covenant

people, without obtaining the least information concerning it? All the support which the wisdom of God saw fit to give to piety, religion and morality, by means of punishment, was derived from sufferings endured in this mortal state. It is not in this ministration of death and condemnation, that we find the doctrine of punishment in the future state; if we ever find it, we must find it in the more glorious ministration of the spirit of righteousness, in which Jesus, our great high priest, 'is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.' But who will ever believe that the dispensation of the gospel exhibits punishments for sin more lasting and more severe than are announced in the law?

If we examine the divine testimony concerning the Judges of Israel, we shall learn that as late as was Jotham's curse pronounced and executed on the murderous Abimelech and the sinful Shechemites and house of Millo, temporal punishment is said to be a full retribution even for the most heinous offences. Of the seventy sons of Jerubbaal, Jotham alone escaped the murderous and bloody hands of Abimelech, who was made king by the Shechemites, who thus supported him in his wickedness. Jotham, as soon as he was informed of the tragical death of his brethren, and that the murderer was made king, went and stood in the top of Mount Gerizim, and after reproving the Shechemites for their madness and impolicy in one of the best and most ingenious parables ever written, he pronounced the following curse: 'Let fire come out from Abimelech and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and

devour Abimelech.'—(Judges ix. 20.) 'This curse of Jotham was not long delayed ; it was not put off to a future state ; in about three years from the day Abimelech was made king, 'God sent an evil spirit between him and the men of Shechem ; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech ; that the cruelty done to the three-score and ten sons of Jerubbaal might come, and their blood be laid upon Abimelech their brother which slew them, and upon the men of Shechem which aided him in the killing of his brethren.'—(Verses 23, 24.) This treachery soon kindled the flame of open war, and terminated in the destruction of Shechem and its inhabitants, and in the death of Abimelech. 'Thus God rendered the wickedness of Abimelech which he did unto his father, in slaying his seventy brethren. And all the evil of the men of Shechem did God render upon their heads ; and upon them came the curse of Jotham, the son of Jerubbaal.'—(Judges ix. 56, 57.)

According to the doctrine of future retribution, which we now have under consideration, if God had rendered *all* the iniquity of Abimelech on his head, and *all* the evil of the men of Shechem upon their heads, they must all have been condemned to endless sufferings, in the hell which that doctrine teaches ; but there is not the least intimation that in the retributions of divine justice, which were executed on those vile transgressors, any infliction was extended into the future state. It seems reasonable to ask, in this place, why God should inspire Jotham to announce the curse which we have seen that God executed on those murderers, and yet withhold from him all knowledge concerning a curse which is infinitely more durable and indescribably more severe, if such

were contained in the treasures of divine retribution? The divines of our times, who believe and preach future retribution, confidently threaten people with its terrors, though so far from being such atrocious murderers as were Abimelech and the Shechemites, they have committed no open violation of the wholesome laws of civil society in their lives, and are kind husbands and wives, provident fathers and mothers, dutiful children, loving brothers and sisters, trusty and obliging neighbors and friends. How shall we account for these excessive terrors, under the gracious dispensation of the gospel of man's salvation, which infinitely transcend all the most terrible denunciations of that law which is emphatically styled the ministration of condemnation?

While passing in review the records of retributive justice, respecting instances wherein God himself is accuser, judge and executioner, we are induced to bestow some particular attention on the fearful case of king Ahab. To the crime we are now about to consider Ahab was but an accessory, Jezebel, his wife, was the principal. The specifications of the case are as follows: — 'Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab, king of Samaria. And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house, and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money. And Naboth said to Ahab, The Lord forbid it me that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee. And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased, because of the word Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he had said I will

not give thee the inheritance of my fathers; and he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread. But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread? And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it; and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard. And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou not govern the kingdom of Israel? Arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry; I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite. So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders, and to the nobles that were in the city dwelling with Naboth. And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people; and set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king: and then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die.—(1 Kings xxi.) These iniquitous orders were immediately obeyed by the elders and nobles of Jezreel, who held the favors of Ahab's court in higher esteem than they did that pure and holy justice which forbids false accusation and violence; and Naboth was condemned in a mock trial, under the specious pretence of religious zeal, and cruelly stoned by a lawless mob, that he died. Information was sent to Jezebel that Naboth was dead, when she said to Ahab, 'Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead.' Well pleased with these tidings, the king went to take possession of the

coveted vineyard. But the righteous Judge of all the earth sent his prophet Elijah to meet him on the very spot where he had fondly anticipated the enjoyment of a garden of herbs, and authorized him to announce to the ears of this murderous king the following righteous sentence: 'In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. . . . Because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord, Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity. . . . And will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha, the son of Abijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin. And of Jezebel spake the Lord, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat.' Not far from one year after the murder of Naboth, and the annunciation of the divine judgment against these royal offenders for the crime they had committed, Ahab was mortally wounded in a battle which he fought at Ramoth in Gilead, with the King of Syria. 'So the King died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the King in Samaria. And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria, and the dogs licked up his blood, and they washed his armor according unto the word of the Lord which he spake.'—(1 Kings xxii. 37, 38.) In about thirteen years after the dogs licked the blood of Ahab, according to the word of the Lord, Jezebel was eaten by dogs according to the same sentence; for Jehu conspired against king Joram, the son of Ahab, and slew him, and ordered Jezebel to be thrown from her window into the street,

where she was trodden under foot by the horses of Jehu's troops, and eaten by dogs. When it was told Jehu what had become of Jezebel, he said, 'This is the word of the Lord, which he spoke by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel; and the carcass of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall say, this is Jezebel.'—(2 Kings ix. 36, 37.)

We have here set before the reader a very short account of the wickedness of King Ahab and his wife Jezebel, in relation to the cruel murder of Naboth; but it should be noticed that these two offenders were notoriously wicked in their general conduct, and that the sentence of divine vengeance against them was a judicial retribution for their offences. However hard it may be for our divines of the present day, who advocate the doctrine of future retribution, and who contend that sin is not fully punished in this world where it is committed, to be told that the divine sentence which we have just noticed, and which was executed on Ahab and his wife Jezebel, was all which the wisdom of God has seen fit to have recorded for our admonition, they will search in vain to find any authority in the Scriptures for their being punished in a future state.

How widely different was the conduct of the prophet Elijah, who was sent to meet Ahab, and to deliver to him that message from God, which unwavering justice dictated, from the conduct of our divines, who preach the terrors of future retribution! In place of informing the royal murderer that he had exposed his immortal soul to the eternal vengeance of an offended God, and that he was in danger of being cast into a

lake of fire and brimstone hereafter, as a just retribution for his wickedness, the legate of heaven, in a manner as pointed and severe as it was solemn and awful, told him, 'In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. . . . The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.' As wide as this difference appears, it is fully equalled by that which exists between the terrors of the two doctrines. Let a clergyman, for instance, address a murderer with the terrors of future damnation, and tell him if he does not repent before he dies, he will go to hell hereafter ; and, out of civility to the divine, he may treat him with respect, but nothing more ; but place this felon at the bar of justice and let him hear his sentence of death pronounced by the judge, and strange terrors will agitate his fragile frame, and deathly paleness will speak the apprehensions of his heart ! What men can realize as matter of certainty, can never fail of exerting an influence on the mind, which will always correspond with its importance ; but mere imaginary terrors, however vivid may be the color in which they are painted, will exert an uncertain and doubtful influence, corresponding with their own uncertainty, while various means of avoiding harm will be sure to neutralize their whole power.

We must not forget to consider the fact that at the time the divine sentence of retribution was announced to Ahab, more than three thousand years had passed away, after the creation of man, and yet it had not seemed good in the sight of God to reveal to his children this sin-preventing, soul-saving doctrine of future punishment ! Who will tell us why God should withhold the knowledge of a doctrine from man, which is now thought to be a main pillar in the temple of

true religion, and the principal bulwark which defends those moral virtues that constitute the felicities of life ? Was not sin as hateful to God, was not righteousness as precious in his sight, was not the salvation of immortal souls as important, in ancient as in modern times ? If the future and eternal welfare of man can be secured only by the terrors of endless misery, why should that kind Creator, who gave to the ancients the same sun, the same moon, as constant seed-times and harvests, as to us, have withheld from them these more needful terrors, yet deal them out on us so profusely ! Will not millions of poor wretched immortals, doomed to endless sufferings for going out of this world destitute of those preparations, which depend on a belief in the doctrine of future retribution, mingle some faint murmurs, at least, with their groans, that they were not provided with these indispensable means of preparation in their day ? If it be said that righteous Noah, Lot, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets will tell them that they were prepared for eternal happiness without any knowledge of this doctrine of future retribution, it will amount to a full concession that a belief in this doctrine is not absolutely necessary to such desirable preparation.

As it is contended that God has not seen fit to judge and reward men in this world, according to their works ; but has appointed to judge them after death, and to punish them for their wickedness in the future, eternal state, we will, with this opinion, contrast the divine testimony recorded by Ezekiel : ‘ And thou, son of man, prophesy, and say, Thus saith the Lord God, concerning the Ammonites, and concerning their reproach ; even say thou, The sword, the sword is

drawn ; for the slaughter it is furbished shall I cause it to return into his sheath ? I will judge thee in the place where thou wast created, in the land of thy nativity. And I will pour out mine indignation upon thee ; I will blow against thee in the fire of my wrath, and deliver thee into the hands of brutish men, and skilful to destroy. Thou shalt be for fuel to the fire ; thy blood shall be in the midst of the land ; thou shalt be no more remembered ; for I the Lord have spoken it.' — Ezekiel xxi. 28, &c.) We have here the Divine testimony that God would judge the wicked Ammonites *in the place where they were created* ; that their punishment should be in their land, and should be executed by brutish men, who should be skilful to destroy. The Ammonites were not created in a future state, nor was the land of their nativity in a future state, nor will any one pretend that God will deliver the Ammonites into the hands of brutish men, in a future state, to be there destroyed by them. Yet all this punishment is said to be executed in God's wrath, and in the fire of his indignation. If it was consistent with the moral government of the Ruler of the universe to judge and punish the idolatrous Ammonites in this world, and in their own land, it is difficult to see why it is not equally consistent with this Divine government to judge all nations, and every individual of the human family, and to recompense them according to their deserts, in this present state.

After stating, in the foregoing explicit manner, the judgment of the Ammonites, the prophet, in the next chapter, as explicitly states the execution of the divine indignation against God's covenant people ; and he lays the scene in the city of Jerusalem. After having set forth, in a long catalogue of specifications, the

crimes and abominations of the house of Israel, he thus proceeds: 'And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross; all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger, and in my fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out my fury upon you.' — (Ezekiel xxii. 17, &c.)

It is worthy of notice that the prophet is as particular here in stating the place where the house of Israel should suffer the execution of the divine wrath, as he was in stating the place where the Ammonites should suffer it. The Ammonites were to suffer for their iniquities, in their own land; and the house of Israel were to suffer their punishment in Jerusalem.

To us an important query here arises: As it is contended by our divines, that all the sufferings which men endure in this world, are nothing in comparison with the punishment which they are taught to expect in the future state, why are the former so particularly set forth, and the places where they were to be endured designated, so that no mistake can be made; and yet are we not favored with any description of the lat-

ter? If in any part of the divine writings we could find as particular a description of a future state of punishment, as we have seen of the punishment of those whom we have passed in review in this inquiry, there would exist no doubt concerning it. But neither Moses nor any of the prophets ever attempted to give any relation concerning this future retribution, which now constitutes one of the principal pillars of religion, and an indispensable article in the Christian faith.

In his description of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, Jeremiah compares the punishment of the sin of the daughter of his people with the punishment of the sin of Sodom, and says that the former was greater than the latter. Let the reader carefully consult the following most eloquent description: 'How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed! the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street. The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter! Even the sea-monsters draw out the breast, they give suck to their young ones: the daughter of my people is become cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness. The tongue of the sucking child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirst: the young children ask bread, and no man breaketh it unto them. They that did feed delicately are desolate in the streets: they that were brought up in scarlet, embrace dunghills. For the punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, that was overthrown as in a moment, and no hands stayed on her. Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their pol-

ishing was of sapphire : their visage is blacker than a coal ; they are not known in the streets : their skin cleaveth to their bones ; it is withered, it is become like a stick. They that be slain with the sword are better than they that be slain with hunger : for these pine away stricken through for want of the fruits of the field. The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children ; they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people. The Lord hath accomplished his fury ; he hath poured out his fierce anger, and hath kindled a fire in Zion, and it hath devoured the foundations thereof. The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem.' — (Lam. iv. 1—12.) Although language and the tongue of the most eloquent would fail in the attempt to set forth the suffering of mortals to a greater degree than is here described, yet there is no intimation, in this description, of punishment in a future state. The prophet assures us that these sufferings were in Jerusalem and in Zion, and that they were the accomplishment of the fierce anger and the fury of the Lord. If we carefully consider the language we have quoted from Ezekiel and Jeremiah, in which they set forth the awful retributions of divine justice, all which they confined to this life and this mortal state, it will at once occur to our recollection that there are no expressions used in any part of the sacred writings, which indicate terrors more fearful, or sufferings more intense.

Should preachers of our times, who profess to believe that the prophets of Israel, whose testimony we have just considered, were inspired by the Divine Spirit

to announce the retributions of justice against the transgressors of their times, follow their example, and, confining all the punishments which they should hold up to the people, to the present state, exert all their wisdom and discernment to understand the effects of wickedness of all descriptions, and to set them forth in their true colors, they would certainly be a very different kind of preachers from what they now are ; and, we believe, a much more profitable kind of preachers. But what would our Christian congregations think, should they, in place of hearing from the pulpits the usual and fashionable denunciations of eternal punishment in the invisible world, for the follies and crimes of this life, hear the natural and necessary tendency of every species of wrong-doing clearly pointed out, and enforced with all the powers of that eloquence which is employed in the usual way, but not a word about a future state of punishment? Should such a change take place, if violent excitements should be discontinued, if religious fanaticism should cease to produce its frequent paroxysms, and if none were made mad with the fears of everlasting torment, it is confidently believed that vice would be more detested than it now is, and that virtue would have more sincere admirers.

Notwithstanding these remarks are already protracted beyond what was at first contemplated, we are unwilling to bring them to a close without noticing how exactly the preaching of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, corresponded with the testimony of the prophets which we have considered.

When the divine teacher denounced the judgments of heaven on the most perverse and abominable people that ever our world produced, the dark, portentous

cloud of vengeance, which had been gathering for ages, had then acquired such a density as to hang visibly over the land. He saw the cloud, and wept over Jerusalem, knowing that her fearful destruction drew nigh. Accordingly he limited all his dreadful denunciations to the generation in which he lived. The following are some of his declarations on this subject : ‘ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it : and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels ; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.’ — (Matt. xvi. 24—28.) ‘ Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell ? Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes ; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city ; that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children

together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.' — (Matt. xxiii. 32—39. 'Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.' — (Mark viii. 37; ix. 1.) 'For whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels. But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the kingdom of God.' — (Luke ix. 26, 27.) 'And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But wo unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of na-

tions, with perplexity ; the sea and the waves roaring ; men's hearts failing them for fear, and looking after those things which are coming on the earth ; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads ; for your redemption draweth nigh. And he spake to them a parable : Behold the fig-tree and all the trees ; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your ownselves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.'—(Luke xxi. 20—32.) 'Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heaven shall be shaken ; and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven ; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Now learn a parable of the fig-tree : When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know the summer is nigh ; so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.'—(Matt. xxiv. 29—34.)

If Jesus, like modern preachers, had believed that in this state of being, God neither judged nor reward-

ed men according to their works ; but that in a future state he hath appointed a general judgment, and will in eternity punish, with unspeakable severity, those who do wickedly in this world, would he have been so very particular to limit all the denunciations of divine wrath, which he announced to his enemies, to the generation in which he lived ? Had Jesus been of the opinion that a belief in this future and eternal retribution, was indispensable to the cause of true piety, religion and morality, would he not have preached as our divines now do, and brought that hell, in which our preachers believe, and which they constantly hold up to the people, directly before the eyes of the multitudes who attended on his preaching ? If it be said that Jesus did threaten the wicked with hell fire, we say that we have no proof that he ever used any word by which he meant to express what our preachers mean by the word hell.

By those, in our times, who endeavor to maintain that where Jesus used the phrase, 'A gehenna of fire,' rendered by our translators, 'hell fire,' — (Matt. v. 22,) he meant to designate a place of torment in the future state, it is argued that this must have been his meaning, because he knew that the Jews, to whom he spoke, were in the habit of using the same phrase for this purpose. To this reasoning we state the following objections : 1st, To support the fact, on which they rest this argument, they have never been able to produce any thing like undoubted authority. And why they should feel satisfied to rest a doctrine of such immense importance on authority, which, at any rate, must be considered doubtful, is very questionable. It is by no means certain that the Jews, in our Sa-

viour's time, were in the habit of using the word *Gehenna* to signify a place of future misery.

2d, If we look at the passage where this word is found, and examine it with suitable candor, it is believed that we shall be fully satisfied that Jesus did not mean to speak of a state of torment in the future world. See verses 21, 22: 'Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment; but I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.' Now, no candid person will pretend that Jesus meant to designate a future state of punishment by being in danger either of the judgment, or of the council. But if by these he did not mean to point out a future state of sufferings, but alluded to temporal sufferings only, it must appear strangely extravagant to suppose that by the last he meant a state of sufferings in the future world. The first crime is that of being angry with a brother without a cause; the second is that of saying to a brother, Raca; the third is that of calling a brother a fool. Will any candid person pretend that there is such an infinite difference between the two first of these offences, and the last, that temporal punishments were suitable to be inflicted for the two first, but that nothing short of the torments of that hell, in which our clergy believe, are suitable to the last? Such a conclusion, we think, but a few candid minds, after deliberate consideration, will adopt.

Dr. Adam Clarke, a believer in future punishment, is candid enough to allow that the passage under consideration had no allusion to sufferings out of this world. On the text he says,—‘It is very probable, that our Lord means no more here than this: If a man charge another with apostacy from the Jewish religion, or rebellion against God, and cannot prove his charge, then he is exposed to that punishment, (burning alive) which the other must have suffered if the charge had been substantiated. There are three kinds of offences here, which exceed each other in their degrees of guilt. 1, Anger against a man, accompanied with some injurious act. 2, *Contempt*, expressed by the opprobrious epithet, *Raca*, or shallow brains. 3, *Hatred* and *mortal enmity*, expressed by the term *moreh*, or *apostate*, when such apostacy could not be proved. Now, proportioned to these three offences, were three different degrees of punishment, each exceeding the other in severity, as the offences exceeded each other in their different degrees of guilt. 1, The *Judgment*, the Council of twenty-three, which could inflict the punishment of strangling. 2, The Sanhedrim, or Great Council, which could inflict the punishment of *stoning*. 3, The being burnt alive in the valley of the Son of Hinnom. This appears to be the meaning of our Lord.’

The learned Parkhurst says, in his Greek and English Lexicon, on the phrase *geenna tou puras*, a gehenna of fire,—(Matt. v. 22,) does, I apprehend, in its *outward* and *primary* sense, relate to that dreadful doom of being *burnt alive in the valley of Hinnom*. This lexicographer also was a believer in future punishment. We quote these authors, whose biblical learning is highly esteemed, by the clergy of all de-

nominations, not because we think them always correct in their opinions, but because, as they were believers in a future state of punishment, they would not have applied the text under consideration, to any punishment endured in this world, if they could have been justified in applying it to the hell, in the future world, in which they believed.

Mr. Whitman, in what he entitles, 'Friendly Letters to a Universalist,' recently published, contends, with much more spirit than humility, on p. 170, that Jesus was either a fool, or a liar, if he made use of the phrase 'A gehenna of fire,' to signify punishment in the valley of Hinnom! To us, it seems somewhat remarkable, that he should have inserted the word *fool*, as that is the very word, in the text, which he contends places him who uses it in danger of the future punishment for which he contends. This reminds us of the words of the Saviour to his disciples, 'Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.' For humanity's sake, and for his sake, and for mercy's sake, we hope his doctrine is not true. But we have but little doubt that he endures the very anguish of soul, which we believe Jesus meant to represent, symbolically, by the phrase '*A Gehenna of fire.*' This agrees with our views of the use of Gehenna by James, Ch. iii. 6: 'And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of Gehenna.' Mr. Whitman allows on p. 172, that Jesus sometimes used the word Gehenna to signify spiritual punishment in this world. But seems not to realize that by this concession he put it out of his power to prove that he ever used it to designate a punishment in the

future state. Nor does he prove that spiritual punishment, in this world, was not meant, by the Saviour, in the passage we have noticed.

By an attentive perusal of the argument of the Saviour, in Matt. v., in which this passage is found, we are satisfied that the divine teacher designed to inform his disciples, that in the spiritual government of the kingdom of heaven, here on earth, cognizance would be taken of crimes, which should consist in the wickedness of the heart, though no overt act were committed; and that he made use of legal punishments symbolically, to indicate the mental sufferings to which the sinfulness of the heart would subject men. And we believe that whoever will candidly examine Matt. v. from the 17th verse to the 30th, inclusive, will be of our opinion. 'The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.'—(Heb. iv. 12, 13.)

It ought to be kept in mind, that when Jesus used the phrase, 'A gehenna of fire,' in the passage in Matt. v. 22, and several times more in the same discourse, he was speaking, not to the Scribes and Pharisees, nor to the Jews, as a people, but to his disciples; and that he was giving them spiritual instruction, which related to his own kingdom of divine righteousness. To be satisfied of this fact, the reader may commence with the chapter, and its truth will at once appear. In the fore part of this chapter, Jesus taught his disciples the character of that righteousness which is indispensable

in his gospel kingdom, or kingdom of heaven. He gave them to understand that unless their righteousness should exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, they could not enter into the kingdom of heaven. The righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees consisted in a very scrupulous observance of the rites and outward duties of the law of Moses and the priesthood of Aaron; but Jesus informed them that they had omitted the weightier matters of the law, such as judgment, mercy and faith. These weightier matters were required by Jesus of his disciples, and constituted that righteousness which was required in his spiritual kingdom; in which kingdom his apostles were constituted kings and priests unto God. In this spiritual kingdom or government, there must be a spiritual discipline that would take cognizance of the thoughts and intents of the heart, and faithfully administer to every man a righteous retribution. The judgment seat of Christ is in the heart of every christian. Before this tribunal all his thoughts are laid open. If he allows himself to be angry with a brother, contrary to the law of Christ, he feels a corresponding condemnation; if he utter a word to his brother which is a violation of this spirit of love, a corresponding retribution is inevitable. To express these retributions, we think Jesus made use of temporal punishments symbolically.

The kingdom of God, or the gospel of Christ, was set up in our world to enlighten it; it is therefore the light of the world; and the more this light advances, the more it will reprove of sin, overcome it, and save men from it. Men, destitute of the knowledge of the gospel, can justify themselves, while rendering evil for evil; but the law of Christ condemns the practice.

But when Jesus spoke of the damnation of Gehenna, in Matt. xxiii. 33, he was addressing the Scribes and the Pharisees in their temple, accusing them of their hypocrisy and wickedness, and said: Ye, serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of Gehenna?' And he proceeds immediately to show them what he meant by this damnation, and when it would come upon them; for he adds: 'Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them shall ye kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city; that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation.' That Jesus here spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, is fully and clearly seen, by duly noticing the fact, that when he had finished his address to the Scribes and Pharisees, in the temple, he went out, and his disciples followed him privately to the Mount of Olives, where they asked him when those things should take place: to which he replied, in a particular description of the time of trouble when Jerusalem should be destroyed, and informed them that that generation should not pass away, until the whole should be accomplished. By the whole connexion, it evidently appears, that when Jesus denounced on his wicked enemies, who he knew would put him to death, and persecute his disciples, the damnation of Gehenna, he gave them to understand, that the woful judgments, of which their prophets had warned them, would soon be executed.

Cruden says that some suppose that 'the name of *Tophet* is given to the valley of Hinnom, because of the sacrifices that were offered there to the god Molech, by beat of drum, which in Hebrew is called *Toph*.' We meet with this word applied to this valley, which is Gehenna, as written in Greek, 2 Kings, xxiii. 10: 'And he defiled *Tophet*, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech.' Also, Isaiah xxx. 33: '*Tophet* is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.' Such is the prophet's figurative language, when speaking of the destruction of the Assyrian army. Again; Jeremiah vii. 31, 32: 'And they have built the high places of *Tophet*, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into mine heart. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be called *Tophet*, nor, The valley of the son of Hinnom, but, The valley of slaughter: for they shall bury in *Tophet* till there be no place.' See also the whole of Ch. xix, in which we find a most awful description of the destruction of Jerusalem, and in which the Lord says, verse 12; 'Thus will I do unto this place, saith the Lord, and to the inhabitants thereof, and even make this city as *Tophet*.' Here we have a most clear description of the damnation of *Tophet*, or of the valley of the son of Hinnom, or of Gehenna, for these several words mean the same thing. Now it appears to us, after giving the subject as much attention, as the most patient investigation

could bestow, that the supposition, that Jesus meant that the Scribes and Pharisees should understand him to be speaking of a damnation, when he spoke of the damnation of Gehenna, of which, none of their prophets ever spoke, does no small violence to the sacred writings, and is but a small recommendation of the discernment of those who would support it. To us, it is a warping specimen of the iron bondage, in which tradition has bound the human mind, and strangely hampered the brightest intellects. It seems that these erring brethren have given up the high places demolished by king Josiah, and built new ones in a Tophet, which they have located in a future state, where their Molech is to receive their sons and their daughters, in his bosom of fire? The making of shrines to this idol has long been a source of much gain, and the craftsmen in the employ are as careful of his magnificence and repute, as Demetrius was of the fame of Diana, of the Ephesians. But they seem to be blind to the immense sufferings, which they inflict on thousands of innocent beings, by driving them into gloom and madness, with the terrors of their doctrine.

If in the passages, which have been noticed, where the Saviour used the word Gehenna, no allusion to a future state of punishment can be discovered, even those who believe that such doctrine is taught in the Scriptures, will feel no confidence in using any other passage, where the same word occurs, in support of such punishment. We shall, therefore, submit our remarks on the word Gehenna, as a sample of our views of the use of this word, in all the passages, in which it is found, in the New Testament.

As Jesus, in the instructions which he gave to his disciples, was quite particular in giving them to un-

derstand, that his coming to render unto his friends and his enemies according to their works, would take place in the generation in which he lived, and while some of them should remain alive on the earth, it is worthy of special notice that he gave them no information that he should ever come for such a purpose in any later age or period of time. Corresponding with this important fact, we find, in the writings of his apostles, that whenever they spoke of the coming of their divine master, they spoke of it as an event immediately to take place. Peter and John were doubtless present when Jesus spoke to his disciples on this subject; and it is evident enough from certain expressions we find in their writings, that they remembered his sayings. Among the important signs, which he charged his disciples duly to regard, Jesus more than once mentioned the coming of *false christs*, who should deceive many. See Matt. xxiv. 5: 'For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.' Verse 24: 'For there shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.' Compare this with 1 John ii. 18: 'Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come; even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.' It is not probable that this epistle was written more than one or two years before the destruction of Jerusalem, by the Romans. The time had then come for the special signs, of which Jesus spoke, to appear. They did then appear; and this disciple thereby knew the *last time*, by which is meant the end of the world, of which Jesus spoke in Matt. xxiv., was at hand. In his warnings

to his disciples, Jesus charged them to be watchful. See verses 42 — 44 : ‘ Watch, therefore ; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore, be ye also ready ; for in such an hour as ye think not, the son of man cometh.’ Compare this with 2 Peter iii. 10 : ‘ But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.’ As Peter wrote this epistle eight or nine years before John wrote, as before quoted, he does not affirm that the time, called the last time, had actually come. The signs, of which the divine master spoke to his disciples, were not so visible when Peter wrote, as they were when John spoke of many antichrists. On this particular, see the Apostle Paul, 1 Thess. v. 1 — 6 : ‘ But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety ; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child ; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of the light, and the children of the day ; we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep, as do others ; but let us watch and be sober.’ This epistle was written some few years before that of St. Peter, from which we have quoted. Though St. Paul was not present with the disciples, when the divine master gave them the warnings of which we have spoken, he, as well as all the christian converts, had had ample opportunities to

learn these things from those who had heard them from the lips of Jesus. The least attention to the words of the Apostle Paul above quoted, will discover that the writer expected that the day of the Lord, of which he spoke, would come as a thief, in the life-time of those to whom his epistle was directed.

In accordance with the fact that the judgments of which Christ and his apostles spoke, were all accomplished near the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, we find the testimony recorded in the book of Revelation. See ch. i. 1: 'The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass.' Verse 3: 'Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand.' Ch. iii. 2: 'Behold, I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.' Ch. xxii. 7: 'Behold, I come quickly; blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.' Verse 10: 'And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand.' Verse 12: 'And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.' — (Com. Matt. xvi. 27, 28.) Verse 20: 'He which testifieth these things saith, surely I come quickly; Amen, Even so, come, Lord Jesus.'

It may serve to confirm, what we are here endeavoring to establish, to compare the direction given (Rev. xxii. 10,) with certain directions which were given to the prophet Daniel. In Dan. viii. 26, it was said to the prophet; 'And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told is true; wherefore shut

thou up the vision ; for it shall be for many days.' Also — xii. 4 : ' But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end.' Verse 9 : ' And he said, Go thy way, Daniel ; for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.' In the last verse of the chapter the prophet was told that he should rest, and stand in his lot at the end of the days. The reader will learn by these passages, that the reason why Daniel's prophecy was sealed up, was because it related to events that would not take place for ' many days.' With this fact let it be noticed that when Jesus spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem, as recorded Matt. xxiv, he referred to this prophecy of Daniel ; and gave his disciples to understand that they might live to see it fulfilled. Here then let it be noticed, that Daniel prophesied but about six hundred years before the destruction of Jerusalem. Let these circumstances and facts be compared with the direction given in Rev. xxii. 10 : ' And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book ; for the time is at hand.' By bringing these scriptures together, we see that Daniel was in his lot when his prophecy was fulfilled ; and that this was when Jerusalem was destroyed. We also learn the impropriety of supposing, that the coming of Christ, to render to every man according to his works, of which we read in the last chapter of the Revelations, is yet future. If Daniel's prophecy was sealed up, because the events were six hundred years distant ; and if the prophecy in Revelations was not allowed to be sealed, because the time of its fulfilment was at hand, is it reasonable to suppose it is yet future, after nearly eighteen hundred years have passed away ?

Having thus shown that no judgments were denounced on the wicked, either by Jesus or his apostles, that were not confined to the generation in which they lived, we are naturally led to inquire, why these divinely inspired teachers omitted the denunciation of retribution in the future state, if such be indispensable for the support of the religion which they taught, and the virtues which they recommended? Did neither Jesus nor his apostles understand the laws of the human mind so as to know, that unless rewards and punishments in the future world, were constantly enforced on the minds of men, they would never be truly pious or morally virtuous? How came it to pass that our revival preachers should now understand these important things better than those to whom we look as to teachers sent of God?

The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, recorded in Luke 16th, last paragraph, is thought, by divines in general, to be ample, and even positive proof of a future state of torment. Most christian people have been in the habit of so understanding this portion of our Saviour's instructions; and when we consider the force of education, and the proneness of the human mind to follow the beaten path of tradition, we are not at all surprised that thousands of people, for centuries, have given their full assent to such a use of this scripture. But we must acknowledge, that it is not a little to be wondered at, that so many learned critics, as have written commentaries on the scriptures, should have overlooked the true application of this parable. As we have, many years since, published our reasons for dissenting from the commonly received opinion concerning this scripture, and also given our views of its

true meaning ; and as these views are now generally known, among those who have rescinded the doctrine of a future state of punishment, we propose to do little more, in this place, than to present the reader, with what we may call the *key* which unlocks the mystery of the parable.

But the reader may possibly ask, by what authority we call this scripture a parable. By answering this query, it seems probable we may assist the reader the more easily to comprehend the whole subject. Let us ask what good reason we have to believe the following scripture to be a parable ? Judges ix. 8—15 : ‘ The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them ; and they said unto the olive-tree, reign thou over us. But the olive-tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honor God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees ? And the trees said unto the fig-tree, come thou, and reign over us. But the fig-tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees ? Then said the trees unto the vine, come thou, and reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees ? Then said all the trees unto the bramble, come thou, and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow ; and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.’ In answer to our question respecting this passage, the reader replies : We have two ample reasons for saying that this passage is a parable. 1st, Trees are not only destitute of the power of speech, but are even inanimate ; and therefore never wanted a king

to rule over them, nor ever spoke to the olive-tree, to the fig-tree, to the vine, or the bramble on such a subject. And 2d, The connexion in which this passage is found, shows clearly, that Jotham, who delivered it, used the trees to represent the Shechemites, who anointed Abimèlech king over them; and the bramble to represent Abimelech. All will allow that these are good reasons for believing that the scripture above quoted is a parable.

Now we conceive that we have two reasons for calling this scripture, concerning the Rich Man and Lazarus, a parable, which are not only similar to those above offered, for calling the words of Jotham, a parable, but equally applicable. In the first place, it is just as well known, that a dead man can neither see nor speak, as it is that trees never talk. But it may be said, that it was in *hell* that the rich man lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off. True, but this *hell* is the same as that of which Jacob spake, when he said, — (Gen. xxxvii, 33.) ‘I will go down into the *grave* (hades) unto my son, mourning.’ Does any body believe that Jacob thought that his son had gone to such a hell as christian people believe the wicked will be tormented in hereafter, and that he himself was going there too? Job says, ‘Oh that thou wouldst hide me in the grave, (hades) that thou wouldst keep me secret, until thy wrath be passed, that thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me!’ — (Ch. xiv. 13.) The reader is requested to keep in mind that it is said that the rich man lifted up his eyes in hades, being in torment. But this hades is the place in which Job desired that God would hide him, until his wrath was passed. Could one of our preachers, who are in the habit of working on the fears of the people by the

use of the word *hell*, in any way more surprise a congregation than by uttering, publicly, Job's prayer, above cited? What would the people now think, should they hear such a preacher say, in prayer to God, 'Oh that thou wouldest hide me in hell, that thou wouldest keep me secret until thy wrath be past? It is in hell that God's wrath is endured to the greatest possible degree, according to the doctrine of the preachers of whom we speak; but it is clear enough that Job thought if he could be hid in hades he would be secure from the wrath to which he was exposed while in this mortal life. Did Job expect that he should go to hades? Yes: for he says, — (See ch. xvii. 13, 14.) 'If I wait, the grave (hades) is mine house: I have made my bed in darkness. I have said to corruption, Thou art my father; to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister.' How does Job describe his expected, and wished for condition in hades? — (See ch. iii. 17—19.) 'There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of their oppressor. The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master.'

The reader will deem the fact important, in our inquiry, that the word *hades* is no where used in the Old Testament, to signify a place of suffering. In the Hebrew, the word rendered *grave*, in the above quotations is *Sheol*, which in many other places is rendered *hell*. In the Greek, the word is *hades*, both in the passage in Genesis, above quoted, and in this parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus; and there is no reason why the word should not have been rendered *grave* in the last as well as in the other. But if our translators had rendered the word *hades*, *grave*, in this

parable, no one would ever have believed that it was any thing but a parable. Wakefield says, treating on this parable, 'It must be remembered, that *hades* nowhere means *hell* in any author whatsoever, *sacred* or *profane*; and also, that our Lord is giving his hearers a parable.' Dr. Campbell, speaking of *hades*, says, 'In my judgment, it ought *never* in scripture to be rendered *hell*, at least in the sense wherein that word is now universally understood by Christians.'

Dr. Clarke says, 'The word *hell*, used in the common translation, conveys *now* an improper meaning of the original word; because *hell* is only used to signify the place of the damned. But as the word *hell* comes from the Anglo-Saxon *helan*, to *cover*, or *hide*, hence the tiling or slating of a house is called, in some parts of England, (particularly Cornwall,) *heling*, to this day; and the *covers of books*, (in Lancashire) by the same name, so the literal import of the original word *hades* was formerly well expressed by it.

If we allow the literality of the account of the rich man after he died, and do not allow that it is a parable. we make out that after the rich man literally died, he could see and speak, and know persons. But this would directly contradict the declaration of the wise man; — (See Eccl. ix. 5): 'For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not any thing.' Divine revelation makes us acquainted with no sentient existence of man, after he dies, until he is raised from the dead; in which resurrection Jesus told the Sadducees, that men are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection; that they are equal unto the angels, and can die no more. It is quite clear that St. Paul believed in no sentient

state between death and the resurrection ; for he reasons as follows :— (1 Cor. xv. 16—18) : ‘ For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised ; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain ; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.’ What sense would there be in this declaration of the apostle, if men can exist, and know, and see, and speak, and suffer, and enjoy, after they are dead, without being made alive in the resurrection ? Look, for a moment at Lazarus, in Abraham’s bosom. What condition is Abraham in ? The common opinion is, that he is in a happy state. What benefit then would a resurrection be to him ? What condition is Lazarus in ? This same common opinion supposes that he is in a blessed state. How then could St. Paul say, that unless Abraham and Lazarus should be raised from the dead, they had perished ? If we maintain this state between death and the resurrection, in which men are active beings, exercise the functions of consciousness, are capable of enjoying and of suffering, we contradict the statement made by St. Paul just recited. Now the scene, of what we call the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, is not laid in the resurrection state, but in *hades*, or the grave ; and Abraham with Lazarus in his bosom, and the rich man are all here where they hold conversation.

Will it be asked, if in all the scriptures there is to be found a passage, where the word *hell* is used, and where it represents those who are there as speaking, and where nothing is meant by *hell* but the *grave*, or the state of the dead ?— (See Isa. xiv. 9—11.) ‘*Hell* (*hades*) from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming ; it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth ; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All

they shall speak, and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, (hell or hades) and the noise of thy viols; the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.' Here the prophet makes the inhabitants of hell, with all the ancient kings, and chief ones of the earth, come forth to meet the king of Babylon at his approach; and he makes these kings and nobles speak to the king of Babylon, and ask him questions, and state to him certain facts, &c. Let us ask why the Christian clergy have not supposed that this passage gives a relation concerning the inhabitants of the hell with which they have so long frightened their hearers? The answer is very ready; there is nothing said about torment in this hell, in Isaiah. The prophet presents us with a vast company all in motion, eager to meet the king of Babylon at his approach, but there is no intimation that any of this vast multitude were in torment. If the prophet had represented them in a suffering state, the clergy would have believed that their doctrine of a future state of misery was as amply supported by this scripture, as by the account of the rich man in *hades*. But when they find all the inhabitants of hell in as lively a motion as are the inhabitants of a populous city, when coming forth to meet and welcome some great personage, they see nothing but a parable.

Having, as we think, given as good a reason for believing the passage, concerning the rich man and Lazarus, a parable, as is the first rendered for believing what Jotham said of the trees, a parable, we shall now endeavor to show that our second reason is as good, as the second, which was assigned for that purpose. As that was found in the connexion, and general subject, so we shall find in the connexion, and general subject,

on which Jesus was treating, when he delivered the passage concerning the rich man and Lazarus, evidence equally apparent.

The subject commences with the 15th chapter, and continues to the end of the 16th. A circumstance occurred which gave no small offence to the Pharisees and Scribes, who were constantly on the watch to see the conduct of Jesus, in order to notice whatever they could find in the same, which they could censure. They saw all the publicans and sinners drawing near unto him to hear his preaching. At this they murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. Jesus replied, using three very appropriate and instructive parables. The first of the lost sheep; the second of the lost piece of silver; and, the third of the prodigal son, and his elder brother. These parables contained a complete answer to the objection which the Pharisees and Scribes had stated against him. By the elder brother he evidently represented his murmuring opposers, who, according to the parable, were, by their own envious and wicked spirit, excluded from the blessed enjoyments, to which penitent sinners were welcomed by the favor of the Gospel. Having thus answered his opposers, he turned to his disciples, and delivered the parable of the unjust steward, in hearing of the Pharisees. In this parable the divine teacher informed his disciples that the religious Jews, as a people, were going to be turned out of the stewardship, which, under the legal dispensation, they had occupied, as they had not with faithfulness discharged its duties. He also gave his disciples to understand that though the Jews were going out of the trust, in which they had held a station, they were making no provision for their future wants, in which

they discovered less wisdom than an unjust steward, who made friends of his lord's creditors. The Phari sees hearing this parable, were highly provoked, and so exasperated that they derided Jesus. He replied, 'Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. He then adds, not in the least departing from his subject, 'The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.' Here he introduces a parable again, for the purpose of representing the impropriety of setting aside the law, and of introducing the gospel dispensation, until the law was fulfilled; and also of the impropriety of holding connexion with the law dispensation after it was legally discharged. This parable reads as follows: 'Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery.' The next words commence the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus; and there seems no reason to doubt that it was designed to represent the error the Jews would fall into, by adhering to the ritual dispensation, after it was fulfilled in Christ; the miserable condition which has been the lot of that people ever since the reception of the Gentiles into the gospel covenant, and faith of Abraham, signified by Abraham's bosom. Whoever is acquainted with the many passages, in the Old and the New Testaments, relating to these very prominent subjects, will be able to associate a multitude, which evidently, point to them. And,

as before suggested, since we have long ago published our views of this parable, we deem it unnecessary to be further particular in this place.

We may be permitted, however, to add, that it appears to be equally unreasonable, to take this account of the rich man and Lazarus away from the general subject of the Saviour's discourse, in which we find it, and to apply it to signify the enjoyments and sufferings, and conversations of dead men, in hades or the grave, as it would be to take Jotham's parable away from the history of the Shechemites and Abimelech, and use it to prove that there was once a time, when the trees wanted a king over them, and that they actually made verbal requests to the olive-tree, to the fig-tree, and to the vine for that purpose, and were by them refused, in speeches, which are recorded; and that they obtained the consent of the bramble, in a speech which it returned to their request.

As the following passage is about as much relied on for the support of a future state of retribution, as the passage we have just considered, we will not omit to notice it in this place. — 'And I say unto you, my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do; but I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him.' — (Luke xii. 4, 5.)

There are several reasons which seem not only to justify an attempt to explain this passage of Scripture, but also to call seriously for the same. The use which has long been made of this passage, by divines, to substantiate the doctrine of misery in the future state,

and the fearful horrors with which they have tormented their unhappy adherents, seem to call for an effort to disarm such an unholy cause of a weapon to which it has no right, but which it has long used with truly lamentable effect. To this we may add some pressing requests, for an exposition of the passage, to be presented to the public. It is true that there have already been published sufficient comments on this Scripture to satisfy the candid that it contains no authority in support of the terrible sentiment, in vindication of which it has been generally used. But still the unwarrantable practice is continued, and calls for a full and clear explanation are also continued.

In the first place, it may be beneficial to consider the sentiment in support of which this passage has been used, and the application of the passage to it. 1st. It is believed that the word *hell* in the text, means a place of unspeakable torment in the invisible world. 2dly. That being cast into hell, means, being cast into this state of torment. 3dly. That as men are not able to injure us after they have taken our lives, we need not fear them. 4thly. But as God is able, after he has killed us, to cast us into this place of torment, we should fear him.

It may not be necessary to be farther particular in stating the common doctrine, to which our text is applied, because it is generally well understood. But we think it somewhat important that such objections to the foregoing use of the text, as have arisen in our meditations on the subject, should be considered.

1st, We object to this use of the text, because we have no information, in any other part or parts of holy writ, that our Creator has established such a place of

torment, in the invisible world ; and we are very confident that such information is not given in our text.

2dly, We object to this use, because it evidently dishonors that Being whom we ought both to love and venerate. If a being who contrives a state of unmerciful sufferings for his own creatures, deserves our love and our homage, we surely cannot imagine one so evil as not to have equal claims to the same.

3dly, It is very evident that the divine Master was endeavoring, in the discourse in which our text is found, not only to put his disciples on their guard against two powers, which were able to injure them, the one more, however, than the other ; but also to direct them where their safety lay, and where, or in whom, to place their confidence. See Matt. x, where the parallel passage is found ; verses 16—18 : ‘ Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves : be ye, therefore, wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men ; for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues ; and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, and for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.’ Verses 22, 23 : ‘ And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake. But when they shall persecute you in this city, flee ye into another ; for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.’ Verses 28—31 : ‘ And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul : but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing ; and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.’ Here take particu-

lar notice: 1st, Jesus calls the enemies of the gospel wolves, and his disciples he calls sheep, which he was sending forth among these wolves; or, in other words, he represents his enemies and his disciples by such figures. 2dly, Observe that Jesus informed his disciples what these wolves would do to them; and also let it be remembered that he told them to *beware* of men on account of what they would do to them. 3dly, Let it be duly noticed that immediately after the disciples are told whom not to fear, and whom they should fear, Jesus says, 'Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.' Here it is quite evident that the divine Master meant to teach his disciples, that as their heavenly Father condescended to take care of even one sparrow, he would certainly take care of them who were of so much more value than many sparrows, that he had even numbered the hairs of their head. But the use of the text under consideration, to which we object, supposes that Jesus represented to his disciples, that their heavenly Father, in whom he would have them put such entire confidence as to fear nothing, was more to be feared than all the wolves among whom he sent his defenceless sheep! We cannot believe that the divine Master was so palpably inconsistent in his instructions, as to hold up as an object of the greatest fear, that Father in heaven, in whom he directed his disciples so to trust as not to fear.

4thly, We object to the common use of our text, because the passage is found in the Saviour's particular directions, given to his disciples. And there are

many things said in these directions which are by no means applicable to men in general. But the common use of the text applies it to all men, in all conditions, and in all ages. And, moreover, Jesus told these disciples, in the chapter where our text is recorded, calling them a little flock, not to fear, for it was their Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom; see verse 32. To this little flock, we cannot believe that their divine Shepherd meant to hold up their heavenly Father, as more to be feared than all their enemies.

5thly, We object to this common use of our text, because there is no mention made of our Creator, nor any word used in the text or its connexion, that presents him as that power that was to be feared, because he could cast into hell. To us it seems unaccountable that learned divines, who, no doubt, have been honest in their studies of the Scriptures, have never been startled at the objections which we have here stated; and yet there are many more which might be presented. But we desire not to be too tedious.

In the second place, we shall attempt an explanation of the passage under consideration, according to the present convictions of our understanding. But we would candidly state, before we proceed, that what we are about to offer, is not, in all its parts, so perfectly clear to our own minds, as we could wish; and therefore a hope is entertained, that some one of more discernment, and of more successful research, will favor us by reflecting more light on this subject.

We shall begin by suggesting that Jesus, in this discourse, spoke to his disciples concerning the ene-

mies of whom he would have them beware ; and distinguished between those who only had power, that is, legal authority to scourge them in their synagogues, and in various ways to treat them cruelly, and others, whose power, or legal authority, extended, not only to the taking of their lives, but to denying them the rites of burial ; and who would destroy their lives and their bodies in *γέεννα*, which is the name of the place which the translators call hell. To this suggestion, two objections will arise in the mind of the reader : First, It will be said that Jesus did not point out two objects of fear, but one only ; for he said, Fear not them that kill the body, &c. but fear him which, after he hath killed, &c. To answer this objection, we must be able to show, that in scripture language, it often occurs, that when a preference is to be given to one of two things, the less receives an entire negative, in order to heighten the other. For our satisfaction on this subject, we refer to Psalm li. 16, 17 : ' For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it ; thou delightest not in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit ; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.' Surely none, acquainted with the Scriptures, will suppose that David did not believe that God required sacrifices under the law dispensation. But all good men, in all ages, have understood that in God's sight a humble and a contrite heart was a more acceptable sacrifice than were such as were offered on the altar. To strengthen this view, see 1 Sam. xv. 22 : ' And Samuel said, hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord ? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice ; and to hearken, than the fat of rams.' What we are in search of,

is fully comprised in the following; Hosea vi. 6: 'For I desired mercy and not sacrifice; and the knowlege of God more than burnt offerings.' Here an entire negative is followed by comparison. If it were proper to say that God required the knowledge of himself *more* than burnt-offerings, it allows that he required burnt-offerings, which is what the prophet asserts, in the first member of the verse, that God did not desire. Jeremiah, in chap. vii. 22, 23, presents us with a testimony direct and full to our subject: 'For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices; but this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people; and walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.' With this, compare the institutions and ordinances of the levitical priesthood, as recorded in Exodus and Leviticus; and it is seen at once, that the meaning of Jeremiah is, that God did not command the sacrifices of that ancient priesthood but in a sense subordinate to the moral precepts of the law. Jesus himself, though he preferred a good moral act to any gift that might be offered on the altar, required the latter also: Matt. v. 23, 24: 'Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.' But if no other proof of what we are endeavoring to establish were at hand, the words of Jesus which follow would be sufficient; John xii. 44: 'Jesus cried, and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on

him that sent me.' In *words*, here is a contradiction ; but not in *sense*. What Jesus meant is clear : He that believes on him, believes that the Father is greater than he ; and therefore gives the preference to him who sent him.

Having given what we think is a fair and candid reply to this first objection, we shall now attend to the second, which rests on the word *kill*. It will, undoubtedly, by some be objected, that as Jesus said, Fear not them that kill the body, &c. he assigned to those whom he told his disciples not to fear, the power to take their lives. To meet this objection, we confess we have not so ample means as we could wish, nor so much as we might probably obtain by a little more exertion than we have time to employ at present. But what little we have being measurably satisfactory to us, we give it to the reader, hoping that further light on the subject will from some quarter arise. In the first place, we think that the religious enemies of the disciples, who were of the Jews, being Roman subjects, had not the prerogative to take their lives ; but that they had the privilege of their ecclesiastical discipline, which enabled them to cast out of the synagogue, to scourge with whips, and to inflict various and cruel tortures ; but not to take life. We think this fact is well substantiated by the plea which the Jews made before Pilate, as recorded, John xviii. 31 : ' Then said Pilate unto them, Take ye him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews, therefore, said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.'

In the second place, we are well persuaded that the word *αποκτείνω*, which in the text is rendered kill, is not unfrequently used to express cruel torturing, where

life is not taken. Parkhurst says that *αποκτείνω* generally implies cruelty and barbarity. Donnegan, thus: to torture, torment, to render miserable or wretched. These we esteem good authority for supposing that although this word is often used to imply the taking of life, it may be understood in a more limited sense in this passage.

In the third place, we think it is very evident that Jesus had the fact in his mind, when he spoke to his disciples on this subject, that their Jewish enemies had not the power to take their lives. This appears by what he says, as recorded in Matt. x., to which we have already referred. See verses 17, 18: 'Beware of men; for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.' If their Jewish enemies, who could bring the disciples before their councils, and could scourge them in their synagogues, had authority to take their lives, they would have had no occasion to bring them before Roman governors and kings, but would have been glad to accomplish the whole work themselves.

Fourthly, after the divine Instructor had presented his disciples with these two authorities, which would be employed against them, it was natural for him to warn them to be more on their guard against falling into the hands of the Roman authorities, than into the hands of those whose power was less extensive. And, therefore, he warned them to fear the greater power more than the less. But it is evident, from the whole connexion, that he would guard them against both, by their being wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

In the passage, as recorded by Matthew, this comparison, for which we contend, is plainly expressed by the word *rather* ($\mu\tilde{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omicron\nu$). 'But rather fear him,' &c. See chap. vi. 30: 'Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more ($\mu\tilde{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omicron\nu$) clothe you, O ye of little faith?' vii. 11: 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more ($\mu\tilde{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omicron\nu$) shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him.'

And fifthly, it appears evident, that, according to the text in Matthew, which answers to the one in Luke, which we are considering, life could not be taken by the lesser power: 'And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul,' &c. The word here rendered soul is $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$, which means the natural life of man. See John xiii. 37, 38: 'Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life ($\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$) for thy sake. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life ($\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$) for my sake?' It is quite unnecessary to multiply quotations on this subject. The fact is well known to all who have examined this word, that it means the natural life; and there was no more propriety in rendering this word *soul* in Matt. x. 28, than there was for so rendering it John xiii. 37, 38: and then the passage would have made Peter to say, 'I will lay down my soul for thy sake,' and Jesus to ask him, wilt thou lay down thy soul for my sake? As there is some reason to believe that there was something like a wrong influence operating in the minds of the translators of our Scriptures, we must beg indulgence while we quote several passages more. And this we do, that the common error

concerning this subject, and which has been occasioned by the translation, may be corrected. Matt. xvi. 25, 26 : ' For whosoever shall save his life ($\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$) shall lose it ; and whosoever shall lose his life ($\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$) for my sake, shall find it. For, what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? ($\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$) or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? ($\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$) ' If by the word *soul*, the translators meant what divines now mean by it, that is, an immortal part of man, what could induce them to use this word in verse 26, in place of the word *life*, which they used in the verse preceding ? This unwarranted variation of rendering the same word in these two verses, has had a most pernicious effect. And professed divines, either through ignorance or hypocrisy, have imposed the notion on common people, that Jesus, in the above passage, spoke of the eternal damnation of man's immortal soul ! That the reader may see the gross absurdity of allowing the word rendered *life* and *soul*, to mean an immortal soul in man, we will put down the first verse of the last quoted passage agreeably to such a supposition. Then verse 25 would read thus : ' For whosoever will save his immortal soul shall lose it ; and whosoever will lose his immortal soul for my sake, shall find it ! ' See also Matt. xx. 28 : ' Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life ($\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$) a ransom for many.' No one supposes that Jesus here meant to say, that he came to give his immortal soul a ransom for many. Luke xiv. 26 : ' If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life ($\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$) also, he cannot be my disciple.' We hardly believe that any will contend that Jesus meant that

a man must hate his immortal soul, to fit him to be his disciple. Acts xx. 24 : ' But none of these things move me ; neither count I my life ($\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$) dear unto me,' &c. Surely, Paul did not mean to say that he did not count his immortal soul dear unto him.

Notwithstanding we expressed a want of entire satisfaction respecting the last objection to which we have replied, we now say that this want has been nearly, if not entirely removed, by comparing the different passages which relate to the subject. And we feel a good degree of confidence that the mind of the candid reader will feel the force of what has been offered, and see the propriety of paraphrasing our text as follows : ' And I say unto you, my friends, be not so much afraid of them who have power only to scourge you in their synagogues, and to administer cruel tortures to your bodies, but have no authority to take your lives, as of that more extensive authority to which your brethren the Jews will deliver you, by bringing you before governors and kings ; for this power can, after inflicting cruelties on your bodies, doom your lives and bodies to be destroyed in $\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\epsilon\nu\nu\alpha$.

It now remains only to give the true meaning of the word $\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\epsilon\nu\nu\alpha$, which in our text is rendered hell, though this has already been done in the preceding pages. Parkhurst, in his Greek and English Lexicon, informs us that $\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\epsilon\nu\nu\alpha$ is the corruption of two Hebrew words, one signifying a valley, and the other signifying Hinnom, the name of a person once the possessor of it. He says, ' This valley of Hinnom lay near Jerusalem, and had been the place of those abominable sacrifices, in which the idolatrous Jews burned their

children alive to Molech, Baal, or the Sun. A particular place in this valley was called Tophet, and the valley itself, the valley of Tophet, from the fire stove in which they burned their children to Molech.' He further says, 'A gehenna of fire, (Matt. v. 22,) does, as I apprehend, in its outward and primary sense, relate to that dreadful doom of being burnt alive in the valley of Hinnom.' The passage in Matt. v. 22, just referred to, reads as follows: 'But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.' That the learned Parkhurst, who was a believer in future, endless misery, was in the right on this subject, there can be no doubt. But more authority might be quoted, if it were necessary, to show that the word rendered hell, in our text, means nothing but that place of execution, where malefactors were cast alive, and consumed in fire.

REPLY TO A FRIEND,

WHO HAD DEFENDED FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

Brother — As I am unable to understand the entire correctness of your reasoning, I am persuaded you will cheerfully indulge a few remarks, which have no other object than the discovery of truth for our mutual edification and comfort.

You say; ‘If the punishment which is annexed to sin is ever threatened before sin is committed, and is urged upon the creature, as a preventive of transgression, I see no reason against the punishment of a future state being denounced, for the purpose, if not of “establishing Christian morality in this,” yet to increase the inducements to virtue.’ Here you say, that you ‘see no reason against the punishment of a future state being denounced;’ and yet, before you close your few remarks, you say; ‘All Universalists, whom I have ever known, profess to believe, that punishment is disciplinary, and emendatory. They believe, too, that the Deity will exert such means as are necessary to produce certain ends, till those means become effectual. If these propositions be true, they may help us to see, why misery in another world was not directly threatened to Adam, Cain,’ &c. Here it seems that you assign a reason for that, for which you just before could see no reason! If you meant, by inserting the word *directly*, that, although the Divine Being did not speak to Adam and to Cain in language which *directly* implied that their punishment would be

in a future world, yet the divine declarations will bear such a construction, — why did you not endeavor to show this? And on the contrary, sir, if you did not mean this by the word *directly*, what did you mean by it?

Again, you ask the following question; ‘If fear is of any use to mortals, why should it become utterly inefficient, and appear so unreasonable a thing, when the causes of it are placed in a future world?’ Having asked this question, in the room of bringing forward an instance of divine threatening, which necessarily carries the cause of fear into a future world, you speak of the fear which moved Noah to build the ark to save himself and family from drowning in the flood. This, sir, brings your question back to yourself. If fear was of any use to Noah, why was not the cause of that fear placed in a future world? I am satisfied that your good sense will easily answer the question as it returns. You will say, Noah was in no danger of being drowned in a future world, and to prepare an ark to defend him against any other calamity would be unreasonable. Besides, as it is evident that the fear of the flood was sufficient to induce him to prepare for his safety, there could be no necessity of presenting him with any cause of fear in a future state. Would you have your readers believe, that the fear, which moved Noah, was that fear which hath torment, which perfect love casts out; or that fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom, and perfectly accords with true love and liberty of conscience? In a word, if Noah did not act from the spirit of love, he must have acted from a different spirit; and if from a different spirit, will you say that it was acceptable to God, who is love?

You furthermore say ; ‘ Whether fear be necessary to gain true love,’ or not, one thing is certain ; if it was not a principle of action, necessary to the moral system, God would never have placed before men these objects which excite fearful apprehensions. Nor should we have heard, that “ Noah being warned of God, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.” We should have been informed, that Noah, actuated by love, and influenced by that liberty of conscience, which is so congenial to the feelings of human nature, in knowing that he was punished, the moment he did wrong, and rewarded the moment he did right, would, under these circumstances, have set the future at defiance, and acted as ‘ true love and liberty of conscience had dictated.’

It is acknowledged, sir, that objects which excite fearful apprehensions are, by a kind Providence, placed before men, and that the fear which they occasion is of utility to the moral, as well as the temporal interest of society ; but neither does this fact, or the case of Noah in particular, give the least countenance to the necessity of placing objects which excite fearful apprehensions, in a future world. The fear of poverty and want is useful by inducing to industry and prudence ; but the object of this rational fear is in the present state. But how the utility of this fear proves that it is necessary to place objects of fear in another world is not understood. The fear of losing the energy and activity of mental powers may very rationally induce a person to avoid intemperance, and thereby contribute not a little to his morals. But how this proves that it is necessary to place this terrific object in a future world, is not seen. The powers and energies of mind in a future world will, no doubt, depend

on the constitution and organization of that state of being; which state is known to God, but not to us.

What are your readers to understand by the following, above quoted? 'That Noah, actuated by love, and influenced by that liberty of conscience, which is so congenial to the feelings of human nature, in knowing he was punished, the moment he did wrong; and rewarded the moment he did right, would, under these circumstances, have set the future at defiance, and acted as his "true love and liberty of conscience had dictated."' If you are rightly understood, your meaning is, that a belief, that our wrongs are punished in the present state in which they are committed, and that our virtues bring us present reward, is congenial to the feelings of a wicked heart, and naturally induces to indulgence in sin. Sir, if you do not mean this, I confess, I am unable to conjecture that you mean any thing that relates to your subject. But is this doctrine matter of fact? Do the wicked indulge in sin, because they believe that they thereby render themselves miserable in the present life? Do they studiously avoid their duty to their God, to their neighbors and to themselves, because their wicked, deceived hearts believe that *in* keeping the commands there is great reward? Brother, I am not a little surprised to find this sentiment indicated from the pen of a Universalist. If I, by misunderstanding you, have attached a meaning to your words, which you did not intend, I shall be glad to be set right.

Again you say; 'The sinner is informed that he shall be punished, till he shall be brought to submit, and becomes the willing subject of God's kingdom. The above propositions, which are conceded to by all Universalists, prove as much. Hence 'reason' will

'carry this punishment beyond the grave,' unless it can be proved, that the distress which sin occasions in this life, works the full intended effect.' Here, if I do not misunderstand, you establish what you before represented as congenial to the heart of the wicked ; that punishment is in the same time of transgression, and in no other time. A man is a transgressor until he submits to the government of God, and you allow him to be punished no longer than until his submission. Thus you establish, and I do not see why you do not establish beyond all contradiction, that sin and its punishment are in the same state. And I can hardly believe that you will oppose the belief, that happiness will attend a state of obedience and holiness.

That 'reason will carry punishment beyond the grave, unless it can be proved, that the distress, which sin occasions in this life, works the full intended effect,' may, perhaps, be justly doubted. The nature of this reasoning is evidently erroneous ; because reason would not dare to carry punishment beyond the grave, unless it were first proved, that sufficient punishment had not been inflicted on this side the grave. Because reason might be too weak to ascertain whether punishment had been sufficient or not, why should it become confident that more was necessary and justifiable ? And you, sir, must see, as I think, that this argument will empower reason to carry the punishment of David, king of Israel, of Paul, the apostle, and of all the rest of mankind, not only beyond the grave, unless it can be *proved* that punishment had its full effect in this life, but even to millions of millions of ages in eternity, unless it can be proved that short of such duration, punishment will have effected its object. But you say ; 'Punishment

has need of no special limitation, as to the time when it shall cease.' Allow this to stand together with your last considered argument, and *reason* will carry punishment beyond any limitation you can possibly suggest!

As in confirmation of your reasoning, you refer to Lev. 26, you would have been consistent with yourself, had you contended that *reason* would carry the punishments there recorded, beyond the grave, unless it could be proved that all the Israelites who perished in consequence of their sins, were sufficiently punished this side the grave. Had you done this, you would have employed *reason* in showing that terror, consumption, and the burning-ague consumed their eyes, and caused them sorrow of heart beyond the grave. And that in the future world they sowed their seed in vain, because their enemies ate it; that they were slain before their enemies, beyond the grave, and that they who hated them ruled over them in another world; and that beyond the grave they fled when none pursued them, &c. &c. Read the whole chapter, sir, and you find no punishment but what is necessarily confined to this mortal state.

These, brother, are some of the faults, which I have thought it my duty to point out, in your reasoning. If I have erred, it is my want of judgment, — it is no defect of my will.

H. B.

LETTER TO A FRIEND,

WHO HAD WRITTEN A BOOK, IN WHICH THE DOCTRINE
OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT WAS ACKNOWLEDGED.

Sir, — I hereby acknowledge the favor of your publication, as above entitled, and to its principal arguments signify my cordial consent and approbation. There is, however, one subject which commences on page 52, on which I feel it my duty to suggest a few remarks; having no other object in view than a careful and candid investigation of truth. And as you appear to be in search after truth alone, I feel a hope that you will not receive it as unkind in me that I have used the freedom to call this subject in question. The following are your words: ‘There is at least a possibility, even from the mere light of nature, that human sufferings extend beyond the grave. The contrary, it must be conceded, is no where advanced in the inspired writings.’ All the argument which you advance in further support of the doctrine of future punishment is in the following words, on the same page: ‘To all appearance, chastisements do not always, in the present state, complete their benevolent design.’ You then, add; ‘There is reason, therefore, to conclude they will be renewed in the world of spirits.’

In my first remark, sir, I will remind you of the very great disparity, which to me appears, between your subject and your reasoning upon it. Your subject is of vast moment, as it involves a state of exist-

ence after the present mortal state ends ; and must be contemplated in relation to the constitution and organization of man in that, to us, unknown world. 'The first step, by which you approach the proposition that human sufferings extend beyond the grave is the following: 'The contrary, it must be conceded, is nowhere advanced in the inspired writings.' That this remark falls infinitely short of your subject is most apparent. Is every thing a fact, respecting a future state, which is not spoken of in the inspired writings? We are not certified, in direct terms, that 'adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like,' will not be renewed in the world of spirits ; but would you be willing to allow, that as the inspired writings nowhere say that these will not exist in the world of spirits, that they therefore will exist and be practised there ? Will you reply, and say, — All these, the apostle calls the fruits of the flesh ; but as the flesh will not exist in the world of spirits, so, of course, these fruits cannot be produced where the tree, which bears them, cannot grow ? But if you say this, you will perceive the reasonableness of the inquiry which demands the necessity of renewing chastisements and sufferings in a state where crimes can never be committed.

I am utterly unable, sir, to see the least propriety in supposing that there will be punishments for sin in a state where sin will never exist. And to me it is altogether unaccountable, why the advocates for future punishment should always direct their observations to the particular subject of punishment, and never attempt

to prove that men will sin in that state, by which this punishment will be rendered necessary.

The second and last step, by which you advance to your conclusion, that punishment will be renewed in the world of spirits, is the following: 'To all appearance, chastisements do not always, in the present state, complete their benevolent design.' 'To all appearance.' Why, sir, did you ever see the appearance of a spirit, after all the sufferings of this mortal state were closed? Pain brings man into the world, and pain carries him out; and as to any *appearance* which indicates his not suffering evil enough, it is doubted if any one has ever been able to discover it. Our blessed Saviour has informed us, that, 'sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.'

St. Paul says, Rom. vi. 7: 'For he that is dead is freed from sin.' With this scripture declaration before us, can we say that men will be sinners in a future state? If not, what use will chastisement serve?

To conclude. May that perfect love, of which you speak on your next page, even deliver us from all those tormenting fears, which false notions have excited in dark and benighted minds, and prove a far more effectual restraint to the blind passions of the flesh, than has been invented by the vain and foolish imaginations of men.

I am, dear sir, with much esteem, your obliged friend and servant,

H. B.

REPLY TO REASON.

[Reason had written an unpleasant and unfriendly notice of Mr. Ballou's Letter to a Friend, (which we have given above) to which Brother Ballou rejoins as follows.]

Sir, — It is my humble opinion, that what you have written, in reply to my letter to the author of a late publication, entitled 'FINAL RESTORATION DEMONSTRATED,' &c., is not, in all respects, of a character which is consistent with REASON. You seem to signify that my letter was not couched in language of decent respect; but I do not believe that there is any such deficiency in my communication, if inspected with a candid eye, such as *reason* always uses. Reason would surely be generous enough to allow the most favorable construction to be the true intent of the author; but it appears to me, that you have departed from this rule, and indulged in framing constructions widely different from the most favorable. Having thus, as I think, departed from the pure dictates of reason, you proceed to write in a style, which certainly indicates an unpleasant temper, if not an unfriendly heart. This, sir, I am persuaded, is not consistent with reason. Reason surely dictates that when a writer appears in public, with his name and profession, he should not become the subject of resentment and treated in an unkind manner by a fictitious name. Nor does it seem altogether reasonable, that one, who would not be willing to have his name come before the public with his writings, should present himself in the

character of an offended person, on account of what was written to another, until it should be known, that the latter considered himself injured, and stood in need of assistance. It is believed, that the author, whom I addressed, at which address you appear to be offended, is fully competent to judge of the character of my communication, and also to do justice to my remarks; and if so, reason would conclude that there was no occasion of any thing like asperity from a third person. Respecting what I esteem the exceptionable character of your communication, I will here add no more; but pass to notice some of your remarks in particular.

The first which I shall notice, is what you say respecting the failure of chastisements in producing their benevolent designs in this life. You disallow the propriety of inquiring any thing concerning the spirit after it has left the body, in relation to the question, whether to all appearance the chastisement had produced its desired effects, so as not to render it necessary to renew punishment in a future state. But how is it possible to satisfy the eye of *reason* that a subject is not sufficiently punished, unless reason can have the subject to examine? 'To all appearance.' These words, sir, I noticed particularly, because I thought them used in too loose a way; and I think so now. You think that the 'continuance of unsubdued passions and uncorrected vices to the close of life' are appearances which prove that chastisements do not complete their benevolent designs in this life. But, sir, what does reason say on this subject? To me it replies; Before I can judge of this question, I must be informed what these chastisements were designed for. If they were partly designed as a warning to others to

avoid those practices which were visited with such miseries, so far their purpose may be effected without their being renewed hereafter. If the administered punishment was designed to put a stop to the practice of vice, it evidently accomplishes this design by the death of the subject. Now, to all appearance these ends are fully answered. But if these chastisements were administered for the purpose of preparing the subject for the enjoyment of any privileges in another state of existence, then, in order to be satisfied, from appearances, that they had not accomplished their design, it is necessary to examine the subject in that state.

2. Because I complain, that the advocates of future punishment direct their arguments to prove that such punishment will be inflicted, in room of endeavoring to show that man will sin in the future state, whereby this punishment shall be rendered necessary, you think I appear to be 'unfortunately ignorant.' And add, that 'there are hundreds of authors who have attempted to prove that many live and die in sin, remain in sin, and will rise to the resurrection of damnation.' Now, sir, as it becomes REASON to have compassion on the *ignorant*, I humbly request you to quote from one half the number of authors, which you here set down, in your communication, ever so short passages, where they evidently intended to prove that men will continue to commit sin in a future state for which they will then and there be punished; but not everlastingly or to all eternity. So much, sir, I am authorized to ask in reference to your large statement. And then I will inform you that when I spoke on this subject, in my letter, which you have noticed, I gave no intimation that

I had reference to those who have written on these points in former periods of the church.

You say that you were amazed because I spoke of the future world, as an unknown world. If you were amazed I can hardly think you were in the due exercise of REASON. As amazed as any one may be at my ignorance of a future state, I have no pride in pretending to know that of which I am totally ignorant. My dear sir, after all that has been said by our doctors of divinity on the subject of a future state, reason will acknowledge that they have no more knowledge concerning its particulars than an infant child. No, they do not know for certainty that man will exist in another state. I am happy to *believe* in the doctrine of the scriptures, and to *hope* for immortality beyond the grave; but as to any knowledge concerning that state I have none. You say further: 'Notwithstanding all this dreadful ignorance, you affirm, that 'sin will never exist in a future state.' Sir, did I affirm this? Did reason dictate you to make this assertion? I am sorry you have said this; for though I know not who you are, I regret that any one should take such liberty. Should you write again, we may expect something on the subject of the *immoral tendency* of the doctrine which you oppose!

If you understood me to quote the words of Christ; 'sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof,' as proof that 'all men suffer enough in this world, not to deserve any in a future state,' you understood me not according to the dictates of reason. Reason, sir, would at once see that this was only an accommodation of a passage; and that it was not designed as embracing the subject on which the blessed Saviour was speaking.

All that a candid mind could have seen in this case is this; as Jesus said in another case, 'sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof,' so we may say in the one under consideration.

You at once condemn the use which I made of Rom. vi. 7, 'For he that is dead is freed from sin,' and say that the meaning of the passage is; 'the dead unto sin are freed from sin.' In reply, permit me to say, that I am satisfied that many reputable divines will agree with you in this text, and be opposed to my opinion; but, after all, I am honestly of the opinion which I have endeavored to support by the use of this passage, and honestly believe that the text can fairly bear no other construction. Let us examine this passage, that we may come at its true sense. The chapter begins thus: 'What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?' Now let us be careful to understand how the apostle makes out that he and his brethren were dead to sin. He adds; 'Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?' What death does the apostle mean here? I believe all will allow that he meant the death of his body. 'Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.' There can be no doubt that the apostle here spoke of the resurrection of Christ from the death of the body. All this being granted, it is seen at once, what is meant by being dead to sin. It was the being baptized, by faith, into the real death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But if that state of

being which Jesus, by his resurrection, brought to light and manifested, be a sinful state, there could be no good reason why the apostle should argue that those, who were baptized into the death of Jesus were dead unto sin. Look at the 10th verse: 'For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.' How did Jesus die unto sin? In his flesh he was tempted in all points, like unto his brethren, because he had such a body, and such a natural constitution as we all have; but when he was dead, it is believed that he was not in a condition to be tempted. And it is further believed that in his resurrection state he was not in a condition to be tempted, or to suffer from the hands of sinners. He, therefore, in that he died, died unto sin; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. If it were clear to the eye of REASON, that a dead man can be tempted and led into sin, I humbly conceive that St. Paul's meaning would be very obscure where he says, 'For he that is dead is freed from sin.' And I furthermore conceive that it is very far from St. Paul's usual mode of reasoning to say, that he that is dead to sin, is freed from sin; for this is nothing more than to say, that he which is dead to sin, is dead to sin, which is saying, in reality, nothing.

You say that I attempted to prove that 'adultery, fornication, and several other pretty words and deeds will, not only, not exist, or be practised there, (in a future world) but that a principle, or even the consciousness of sin will never exist there.' In this instance, sir, I would hope you made a mistake. You can find no argument of mine to these several particulars. I do not pretend to say that David, king of Is-

rael, is now unconscious, that he was once an adulterer, and that he combined murder with the crime; nor do I contend that Paul is now unconscious that he was once a bloody persecutor of the saints; but I quoted a passage from St. Paul to remind you that such crimes are the fruits of the flesh; and I conceive that *reason* would have led you to understand, that in order for these fruits to be produced in a future world, the tree which bears them must flourish there.

Sir, being a sincere friend to all mankind, I am yours truly, in the gospel of our Lord. H. B.

ON ROMANS VI. 7.

‘FOR HE THAT IS DEAD IS FREED FROM SIN.’

[This was written in reply to a writer who had signed himself ‘T.’]

The writer gives us to understand, that he believes in a state of punishment after the resurrection; and that because he understands that I disallow this idea, he supposes that I contradict the divine testimony. Thus the difference in our views is clearly defined, and we shall easily understand each other, and shall also be easily understood.

I will first remark on what T. says respecting Rom. vi. 7. The following are his words: ‘As I had heard that Mr. B. thought that there would be no such state as that of future suffering for those who lived and died wicked, and did not repent, I was led to conclude that he considered the death spoken of in Rom. vi. 7, to mean the extinction of animal life; when the body returns to the dust; and it seems strange to me that any man of common sense, who could read that chapter with attention, should put that construction on the word *dead*, as there used.’ T. then adds what he thinks the word *dead* means, and says, ‘To me it appears to denote the effect of what (verse 6) Paul styles our old man being crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin; and the grounds on which

he exhorts the Romans to reckon themselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Reply : If the whole of the apostle's statements and arguments, in this place, are founded on the literal death of Jesus Christ, then must it be granted, that the word *dead*, in the 7th verse, means the extinction of animal life. That we may ascertain this, let us carefully examine the context. In the first verse the apostle states the following question : ' What shall we say then ? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound ? ' He then answers, in verse 2d, ' God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein ? ' Here comes in an important question, viz. How does the apostle show, that he and his believing brethren were dead to sin ? See the next words : ' Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death ? ' What does the word *death* mean here ? I have no doubt that Mr. T. will allow, that the word *death* here means the extinction of animal life. The apostle is speaking of the *death* of Jesus Christ ; and I think no one will doubt that his death was the extinction of animal life. Let us read the apostle's conclusion. See verse 4th : ' Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death.' I ask again here, what *death* ? The answer continues : The extinction of animal life. See the text again ; ' That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.' I ask again what does the word *dead* mean in this last quotation ? The answer still continues, The extinction of animal life. We now come to verse 5th, in which the apostle continues his arguments as follows : ' For if we have been planted

together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.' Whose death does the apostle here speak of? Answer, The death of Christ? What death of Christ? Answer, The extinction of his animal life. Verse 6th: 'Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him.' How was Christ crucified? Answer, He was literally put to death. See the text again; 'that the body of sin might be destroyed.' What body of sin? Answer, That body which in death suffers the extinction of animal life. 'That henceforth we should not serve sin.' That is, that we should not now be the *servants* of that body of flesh and blood, which is represented as destroyed, by the death and resurrection of Christ. Verse 7th: 'For he that is dead is freed from sin.' It seems to be evident, beyond all dispute, that the word *dead* here means what the same word in the whole of the context means, viz. the extinction of animal life. The fact is — the apostle in the 7th verse expresses the grand maxim, on which his whole argument rested, viz. that whoever was literally dead, was of course freed from sin. And for this very good reason, the body of sin being destroyed, sin could no longer exist. If sin exists after the body is destroyed, then I acknowledge that I see not the least sense in all the apostle has here said.

In verses 8th, 9th, 10th, and 11th, the words *dead*, *death*, and *died* are used in the same sense as above, and, as I humbly conceive, in no other sense.

After having been thus particular, I will ask Mr. T. to make a fair trial with the text in question, by taking it in the connexion in which it stands; and leaving out of the question entirely, the idea of the extinction of animal life, from the meaning of the words *death*,

dead, died, and see if he can make good sense of the apostle's argument. In the mean time I wish him to know, that I agree entirely with him, as it respects the *object* of the apostle's argument, under consideration. It evidently appears to have been the design of St. Paul, first, to set forth the great and important doctrine of the entire end of sin and condemnation, as is plainly expressed in the preceding chapter, particularly in the following words: 'Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. — Moreover, the law entered that the offence might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.' Here note, — 'Sin hath reigned unto death.' This affords the conclusion, that it reigns no further. And this agrees with verse 10th, in the 6th chapter: 'For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.' The author now anticipates the opposer's objection; that if this doctrine be allowed, we may continue in sin. To this objection he replies, as has been quoted: 'God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?' That is, how shall we, who believe in Jesus, who has manifested the end of sin and condemnation, by his death and resurrection, now continue in sin? The faith in which we rejoice, in which we reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord, must naturally subdue sin in us, that it shall not *reign* in our mortal bodies, that we should obey it in its lusts. This is the privilege,

which faith gives the believer in Christ, even a victory over sin in the present tense. And it is to the enjoyment of this high privilege, that the apostle endeavors to invite his brethren, by means of his arguments now under consideration. And I further agree with Mr. T. that the apostle alludes to these spiritual privileges in Eph. ii. 5.

Taking my leave, for the present, of Rom. vi. 7, I pass to notice some more of Mr. T.'s remarks. He asks, with very great seeming confidence, whether any Christian dare assert, that one who dies in the very act of a most heinous crime is freed or justified from sin by his death? To this question, I think, he replies in the affirmative, as follows: 'As it is the case, that in the present course of events all men die, they become indeed inaccessible of either sin or righteousness till the resurrection.' And then he asks this very singular question: 'But does this alter their moral state?' This question, I think, is very singular. In the present state, all will allow, that men may be active in sin or in righteousness. This Mr. T. will acknowledge. He says, that after death, until the resurrection, men are *inaccessible* of either sin or righteousness. Surely, then, their moral state is vastly different from what it is in this mortal life. If a man be inaccessible of sin, he must be innocent, at least; and if a man be inaccessible of righteousness, he cannot be a subject of a moral law. It is plain, then, that this state must be 'free from sin,' for there is no sin in it.

Having thus answered his most *daring* question with his own words, I will proceed to suggest a reply to the same question according as I think divine truth will fully justify. As sin had its origin in flesh and

blood, and is the natural offspring of these lusts, by which men are tempted; and as no intimation is given in the Scriptures, that sin ever was or ever will be committed out of flesh and blood; and as we have seen, that St. Paul's meaning in Rom. vi. 7, is, that he that is dead *literally* is freed from sin, we venture to hope that sin will never exist after the present mortal state shall close. But we do not *assert*, we only say, thus it appears to us.

If Mr. T. will compare John v. 28, 29, with Daniel xii. 1, 2; and connect with both Matt. xxiv. 21, and context, it is believed that he may learn that he has applied the first passage wrongly, in the use he has made of it.

The use he has made of Rom. ii. 16 seems as strange, to me, as it did to him, that a *man of common sense* should reason as I did. He quotes this passage as applicable to a judgment after the resurrection. We will examine the text and the use he makes of it. He connects with verse 16, verse 6 to 10. See verse 12: 'For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law.' What intervenes between the 12th and 16th is a parenthesis. Read the 12th with the 16th, 'in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.' What use does Mr. T. make of this judgment? Answer; To condemn to punishment, after the resurrection, all who have sinned without law and all who have sinned in the law. See chapter iii. verses 23, 24: 'For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.' By Mr. T.'s rule, he condemns all men after the resur-

rection. By St. Paul's rule, he justifies all men, freely by God's grace. When was Paul judged? Answer; When the commandment came, when sin revived, and he died. When were the secrets of Paul judged? Answer; When he was brought before the judgment-seat of Christ, as he journeyed to Damascus. Whoever will read Romans 2, 3, 4, 5, &c. with any reasonable attention, will learn that it was the design of the author to represent all men, both Jews and Gentiles, in one condition of sin and condemnation, in the earthly Adam; and likewise in one condition of justification in Jesus, who was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification.

I deem it not necessary to extend this reply to Mr. T. to the length it would require, if I noticed all his particulars; however, there is one subject more which I am unwilling to pass unnoticed. He says, — 'I am not surprised at the thousands who flock to hear Mr. Ballou. Many, no doubt from curiosity, and others from various motives; but many will go to hear him or any other man who will preach that there will be no sufferings in a future state on account of sin. There are many thousands in the world who would be glad to find that doctrine established as truth. It would save them many a pang of terror; which I believe impossible to be done on Christian principles; for Christians will still highly regard the testimony of divine revelation.' Although I know nothing of the man to whom I now reply, only as I must judge by this *fruit* which he has placed before me, I must say that there are strong indications of the *leaven* of the Pharisee. If he did not think that he was a more holy man than the thousands of his fellow-citizens, of whom he speaks, in room of talking as he does, in the third person, he

would speak in the first person, and say,— it would save *me* ‘many a pang.’ But it seems, that in room of being saved from one pang, by the idea that punishment will not extend into a future world, the very thought administers pain to his feelings. His language sounds much more like ‘God, I thank thee that I am not like other men,’ than it does like ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner.’ What sort of characters must those be, who feel to rejoice in the sentiment, that the next state of existence will be free from sin, and free from punishment? Will Mr. T. pretend that those who are in love with sin can be gratified in believing, that they will sin but a few moments longer? Does he believe that those who hate their neighbors and who curse them in their hearts are those who felicitate themselves in the sentiment, that in a few moments they will see these neighbors in the enjoyment of inexpressible happiness? Does Mr. T. believe, that it is the man, who would imbrue his hands in the blood of a brother, that rejoices to think that in a few moments he shall see this brother in perfect peace? Will our brother T. inform us, that he believes that all the bloody persecutors, who have wickedly tormented and burned their brethren at the stake for heresy, would have been saved

many a pang’ could they have believed that the subjects of their mad fury were to suffer no punishment in the future state? Is it really the spirit of wickedness that takes pleasure in believing that all sin and wickedness will soon come to an end?

Mr. T.’s insinuation, that the thousands, who endeavored to hear me in Philadelphia,* are so wicked,

* This was written shortly after Mr. Ballou had preached in that city.

that a belief that sin, wickedness, and misery will not exist in the future state, would 'save them many a pang,' is a plain indication that he does not understand the nature of the subject on which he writes. I hope he will not be offended if I venture to inquire a little concerning the nature of the *spirit* of opposition to the doctrine against which he contends. He may be assured, that there is nothing personal intended, as we are entirely unknown to each other. I am induced to do this, because he has attempted to make an unfavorable impression on the minds of his readers, respecting the characters and dispositions of those who differ from him on the subject of our present discussion. Let us ask, then, what this spirit is opposed to? Answer; It is opposed to having sin end with this imperfect state. It is opposed to having every son and daughter of Adam born into the kingdom of divine light and immortal love immediately after this mortal state ends. It is opposed to the discontinuance of misery after this state of sorrow and affliction is no more. This spirit, then, must feel inclined to favor the continuance of sin hereafter; to favor also the continuance of moral darkness and the protraction of misery beyond the resurrection. How long does this spirit desire the continuance of sin and misery? Here we stop, for we can see no limits. Is this the spirit which prays, —'Father, forgive them?'—And does it in the very same breath ask, 'Dare any Christian assert that the God of immaculate holiness will justify or acquit,' &c.? If Mr. T. understood, that repentance and the remission of sins are both the gifts of the Prince and Saviour, he would not make the former a condition of the latter.

As my opposer indicates that I deny the testimony of Christ and his apostles, I here assure him, that if I do this, I do it ignorantly ; and I solemnly call on him to show me wherein I commit this wrong. He should consider, that his *assertions* prove nothing, and that I need evidence in order to be convinced. When he shall have proved, from the testimony of our blessed Saviour and his apostles, that after all that die in Adam are made alive in Christ, are raised in incorruption, in power, in glory, in a spiritual body, and immortal, sin and misery will still be continued, then will I acknowledge my error, and lament the everlasting sin and misery of man,

H. B.

ON THE SPIRITS IN PRISON.

It is contended that the prophecy in the 16th of Ezekiel, of the return of the captivity of Sodom and her daughters to their former estate is proof that those inhabitants of Sodom, who were destroyed in the days of Abraham, were, at the time of the delivery of this prophecy, in a captive state in the world of spirits. — It is also contended that when Christ preached to the spirits in prison, who were disobedient in Noah's time, he likewise preached to those old Sodomites, and that this preaching was designed to set those free from their imprisonment and captivity, to whom Christ preached. According to all this, it appears to me, that the time of the restoration of Sodom and her daughters, is the time of Christ's preaching to the spirits in prison, which was before St. Peter wrote his epistle, in which the account of this preaching is recorded. — Now, if all these things be so, how will they make out the consistency of the prophecy in the 16th of Ezekiel? That says, speaking to Jerusalem, — 'When I shall bring again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then will I bring again the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them.' How will they make it appear that Jerusalem and her daughters, Samaria and her daughters, and Sodom and her daughters were all returned from their captivities in the midst of each other, at the time when it is thought Christ preached to the spirits in prison? In the prophecy alluded to,

it is said to Jerusalem, — ‘Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger; and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant. — And I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord.’ Was this prophecy concerning Jerusalem fulfilled in the time of St. Peter?

Our Saviour said, see Matt. xi. 24, speaking to Capernaum, — ‘But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee.’ Now according to the sentiments of those who maintain the doctrine of future punishment, this day of judgment, of which Christ spoke to the city of Capernaum, has not yet taken place, but will take place after the general resurrection. But if the old Sodomites were delivered from hell when Peter says Christ preached to the spirits in prison, how is it that Sodom, after being in the prison of hell, from the time of Abraham until after the crucifixion of Christ, and then delivered from this awful captivity by Christ’s preaching, are still, after the general resurrection, to be brought to judgment, to be rewarded according to their works while they lived and sinned in the flesh?

Should they succeed in making all these matters clear, how will they finally apply this prophecy in Ezekiel to a state of man’s existence, between this mortal state and that immortal state of which St. Paul speaks in 1 Cor. xv. What is meant by Sodom’s daughters? What is meant by Samaria’s daughters? And what is meant by Jerusalem’s daughters? When I read of Sodom and her daughters, I suppose I read of Sodom and other cities which were dependent on her; and when I read of Samaria and her daughters, I think I

read of Samaria and other cities which were dependent on her ; and when I read of Jerusalem and her daughters, I think I am reading of Jerusalem and other cities, which were dependent on this metropolis of Judea. But I do not understand such language at all, if applied to a future state. Nor can I discern how they will finally explain the prophecy on which they so much rely, in respect to Sodom and her daughters and Samaria and her daughters being given to Jerusalem for daughters, in a future state.

One query more, and I have done for the present. Wakefield renders the passage as follows ; see 1 Peter iii. 17—20 : ‘ For it is better that ye suffer, if this be the will of God, for well doing than for doing ill ; because even Christ once suffered for sin, a righteous man for unrighteous men, that he might bring us unto God ; being killed in body, but made alive by the spirit ; in which indeed he went and preached to the minds of men in prison ; who were also hard to be convinced in former times ; as when the patience of God continued waiting in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing ; wherein so few as eight lives were saved on the water.’ In this translation there is nothing hinted of Christ’s preaching to the spirits of those who lived in Noah’s time ; and yet this passage is regarded as the sheet-anchor of this dismal doctrine of future punishment.

THOUGHTS ON THE DOCTRINE
OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

This is a subject of a very peculiar nature. It involves considerations so weighty, of such vast moment, and so complicate and difficult of discussion and decision, that it seems almost to forbid the mind's approach, and admonishes most solemnly against indulging any prepossessions or party feelings, which too often grow from early habits of inconsiderate thinking, and from some circumstances of a local or personal nature.

The writer of this has no disposition to interpose in the discussions which have appeared in the Magazine; he chooses that the writers who are engaged should proceed uninterruptedly. Yet if he could be allowed to suggest a hint that if they should see cause to treat a subject of such vast importance with less apparent evasion, and with more solemnity and sound argument, and not give offence, he would deem it a privilege; for although it was suggested, some time past, that much had been written on this subject, which was thought not to be very satisfactory to the public, it really seems that what has been written since has not evinced any material improvement. Of this, however, let others judge.

My own reflections on this great question are so numerous, that it would be vain to attempt a systematic exposition of the whole, in a communication suitably limited for the paper. It will be necessary, therefore, to confine myself to one particular question, viz. Is it

possible to bring the subject of a future day of judgment, in another world, at which trial all men will be judged according to their works in this life, and then recompensed according to the same, to our understandings, and make this retribution, at the same time, consist in the entire and complete happiness of some, and in the real and positive misery of others ?

If I use my reason on this question, I must say, that it appears to me utterly impossible. The opposers of Universal Salvation contend that such a judgment resulting in such retribution is clearly set forth in the Scriptures, and that this retribution will be endless. Universalists have contended that such a supposition is unreasonable, because it is not understood how it can be possible for such a division to be made of the human family, and for one part to be entirely happy, and the other entirely miserable ; because our nature partakes of such powerful sympathies that if we see those whom we love in torment, we cannot avoid a participation of such misery. The reply to this has been, that the blessed will see that the torments of the miserable are for the glory of God, and therefore will rejoice in it ; but this has never satisfied the minds of Universalists. Now it seems that those Universalists, who believe, with their opposers, in the doctrine of this future judgment and retribution, need some method to answer this objection. They hold to the same judgment, to the same rewards and punishments as do those who believe in endless misery, only they hold, that after, what they call in scripture language, *everlasting*; *forever and ever*, and *eternal*, has passed away, there will be an end to the torments of hell. The weighty question with me is, how is it possible for one class of mankind to be entirely blessed

in heaven, during these everlasting ages, and yet know, at the same time, that not only their fellow-beings are in misery, but that their nearest connexions are suffering these dreadful torments ?

A hope is entertained, that no one will indulge a thought, that my question is moved with a desire to perplex honest minds, or to trifle on a subject of this solemn nature. I am a man considerably advanced in life, have infirmities of body, which warn me that I must before long go the way of all the earth ; and I have a large family round me, whose happiness is, in my mind, identified with my own ; I, therefore, need to be informed, before I subscribe to this belief, of a future separation of the human family, how it can be reconciled with reason and the law of our common nature. Those who earnestly contend for this awful division of mankind in the future world, profess to believe that we shall hereafter retain a perfect recollection of our connexion and our actions in this life ; and this appears necessary, in order to subject the wicked to punishment ; but then if this be the case, and if companions, parents and children, brothers and sisters, and all the dearest connexions in this life are, in millions of instances, to be separated, as represented in the accounts which are given of this future judgment, how can one class be entirely happy and see the other class in the torments of hell ?

Should any serious, friendly person think the question which I have here stated, deserves a candid answer, and if such a friend will favor me with a solution of it, he will confer a great favor, and merit the gratitude of

TO A FRIEND,

WHO SIGNED HIMSELF 'RATIONALIS.'

Dear Sir, — You inform me that my questions, to which you have attempted to reply, do not appear to you 'to be phrased to meet the doctrine, against which they are directed, in the most favorable light.' But to me it is evident, that you have made a mistake. My questions relate to the doctrine of future punishment, which writers have endeavored to describe, and which you express in the following words: 'Some have believed, that the future punishment of the wicked would be most intolerable in degree, consisting in *literal fire and brimstone*, and endure for *ages of ages*.' This, sir, is the doctrine to which my queries relate, as every one must know, by the words to which you have objected. You do not object to these words because they are incoherent with the doctrine of future punishment, as laid down by authors, who have endeavored to describe it, by the application of the words, in scripture, *forever and ever, everlasting, eternal damnation, fire and brimstone, &c. &c.* But you object to my words, because they are not well chosen to express your 'individual views, in the most favorable light.'

Is it possible, dear sir, that candor can justify you in finding fault with my words, because they do not express your 'individual views, in the most favorable light?' You acknowledge that authors, who have treated on the doctrine of future punishment, have justified the words of mine, to which you object. Why

then object to my words, *everlasting ages, entirely miserable?*

If you are an unbeliever in the above doctrine of future punishment, and possess the *candor* which you expect me to exercise, why do you not join with me in endeavoring to explode it, and thereby assist in relieving people's minds from views of God's dealings, with his creatures, which are dishonorable to his ever blessed character, and tormenting to rational beings? But, sir, in room of this, you say, — 'For my own part, although I believe in the existence of misery beyond death, I can form no definite idea of its nature or duration.' The question then necessarily occurs; If you have no definite idea of its duration, why do you object to the words which authors have used to express its duration? And again; If you can form no definite idea of its nature, why do you object to such terms as authors have used to express it? According to your own statement, I see not why you should object to the idea of future punishment for millions of millions of ages, nor do I see why you should object to the idea of entire torment in literal fire and brimstone. But,

You seem to express a desire, that your 'individual views should be expressed in the most favorable light.' And therefore you object to those terms which carry the idea of a very long duration, and of a very severe torment. But how are we to know that such words do not express the doctrine in the most favorable light? — But if I use the utmost candor, and allow you the course to which you certainly seem to invite me, what would be the *most favorable light* in which to express your views of the doctrine in question, respecting the duration of future torment and its degree? The answer is easily discovered. If you believe that those

terms which represent this duration and degree to be very long and severe, are terms which represent the doctrine in the most unfavorable light, then terms which will represent it of the shortest possible duration and of the least possible degree, will suit you exactly, and represent your 'individual views in their most favorable light.' But,

Dear sir, what will this gloomy doctrine of future punishment be reduced to, in this way of calculating it? The duration of an electric shock will form its utmost period, and the slightest degree of inconvenience comprehend all its misery.

By what goes before, dear sir, you will learn that I think you have reasoned inconsistently, and that in room of answering my queries, you have denied the doctrine to which they refer.

You say, — 'The proper light in which the doctrine that you oppose, ought to stand, is, that men will be treated in a future state according to the character in which they leave this.' Here again it is evident that you made a mistake. My queries had no reference to this statement. My queries regarded the *entire* misery of one class of mankind in the future world, and the *entire* happiness of the other class, and asked whether this is according to men's works in this life?

Though I need not reply to your answers, as they do not regard my questions, in the least, yet I will make a few remarks, that you may understand what I conceive to be their merit.

You think that, as the saints in heaven, and especially Jesus Christ, know that people here on earth are miserable, and as this knowledge does not deprive them of felicity, — as they know that all which is suffered here is for the good of those who suffer, — so they may know

that people are miserable after death, and not thereby be deprived of happiness, as they know that what is suffered there is equally for the good of the sufferers. — You do not allow that *particular* attachments for connexions will exist in heaven; so that you think, that what of my question relates to this may be omitted. Now as you have taken the signature, RATIONALIS, you will indulge me in an attempt to *reason* with you. Is it reasonable, sir, to believe, that the blessed Jesus, who so tenderly wept with mourners, and in prospect of the dreadful sufferings which he knew would soon come on the Jews, has, ever since his ascension, had a perfect knowledge of all the sufferings of men in this world, without one sympathetic feeling? You contend that his knowledge that all human sufferings are for the good of those who suffer, is the reason why his happiness is not eclipsed by these sufferings; but I ask, was he ignorant of this fact when he wept over Jerusalem? I further ask if it be reasonable to believe, that St. Paul, who once said he had great heaviness and sorrow of heart for his brethren according to the flesh, has, ever since his departure from this world, had a perfect knowledge of their sufferings, without the least sorrow for them? If you say that he knows that all their sufferings are for their good, I ask, was he ignorant of this when he expressed his sorrow for them? But why do you not allow that the saints in heaven have particular attachments for their respective connexions? If you are willing to allow that death effects so great a change as to disannul all those tender attachments which parents and children feel in this life, I should think you might allow it to disannul all inclination to sin. But, sir, are you aware that you disallow the saints in heaven as kind affections as you

allow the damned in hell? You insist on applying the parable of the rich man and Lazarus to the states of the miserable and happy in the future world; and you must remember that the rich man in hell prayed for his five brethren, that they might not come into his place of torment.

Your attempt to do away the difficulty, suggested in one of my queries, respecting but two classes in the future world, is a denial of the *common* doctrine of future punishment; and it evidently reduces the idea of the future states of the righteous and the wicked, to no greater dissimilarity than exists in the present world. As you contend that the future happiness of the righteous and the future misery of the wicked will both be varied as the characters of men vary in this world, you present just such a world to our view, for the future state, as this world is, only you do not say whether sin will exist there or not. In one word, dear sir, if I were to make up an opinion from what you have written on this subject, the *name of future misery* is all for which you feel any concern. But if you are desirous of giving me any instruction which may turn to my profit, respecting this subject, I humbly desire you to state what you think I ought to believe, and then be careful that you prove it by either reason or scripture, or both; and thereby oblige your ever faithful friend and brother,

H. B.

AN IMPORTANT SUBJECT CON-
SIDERED.

As it is contended, by the advocates of a state of imperfection and misery, in the future world, for those who leave this in a state of ignorance of the gospel, and unreconciliation to God, that unless there be a dispensation of retribution and discipline hereafter, Jesus Christ cannot be the Saviour of such, I propose to suggest some thoughts relative to so weighty a subject.

The writer of this entertains a hope, that his brethren, who may not agree with him in all those particulars, will consider that he is only endeavoring to investigate and inquire into things which have not been understood in the Christian church, and about which little or nothing has been believed, except what has rested on the mere force of tradition alone. He feels no disposition to require of others their implicit assent to what he may suggest; but is desirous of contributing a mite to the promotion of useful inquiry, which may lead to profitable understanding.

Let us, at this time, confine our investigation to the following question: If one who goes out of this world ignorant of Jesus Christ, and inexperienced in that reconciliation to God, which a knowledge of the gospel effects in the soul, commences his sentient existence in the future state, in an immortal constitution, in which no temptation to sin will even try the soul; but where the true light of divine wisdom will direct

every thought, and fix the affections entirely on the beauties and glory of infinite goodness, by which the sweetest and most tranquil felicity will be enjoyed, — how then is Jesus Christ the Saviour of this subject?

It is true that there are many other important questions which relate to this general subject, some of which the writer of this may hereafter notice; but the above particular question will engage his attention for the present.

In order to answer this question, it seems necessary, in the first place, to present to the reader the characters, in which the Scriptures represent Jesus Christ, as the Saviour of mankind. We may not notice all the emblems, used in scripture, for this purpose, but some of the most important. The most important character in which Jesus Christ is held forth, in the Scriptures, as the eternal life of the human family, as is humbly believed, is expressed in the words of the Saviour, recorded in John xi. 25: 'Jesus saith unto her, I am the resurrection and the life.' In 1 Cor. i. 24, St. Paul informs us that the Christ which he preached, is the 'power of God and the wisdom of God.' In John xiv. 6, Jesus says, — 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.' In Heb. i. 3, the Saviour is called the 'brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person.' It may not be necessary, for our present purpose, to cite more passages; the reader, however, can have recourse to many more. Let us now select a few words, from the above quotations, and contemplate our Saviour in the characters which those words indicate; and then apply those characters to the subject of our inquiry. RESURRECTION, LIFE, POWER OF GOD, WISDOM OF GOD, THE TRUTH, BRIGHTNESS OF GOD'S GLORY, AND THE EXPRESS IMAGE OF

HIS PERSON. According to what we have now before us, Jesus Christ, in the all-wise system of God, our Creator, is our resurrection, our life; to us he is the power and wisdom of God; to us he is the truth, and the brightness of God's glory, and the only image in which we can behold the invisible God.

The subject of our inquiry is one who left this mortal state without faith in Christ, and, of course, without that reconciliation to God, which such faith produces. And our question is, How is Jesus Christ the Saviour of such an one, if he is raised into an immortal happy state, hereafter, without first passing through another imperfect state? Answer: Just as he would be if this subject should pass through another imperfect state. For then, even after ages of ages of misery and sin, if such were his lot, that miserable state, like our present mortal state, must pass away, and our subject would, after all, entirely depend on Jesus Christ for a resurrection into a state of immortality and eternal life. Yes; Jesus must, after all, be our resurrection and our life; he must be to us all, the wisdom and the power of God; he must be to us the truth, and the bright mirror in which we may behold the glory of the invisible God.

In 1 Cor. xv. 22, St. Paul says; 'For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.' In this most important sense, Jesus Christ is the eternal life of the world. In this all-important sense, Jesus Christ is the same to the millions of the human race, who have lived and died in heathen lands and countries, as he is to those, who, in this world, have enjoyed the light of divine revelation, and the obedience of faith. In this sense also, he is the same to the millions of infants, who have had their birth in Christian

communities, but have been called from this mortal existence, before they were capable of being initiated into the mysteries of the gospel.

Those who find it difficult to understand how Jesus Christ is the Saviour of those who die in a state of unbelief, unless they experience a state hereafter, of punishment, ought to consider how their views can be consistent with the fact, that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of those who die in infancy. If the question labors, how Jesus Christ can save without bringing the subject of his favor to enjoy himself, through the medium of faith and repentance, let the question apply to those who die in infancy. How can they, in the future world, be brought to repentance, unless they sin in that state, as they have committed no sin in this? But faith is needed only in a state of anticipation, which state is imperfect, and repentance is necessary only in a state where sin exists, which is also imperfect.

It should be duly considered, that the method by which faith and repentance are produced, in the present imperfect state, is by the manifestation of divine realities to the understanding. When these divine realities are manifested, through the medium of their proper evidence, it is then that we believe the truth; which truth was just the same before we believed it, as it is afterward. And the divine goodness which appears in those facts in which we believe, naturally leads us to repentance; because there is something infinitely better in these good things of the kingdom of God, than in any thing of which we before had possession. But if our ideas of the future state of man be conformable to the testimony of St. Paul in I Cor. xv. in which we are certified, that the state in which all men will be made alive in the resurrection,

is Christ, who is the resurrection and the life, it seems unreasonable to believe that faith and repentance will be necessary in that state. Respecting our resurrection into that immortal state, the apostle says, in the chapter referred to above, — ‘ It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption ; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory ; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power ; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. The first man is of the earth, earthy ; the second man is the Lord from heaven — and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.’ All Christian people believe, that for our enjoyment of divine things, in this state of existence, it is necessary that we believe in this divine system of eternal life, which is manifested through the resurrection of Jesus ; and that this faith should be productive of emendation of life ; but that this faith or any of its consequences will be necessary in a state of immortality, perhaps we have no more authority for believing, than we have for believing that such faith is necessary for Christ himself, in that immortal state.

It seems important that we notice, that the apostle, in the foregoing quotation, speaks of two men, the first and the second. The first is of the earth, and is earthy ; the second is the Lord from heaven. And he says, — ‘ As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.’ He does not present us with a man between these two, which is neither earthy nor heavenly, in the image of which we are to exist, and suffer for our sins committed in the earthy man, for a season, before we are introduced into the image of the heavenly. But it *seems* absolutely necessary to suppose a *third*, or rather a *middle*

man, state, or constitution, which is neither earthy nor heavenly, in order to maintain the opinion, that, after this life is ended, the greatest part of the human family are to undergo a dispensation of punishment, before they are made alive in Christ, according to the apostle's representation, above noticed.

Whether the foregoing suggestions are accepted as being entirely consistent with the gospel, or not, a hope is entertained that they will not be considered as subversive of the gospel, or as excluding Jesus Christ from being the Saviour of all men.

H. B.

ON JUDGING OF OURSELVES.

‘ YEA, AND WHY EVEN OF YOURSELVES JUDGE YE NOT
WHAT IS RIGHT ? ’ — LUKE XII. 57.

IF we consider ourselves as addressed by these words, we must necessarily suppose that we are furnished, not only with the ability, but also the means to form a correct judgment of what is right. The variety and extent of subject, to which our minds might be led by the words which head this communication, are unlimited ; but the design of the writer has fixed on the particular subject of the moral tendency of true and false doctrine.

There is no one statement which the friends of a particular doctrine can make, which, if believed, more commends it than to assert that it leads to virtuous conduct and to moral life ; while on the other hand, about the worst thing that can be said against a doctrine, and which mostly renders it odious, is that it disregards the moral distinction between virtue and vice, and flatters its blinded votary to follow the latter with hope of impunity. The weight which these statements have in people’s minds is an argument in favor of the respect which is paid to virtue, and the detestation in which vice is justly held ; and this very consideration should be admitted as a convincing argument that we ought not to impose on virtuous minds with a preposterous use of those statements. That is, we should be cautious that we do not hastily and incorrectly brand a doctrine with vicious tendency, until it is most clear

and evident that it is worthy of this condemning character. For instance; if my neighbor differ from me in sentiment, and I have no reason to find fault with his morals, it would seem to be very improper for me to tell him that his doctrine leads to immoral conduct. If a doctrine be immoral in its tendency, it will produce immoral conduct in those who sincerely believe it; it has no tendency at all in those who do not believe it.

The enemies of universal grace and salvation have, for many years, earnestly contended that this doctrine naturally leads to every species of wickedness, and people in general have believed that this was verily the case; and yet, against all this weight of opposition, the doctrine, thus defamed has marvellously prevailed, so, that now there are thousands who believe it, living together in all the virtues and harmonies of social life; meeting together every sabbath, in immense crowds to worship the merciful Father of the spirits of all flesh. Their countenances indicate the feelings of their hearts, and joy and peace are their constant companions. — And, refusing to pass judgment ourselves, we are perfectly willing to leave it to our opposers to decide whether our order will suffer by a comparison with any other denomination in christendom. But if what has been stated were true, a very large proportion of our citizens, who are respectable for both piety and morality, would now have been wallowing in all manner of filthiness, shut up in prisons, or would have ended their miserable career on the public scaffold!

The foregoing particulars are noticed, that we may see the impropriety of calling a doctrine licentious in its tendency, while we acknowledge that its sincere believers are the best of moralists. If we follow the in-

junction of our text, and judge, from experience and observation, we shall say, as did the divine teacher: 'Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles.'

But we must do something on the subject of theory, and we must reason from the nature of things, allowing every principle its natural inference and every cause its necessary effect. Be it so: we ask then, 'What shall we reason but from what we know?' The theory of our opposers says, that the fear of punishment in the future world is certainly necessary in order to induce people to be virtuous in this; and they contend, that if this fear is removed, all restraint ceases, and the subject plunges headlong into vice. But stop — is it not acknowledged that we see many cases around us of sterling virtue in those who believe in no future punishment? Why, my brother, will you contend for a theory which your very senses condemn? If I should say that a certain kind of food was of pernicious consequence to a man's sight, and that I was personally knowing to more than fifty people who ate freely of it every day, and whose sight has grown stronger ever since they used this food, should I not state a very great absurdity? But my brother desires me to avoid matter of fact, and confine myself to speculative theory. But this I will not do, because it is in this way that people who have all the means of judging what is right, blunder about in the dark, and form the most absurd theories imaginable. No, brother, I will reason on this subject as I reason on all others, when I am favored with experience and facts to reason from. Now I know what it is that induces me to walk in the habits which I have established; and I am entirely certain

that the fear of punishment in a future world has nothing to do in the affair.

Let us reason here as we endeavor to learn a science, by beginning with incipient principles, and then advance as we are assisted. We may begin with our appetites. Why do we take pains and be at expense to suit our food to our taste? Is it because we fear a state of retribution in a future world? No; but because we desire the satisfaction of our appetite. Why do we expend so much money for our clothing; not only to render it comfortable, but pleasing to the eye? Is all this for fear of future punishment? No. Look at and calculate the immense expenses which are devoted to erect our dwellings, and to furnish them, and ask whether it be the fear of future punishment which induces all this vast expense? The answer is, No. Inquire next concerning the expenses which are laid out for the maintenance of our companions and children, and the support of social friendship in society, and ask if this incalculable expense is for fear of punishment hereafter? The answer is, No. So we might proceed, and we should find that our inducements are the enjoyments which we contemplate in the possession of the various objects of our pursuits; and that the fear of punishment in another world has nothing to do with these things.

Will any reasonable person undertake to say, that people would be more likely to prepare their food to suit their taste if they were afraid of being tormented hereafter if they did not? Or, will any one contend, that it would be profitable to superadd to all the inducements, which influence people to the various acquisitions above noticed, the fear of being punished in a future state? None will contend for this; but why

do they not? The answer is, the things to which we have alluded, have in themselves attractions sufficient to induce people to strive, to the extent of their means, to obtain them. Then I would humbly ask what that object is that we ought to attain, which, not having within itself sufficient worth to induce us to acquire it, needs the assistance of the fear of hell in a future state, to engage your attention to it? Brother, I ask you, what it is? Are you willing to tell me that it is MORAL VIRTUE? I humbly beseech you not to say it. No man would ever say this, unless he were morally delirious. To a rational mind, with a clear understanding, there is nothing so valuable, nothing so sweet, nothing so lovely as moral virtue. This is the very life of the reasonable soul.

Need *fear* compel me to behold
 A beauteous form and neat?
 Or must the hungry man be told
 Of hell, to make him eat?

Talk we of sweetness to the taste,
 Or beauty to the eye?
 Pure virtue's flavor is the best,
 Most brilliant to its dye.

Hast thou, my son, her lovely form
 Seen, in a mirror bright?
 All other beauties treat with scorn,
 But make *her* thy delight.

Around thy neck, like chains of gold,
 Her mildest rays shall shine,
 And to thy longing heart unfold
 Her treasures all divine.

H. B.

REPLY TO A FRIEND,

WHO HAD ADDRESSED THE AUTHOR CERTAIN QUERIES.

Sir, — You do yourself much honor by your very candid remarks on the subject of future recompense, as that subject has been represented in some of my writings. You appear very ingenuous in acknowledging the rationality of the proposition, as by me stated; and on my part I am very free to allow, that, however plausible a proposition may, at first view, appear to us, it well becomes christian humility to regard such proposition with every scruple which the divine testimony necessarily suggests. There is, sir, another consideration, relative to subjects like the one under examination, to which, I think, some regard ought to be paid; and that is, when a proposition appears reasonable and no other objection can be brought against it, only that a solitary passage of scripture appears to oppose it, it, at least, deserves a question whether by the force of tradition, or some other cause, we have not contracted a wrong habit of construing such passage?

I presume that it did not occur to you, that the word *resurrection* in Luke xiv. 14, could possibly mean any thing but a resurrection from death to an immortal constitution and state. Of course, you observe, ‘If there had been ambiguity in the phraseology of the above text, I should not have addressed you upon the subject.’ But the fact is, this word does not uniformly, in the scriptures, apply to an immortal state. See Parkhurst on the Greek word ‘*Anastasis*, from *Anas-*

teemi, to rise. 1. A standing on the feet again, or rising, as opposed to falling. It occurs, though figuratively, in this view, Luke ii. 34. 2. A rising or resurrection of a dead body to life. Heb. xi. 35. Compare 1 Kg. xvii. 21 ; 2 Kg. iv. 34. 3. A rising or resurrection of the body from the grave. Applied both to Christ, and to men in general, whether good or bad.'

When Simeon said to the mother of Jesus, Luke ii. 34, 'This child is set for the fall and rising (*anastasin*) again of many in Israel,' we have no reason to suppose that he spoke of a resurrection into an immortal state ; but that he had reference to changes in the condition of the house of Israel, in this mutable state is altogether probable.

Being satisfied that this word, *resurrection*, is variously applied in the scriptures, it seems not unreasonable to suppose, that the Saviour, in giving necessary instructions, and in holding out suitable incentives to that genuine charity, which is free from ostentation, should signify that state or condition to which such modest worth will most assuredly raise its votary, by the phrase, *resurrection of the just*.

Within the circle of our observation, it is frequently seen, that virtue for a season wears the yoke of oppression, and that genuine worth is treated with contemptuous neglect. But how very transitory are all the vaporings of ostentation ! We need not go into a future state of existence before we can find virtue's ample reward. Remember the triumphs of virtue, which raised Joseph, in Egypt, to authority and command, and which rendered unto him the due recompense which corresponded to his sufferings and righ-

teousness. Whenever genuine virtue triumphs over its enemies, then is the resurrection of the just, and then is his full recompense received.

You will be so good, sir, as to indulge some queries respecting the passage in Luke, which you quote, as your remarks apply it. Luke xiv. 13, 14: 'But, when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.' If this resurrection mean a resurrection into an immortal state, I then ask what the recompense is to be? Whatever can be called a *recompense* must correspond with that for which it is a recompense. Is this recompense the immortal state or constitution? or is it some peculiar privilege which some in that state will enjoy, of which others will be destitute? No one will contend that the immortal state and its general blessedness are to be obtained only by the rich, who are able to feed the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; for this would exclude all these from that blissful state. And what propriety could there be in supposing, that those who are able in this world, to feed the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, who are to be forever excluded from divine favor, are to be eternally rewarded with life and immortality therefor? But this idea never came into the mind of those who apply this text agreeably to your remarks; and yet it is very evident, that the recompense, spoken of in the text, is something which those who feed the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, are to receive for so doing, not a recompense which these who are thus fed are to receive. It, therefore, appears evident, that if the recompense, mention-

ed in the text, be anything which respects the future state of existence, it must be something which is not to be enjoyed by all the blessed in that state. The question then remains, What is this recompense to be? It cannot be the resurrection itself, because those poor people who are, in this world, fed by the rich, will, no doubt, some of them at least, be partakers of that resurrection. It cannot be a permanent state of holiness, because those who are thus fed by the rich, in this world, may obtain this holiness.

In this world, it is easy to see and understand how those who feed the poor, &c. enjoy a blessing and a recompense of which the poor are destitute; for 'it is more blessed to give than to receive.' But in order to carry this recompense into the eternal state, it will be necessary to grant to some, in heaven, enjoyments of which others can never partake; and, of course, this will give to some an infelicity from which others will be exempt.

It has already been remarked, that whatever is a *recompense* must correspond with that for which it is a recompense. If divines would keep this evident fact in mind and duly regard it, they would not, as they constantly do, preposterously hold up an immortal state of endless felicity as a recompense for momentary virtues practised in this life. To understand the passage in Luke, as tradition has taught, to mean a recompense of endless happiness in an immortal constitution, is to call that a recompense, which is infinitely greater than that for which it is supposed to be a recompense. And it is worthy of notice, that, when treating on the subject of divine grace, and the gift of God, which is eternal life, our divines exclude the

merit of good works entirely. So they go on, confounding things which ought to be kept distinct, and contradicting, when treating one subject, all which they contend for, when treating on another.

Hoping these suggestions may satisfy one who exercises the candor which appears in your communication, they are submitted for your consideration, with sentiments of due respect.

H. B.

FUTURE RETRIBUTION.

As the subject of a future state of retribution has received much attention, and as considerable ability has been employed, both to maintain and refute the doctrine, from scripture authority; and as I feel well satisfied, for one, that the Bible teaches no such doctrine, it seems proper that I should endeavor to be able, if possible, to give a satisfactory answer to such questions as are suggested, and such as the subject, in conjunction with the prejudices of education, is calculated to elicit.

If in attending to anything of this nature I should be led to discover that my present convictions are not so well supported as I now think them to be, it will be my duty, and I hope I should not shrink from it, to acknowledge the fact, in as public a manner as I have made known my present belief.

The reason why I am now particularly inclined to notice some objections which are suggested, is because these are now more relied on to prevent people from giving up the doctrine of a future state of punishment than any quotations which are brought from the scriptures, which we acknowledge to be our only infallible guide. It appears very evident, that all those passages, which have been generally applied to a state of retribution, in a future world, are capable, to say the least, of an application which finds their accomplishment in the present mode of existence. And it seems that those who feel engaged in supporting the former

and general use of the above-mentioned passages are sufficiently aware of this fact, which renders it necessary for them to propose these arguments, not from scripture, but from reason.

It is now but a few days since I enjoyed a very pleasant opportunity, in conversation with an Unitarian preacher. We found that on most of subjects, embracing doctrines, we were perfectly agreed; and I thought he manifested as little relish for orthodoxy as myself. But there was one question with which he seemed disposed to favor the doctrine of a future retribution, though he was, by no means inclined to contend that punishment will be endless. The sum of his question was this; if a man of power and wealth oppress the honest and industrious, and swell his own coffers, by such oppressions; if he, being artful, in order to cover his iniquities, goes so far in them as to persecute and put the just to death, all the time so deceiving the public as to secure to himself the respect and even homage of society at large, and lives in this deceit and wickedness until old age, and dies suddenly at last without repentance, how can it be made to appear that such a sinner is rewarded according to his works, unless he receive a punishment for his sins in a future state?

In reply to this question, which, besure, is not new, but has been urged against the universal doctrine as long as I can remember to have heard of Universalism, I was led to proceed as follows:—

1. If it had pleased our heavenly Father to reveal in his written word anything which so applies to this question, as to make it evident that such a person, so living and so dying, must be punished in the world to come, there could be no need of this question, because

such scripture being adduced would decide the whole controversy. Here I paused, and intimated that if he believed that there was any such scripture, I expected he would bring it in place of his question. But he, in room of intimating that any such scripture could be brought, desired me, in a very good-natured manner, to proceed and answer the question as it stood. My reply then proceeded on the following scriptures as its foundation: Eccl. iv. 1, 2, — ‘So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun; and, behold, the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter. Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive.’ — Prov. iii. 17, speaking of wisdom, Solomon says: ‘Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.’ xiii. 15: ‘The way of transgressors is hard.’ Isa. lvii. 21: ‘There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.’

The first of the above passages seemed to meet his question as directly as if it had been written for that express purpose; and, taken in connexion with the others, seemed to lay open the whole subject. All who are oppressed under the sun enjoy as much peace and pleasantness as are the natural consequences of all the righteousness which they practise in walking in the ways of wisdom, which leaves all their sufferings, which are caused by the injustice of their oppressors, no other character, in reference to themselves, than those physical evils possess, which are acknowledged to be inflicted by the hand of Divine Providence. As moral beings, then, our enjoyments, at all times, correspond with the degree of moral righteousness to

which we attain. This being established, it must follow, of course, that the testimony which supports it has equal force to maintain, on the other hand, that the transgressor, at all times, as a moral being, suffers in a due proportion to the degree of wickedness by which he is characterized. The man, therefore, who was made the subject of the Unitarian's question, did, in fact, endure a suffering, during his whole life-time, which corresponded with the wickedness which he had practised. As to what this man *appeared* to enjoy, there certainly could not be any more of moral enjoyment than there was of conscious integrity in the means which procured his enjoyment; and surely no Christian ought to allow that sensuality is real happiness.

If it were the sentiment of Solomon, that oppressors, after they die, are miserable in consequence of the oppressions which they practise while they live, and that they enjoy much while they are practising their oppressions, why should he say, as above quoted? — 'Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead, more than the living which are yet alive.' — Whether this sort of reasoning gave my Unitarian brother any satisfaction, or not, he did not directly inform me; though by his smiling and making no objections to my answer, I thought that he did not view it to be very exceptionable.

It seems proper that we should endeavor to bring this subject, of a retribution in another state of existence, for deeds done in this, into view, as it is presented to the common mind under the influence of common prejudice. The necessity of examining this subject in this relation will be acknowledged by the candid, when the fact is realized, that it is this common

prejudice, which is the main support by which this doctrine is upheld.

It is now fresh in my recollection, how the doctrine of Universal Salvation affected the common mind, when it was first talked of in the vicinity where my youth was spent. The doctrine excited horror mingled with disgust, and was denounced as the most dangerous heresy ever propagated. Dangerous, on account of two certain consequences; 1st. The entire prostration of all piety and morality in society, in this world; and 2d. The certainty of everlasting condemnation in the future. At that time, what is now rather seldom hinted, even in a low voice, viz. If I believed so, I would lie, cheat, indulge in dissipation, wallow in sin of every kind, not hesitating to take the lives of my neighbors, my family, or even my own, — was then loudly vociferated from almost every lip, and I was perfectly satisfied that such must be the natural tendency of the doctrine. Time and experience have now entirely disproved the first of the above-mentioned consequences; for many thousands have come into the belief of Universalism, since those days, and now constitute a *religious* denomination, professing and practising piety towards God, and good will to mankind. But as to the 2d consequence above-mentioned, we must wait until we are introduced into the future world before we can certainly know.

A question here arises: What were the habitual prejudices of common minds, which caused the doctrine of Universal Salvation, to be so much abhorred? The candid reader, it is confidently believed, will see a sufficient similarity between this case and that represented by our Saviour, by the laborers in the vineyard, to allow that the former cannot be entitled to a better

character than the latter. Those, in the parable, who murmured, complained because those who, wrought but one hour were made equal with themselves, who had borne the burden and the heat of the day. On the same principle which they supposed their murmurings were just, they would have maintained that if they had known that they were to receive no more than those who wrought but one hour, they would not have gone into the vineyard in the morning. Now, if the objection against the doctrine of no retribution in the future world for deeds done in this, which objection I am endeavoring to consider, be not of a character similar to the objection which the murmuring laborers stated against the good man, I have made a mistake. But I cannot believe that any one will undertake to show me where the mistake lies.

The objection then, and the prejudices of the common mind, which support the objection, seem to stand thus: If our neighbors who are not so godly as we are, and especially the extremely vile, are not to be punished in the future world for their wicked deeds in this, then there must be partiality in our heavenly Father's government, though he has promised to reward every man according to his works. The moment we see this objection in connexion with these common prejudices, we find the whole superstructure founded on an opinion which we have already refuted, showing that the morally righteous, in the present state, enjoy a moral recompense which perfectly agrees with their moral characters; and that the morally vile endure, in the present state, a moral privation and infelicity, which constitute an exact balance of their sins.

I shall now consider the objection against the doctrine of no retribution in the future world, for deeds

done in this, as it relates to the alleged necessity of such retribution in the future state, in order to prepare the impenitent for a state of happiness.

The objection, in this form, has one amiable quality which was not discovered in the other views, in which we have considered it. It now becomes disencumbered of the doctrine of retaliation, and ceases to oppose on the ground of partiality. He who urges the objection, in its present shape, feels no disposition to maintain the doctrine of future retribution merely because he is not willing that the chiefest of sinners should be happy immediately, even to day, nor yet because such may not have suffered what punitive justice requires ; but his objection, against no future punishment, now rests on the necessity of punishment, in the future world, as a corrective, designed to bring the impenitent to a holy submission to the divine government, and to the law of love.

In order to give the objection a due consideration, in the shape in which we now have it, it becomes necessary to inquire respecting the nature and tendency of punishment to produce the reconciliation to the divine government, which our objection sets up as the effect to be produced by it. This inquiry will necessarily ask, what sort or kind of punishment will naturally tend to bring the sinner to love the law of holiness ? The objector is called on to resolve this question in his mind ; for if he does himself love the law of holiness, and if he was brought thus to love, by being exercised with punishment, no doubt he can answer the question. The question seems a proper one for the consideration of all those, who profess to be genuine lovers of holiness. Were they brought into the spirit of this love by enduring punishment, such as is

contended will be inflicted on the wicked in the future world? This question is of such importance, that it may be urged in another form. Were the ancient patriarchs, the prophets of old, the apostles and primitive Christians brought into the spirit of divine love, by enduring such punishment as is threatened to be inflicted on the wicked in the future world?

If this question be duly considered, in its various bearings, it will, undoubtedly, operate as a hammer on the doctrine of future retribution, as we are now, considering it, and if it do not entirely break it in pieces, it must render it very thin; for as the subject now lies before us, it must be granted at once, that there will be no need of any severer punishment, in the future world, to reconcile sinners to God, than those have endured in this world, who have been thus reconciled, unless it can be maintained that the wicked, in the next state of existence, will be more obdurate than they are in this world, which may render a more intense punishment necessary.

It is very possible that a correct understanding of the subject of punishment, as to its utility, may be of service in this place. That our heavenly Father does punish us for our benefit, by yielding us to endure the necessary and inseparable consequences of our crimes and folly, is a fact, which we have not only allowed, but one we have already sufficiently proved from scripture; but that such punishment produces in us love to the moral principle of divine holiness, seems very doubtful. It is the loveliness of an object which induces the mind to love it, not the hatefulness of its opposite. Moreover, it must be allowed, that the proper, proximate cause of our love of the principle of divine holiness must continue, in order for our love to con-

tinue. But who will contend that punishment must continue in order to keep us steadfast in the divine love ?

Let this subject be illustrated thus : The briars, the thorns, and the thistles which perplex and torture the traveller, who has wandered from the right path, tend to stop his progress, and even to compel him to pause and consider. While in this perplexity, he hears a *voice* behind him, ' saying, this is the way, walk ye in it.' He turns and finds a high-way, a smooth and delightsome path, in which he travels with ease. — Now the facts stand thus : The difficulty which he found in one direction rendered him unwilling to proceed further ; but it was the good qualities of the path which he found, which reconciled him to it, and which continued to grant him satisfaction as well as to engage him to continue to travel in it.

If we have now a correct understanding of the necessity and utility of punishment or chastisement, it shows us, at once, that there can be no use for this punishment in the next state of existence, unless there be some wrong path in which the traveller will there wander. There must be, in that future state, the same appetites and passions, the same lusts to tempt and draw away, as those, which, in this mortal state, lead into sin ; or our heavenly Father must provide us with a different constitution, possessed of different passions and lusts, which may there serve to lead us into sins corresponding with such constitution and passions, or there seems to be no ground on which to maintain this necessity of punishment in a future state. If either philosophy or the scriptures teach us to believe that our next state of existence is to be a peccable state, I am in the dark respecting this subject, and need to be conducted into the light.

I may now consider the Unitarian doctrine of future retribution, as they generally hold it forth.

I have never been able to learn that Unitarian divines have framed any system of doctrine respecting this subject. They appear to maintain it by no argument; but merely state it as a fact, and as if it were not disputed. They generally, or frequently, at least, state the idea, wholly or in part, in the language of some passage or passages of scripture, which they very well know the common people understand to refer to such a subject, and entirely depend on popular prejudice to justify themselves in the procedure.

They congratulate themselves, however, on account of their not making the future state of the wicked quite as bad as our Calvinistic divines represent it; but if they find the Calvinists disposed to make use of this in any way unfavorable to their popularity, they will then go to work in earnest, and create a hell so intolerably frightful that it would even fright themselves if they should believe one half of their own story.

If the reader should say that the above statement seems to wear an uncharitable aspect, he must be told, that the sole reason is, it is a true, unvarnished representation of the case. If the question be asked, how I can justify them in their proceedings, I answer; I have no right to judge them as to their motives, and therefore, as they are not accountable to me, I judge them not. 'To their own master they stand or fall.'

The doctrine of a future retribution, as taught by our Unitarian divines, maintains that happiness and misery, in the future world will be enjoyed and suffered accordingly as men shall have lived virtuously or otherwise in this world. This is their simple state-

ment, and it is likewise the statement of Calvinistic divines ; but what they respectively mean by this statement is vastly different. The Calvinists mean that all who are regenerated by the irresistible grace of God are the virtuous, and that all the rest are wicked, let them do ever so well, in a moral point of view. But the Unitarians are so liberal as to allow every man a due reward for all his virtues, and are just to award a due punishment for every transgression. It must furthermore be understood, that the Calvinists have but one heaven for all the righteous, and one hell for all the wicked ; while Unitarians, whether they know it or not, according to what they preach, maintain that there will be no other distinctions in the conditions of men in the future state, than such an infinity of variations as shall correspond with the infinite variety of moral character, formed in this mortal life. None, who have sinned, will ever be so happy as they would have been if they had never sinned ; and none will be so miserable as they would have been if they had been more sinful in this world. This doctrine certainly allows that everlasting condemnation will be endured, and everlasting happiness enjoyed by the same individual. For instance ; David, king of Israel, will be forever justified for the good deeds which he did, and in that justification will enjoy everlasting felicity ; on the other hand, as he was, in some of his acts, extremely wicked, so for them he will be forever condemned, and, in that condemnation, will endure everlasting sorrow. And, taking David for an example, so will it be with every individual of the human race. St. Paul, before his conversion to Christianity, was a most infuriate persecutor of Jesus and his disciples, for which he must suffer everlasting condemnation ;

but after his conversion he was a faithful disciple and minister of his divine Master, and for this he will enjoy everlasting justification. And, taking St. Paul for an example, so will it be with all mankind.

I shall not undertake to state all the objections to this doctrine, which might be brought; but a few may be mentioned.

1st. This doctrine supposes that what is denominated sin, is an evil, which must be attended with evil consequences eternally, which constitutes an infinite evil. This should not be allowed, as it must involve the original cause of this evil in moral blame. But it certainly does not require a very minute investigation to arrive at the fact that the original cause of whatever is must be good; and when this is seen, it is perfectly consistent to allow, that the final result of all things must be the same as the original cause.

2d. This doctrine is not worthy of our belief, as Christians, for this very good reason, the founder of Christianity never taught it. Our blessed Saviour never informed his disciples, that they should suffer, in the eternal world, everlasting condemnation for the faults of this mortal life.

3d. This doctrine is a denial of the New Testament doctrine of entire sanctification. St. Paul speaks of a sanctification which shall leave neither *spot nor wrinkle*; and the beloved disciple says, *The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin*. Surely, if David and Paul are to suffer everlastingly for their sins, and every other sinner is to suffer thus, it is very difficult to understand the doctrine of entire sanctification. But,

4thly. There is hardly any view of this doctrine, which discovers its impropriety more evidently, than

to contemplate it as awarding everlasting happiness for our virtues in this world, but no reward for any good we may be employed about hereafter; and on the other hand, as awarding endless punishment for our sins in this world, but providing no punishment for wrongs which the wicked will practise in the future state.

TO A FRIEND,

WHO HAD WRITTEN HIM ON THE SUBJECT OF 'DEATH
AND GLORY.'

IF our brethren, who maintain future punishment, would consent to do what they have been so often called on to do, viz. prove, from the testimony of scripture, that the next state of existence will be so far like the present, that man will there be liable to temptation, and to be led into sin, there would be an end to the controversy; for it is allowed, on all hands, that where sin is, it is punishable; and it ought to be allowed, by all, that where sin does not and cannot exist, it cannot be punished. There is another consideration, which these brethren seem entirely to disregard; which is, if the Scriptures prove that the next state is a state of imperfection, sin and suffering, they must also prove an end to that state, or be incapable of proving universal holiness in any state. But it has never appeared to me that they felt so much disposed to enlighten us respecting the nature and evidences of the subject for which they contend, as they are to lean on the prejudices of the public in favor of a future hell, in its popular sense, and to turn the bitterness of that prejudice towards those, whose arguments they were conscious they could not answer. If there were any need of evidence to support what I here suggest, one circumstance of fact would be sufficient. When

I lived in Portsmouth, N. H., some fourteen or fifteen years ago, I was made exceedingly glad, by discovering, in my study on Heb. ix. 27, 28, what I now believe to be the true application and use of the passage. As every new idea which was obtained by brethren, so long ago, was considered in the light of common property, we were in the habit of communicating to each other, as you very well know, all discoveries which we were able to make; and one felt no small degree of pleasure in being able to repay such favors as he had received. In the spirit of this reciprocity, I immediately communicated my thoughts on this text to a brother near Boston; he received it with full and cordial approbation, and communicated it to one in Boston and to another at a little distance, and all accepted the exposition with approbation and delight. But what use do these brethren now make of this passage? Why, to prove the old notion of a day of judgment in the future state, and future retribution, all which is acceptable to the public prejudices, the perturbed torrent of which we were formerly engaged in resisting!

But I must hasten to notice your queries. 1st. In relation to what you term 'death and glory.'

This subject has never been much agitated among brethren of our order, until quite lately. Dr. Priestley's views of an unconscious state after death, were not known to me when I wrote my treatise on atonement, nor had that subject then ever been considered by me. This accounts for my silence on it. Of late, I have endeavored to know what divine revelation has communicated on this subject; but, owing to my want of discernment, I have not been able to reconcile all

the passages, which seem to relate to the case, to a fair support of either side of the question. My efforts, I acknowledge, have not been made with that intenceness of application, respecting this matter, as they would have been, had I been persuaded that the question was of any great consequence. Being fully satisfied that the Scriptures teach us to believe no moral state, between the death of the body, and the resurrection state, in which that which was sown in dishonor will be raised in glory, and that which was sown in corruption, shall be raised in incorruption, it seemed to me immaterial whether we enter, immediately, after the dissolution of the body, on the resurrection state, or sleep in unconscious quietude any given time before that glorious event shall take place. In either case, it is what you call 'death and glory;' for it makes no difference as to the length of time during an unconscious state. In such a state there can be effected no moral preparations.

As you have framed the remainder of your queries in such a manner as to give your own views of the subjects, and as there is no essential difference between our conceptions of them, it seems unnecessary for me to be farther particular; except it may be well just to remark on your fourth suggestion, which regards the 'natural immortality of the soul.' Whatever I may have written on this subject, it was never my intention to attempt to define the nature, as to the substance of the soul. I have believed, and still continue to view man as the 'offspring of God,' and that this relation constitutes him an heir of that immortality which is a property of God alone. But surely what

Pope says of Newton will apply with increased emphasis to one so limited as your friend :

‘ Could he, whose rules the rapid comet binds,
Describe or fix one movement of his mind ?
Who saw its fires here rise, and there descend,
Explain his own beginning, or his end ?’

Yours affectionately,

HOSEA BALLOU.

THE SECOND DEATH.

THE Death, of which an illustration is to be attempted, being called the 'Second Death,' renders it necessary that we inquire, to *what* death is it *second*?

Therefore labors on this general subject may be properly directed to ascertain,

1st. That death to which the second death may be properly considered second. And,

2d. The second death, and its similarity to the first.

The general opinion represents those deaths as different in their nature and circumstances as is possible to conceive. The first death is supposed to be the death of the body, and the second a state of never-ending misery. †

The death of the body consists in a total extinction of life with all its appendages. In this situation there is no sense of desire, no sense of pain, or pleasure; no hopes, of course no disappointment; no love, nor fear; in short no happiness, nor misery. Second to this, it is believed that a state of positive sufferings in the eternal world is properly placed, but we think erroneously. One moment of rational reflection would suggest the greater propriety of calling the above-mentioned state of punishment, the second life; because in such a supposed state there are many appendages which bear a likeness to the life of man in this world, while there is not one which bears the least resemblance of the death of the body. The death which it seems proper

to state as the first death is the apostacy of the Jewish church, which apostacy we shall find to be called or represented as a death. See John viii. 21 : ' Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me and shall die in your sins: whither I go ye cannot come.' 24 : ' I said, therefore, unto you that ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.' The common opinion that Christ spokē in the above quotations, of the death of the body, is corrected by the 51st verse of the same chapter. ' Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my sayings, he shall never see death.' Jesus could not mean here that a man could avoid seeing the death of the body by keeping his sayings, but that a man might avoid seeing that death which those would die, who did not believe in him.

Keep in mind that this death in sin is a consequence which the Saviour connects with unbelief, in the following : ' For if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.' A few scriptures relating to the unbelief of the Jews, and the state of death and condemnation into which their unbelief brought them, will here be considered. John xii. 37—41 ; ' But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not in him; that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke, — Lord, who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he

saw his glory and spoke of him.' Matt. xiii. 13, 14, 15: 'Therefore speak I to them in parables; because they seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not; neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing, ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing, ye shall see, and shall not perceive; for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.'

Rom. xi. 7—10: 'What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (according as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear) unto this day. And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a recompense unto them: let their eyes be darkened that they may not see, and bow down their back alway.' Dan. xii. 2: 'And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.'

This passage in Daniel very fitly corresponds with the words of Paul before quoted. 'The election hath obtained it and the rest were blinded:' the dust of the earth, in which the Jewish Church was asleep, was the carnal ordinances of the law, and the added traditions by which they made the law void. John v. 28, 29: 'Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto

the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.' Matt. xxv. 46 : ' And these shall go away into everlasting punishment ; but the righteous into life eternal.' Those scriptures which I have quoted in this case are generally understood to refer to the same state of endless punishment which is supposed to be denominated the Second Death, in Revelation.

But it is worthy of notice that the state of condemnation, into which unbelief brought the Jews, is never called, in scripture, the SECOND DEATH, though it is represented as a death. The plain reason is, it being a death of unbelief and apostacy under the first dispensation, or covenant, it is the first, and not the second death.

That the state of condemnation into which the Jewish Church fell, is not a state of endless punishment, is evident from many scriptures, particularly Rom. xi. where the apostle continues his discourse from the above quotation : ' I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall ? God forbid ; but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.' Verse 15 : ' For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead.' And more to this effect may be seen in the same chapter.

2. The death which the scriptures represent as second to the death which has been here illustrated, is the apostacy of the Christian Church, and the state of condemnation connected with it. To this subject our minds may be directed by the following scriptures.

Heb. x. 26—29 : ‘ For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses : of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, he shall be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the spirit of grace ? ’ Rom. xi. 20, 21, 22 : ‘ Well because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high minded, but fear : for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God : on them which fell, severity ; but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness : otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.’ The evident meaning of the apostle here, is, on the Jews who FELL, God’s severity fell ; and if you, Gentile believers, do not continue by faith in God’s goodness, you also will receive the severity of God, in being cut off, as the unbelieving Jews were broken off through unbelief. 2 Thess. iii. 3 : ‘ Let no man deceive you by any means : for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.’ St. Paul spoke of the fall of the Jews in the quotation above, and here he speaks of the falling away of the Christian Church, and of the setting up of the man of sin. The blessed Jesus’ who sowed the word of the kingdom, in the hearts of the believers, knowing that this falling away, in the then future age of the church, would take place according to the signs given under

the law by the travel of the Jewish Church, represented it in his usual method, by a parable. See Matt. xiii. 24, 25, &c. : ' Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field : but while men slept his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way, &c. 1 Tim. iv. 1 : ' Now the spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.'

The first passage where the words *second death* occur, stands in such a connexion as to render its meaning easy to be understood. And it will appear, on a careful examination, not only to favor the idea which has been suggested, but to contain argument within itself, to satisfy Christian professors, in general, that the second death does not mean a state of endless punishment. See Rev. ii. 8—11 : ' And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write ; these things saith the first and the last, which was dead and is alive ; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer : behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried ; and ye shall have tribulation ten days ; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches ; he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.'—Note 1st. This address is to a church of believers, who are exhorted not to fear those things which they had to suffer, to try them. 2d. Those who overcome all the trials which were put upon them, were not to be

hurt of the second death. 3d. The fair conclusion is, that those who fell from their steadfastness in the faith and patience of Christ, would be hurt of the second death. 4th. It is the opinion of Christian professors in general, that those who are brought to believe in Christ may fall away, yet not finally. It is then evident, that those who were believers in him who is the first and the last, who was dead and is alive, were liable, by being overcome of the devil, to be hurt of the second death.

The epistle to the church in Sardis is remarkably clear on the subject in discussion, Rev. iii. 1—6: ‘And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; these things saith he that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches.’ Note 1st. The church in Sardis is accused of being DEAD. That this death is the SECOND DEATH, is evident from the text quoted from the apostle to the church of Smyrna. ‘He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second

death.' This shows, as has been noticed, that those who do not overcome, but are overcome, must be hurt of the second death. The church in Sardis had fallen into death, and are exhorted to repent; they had not overcome, but were overcome; therefore, according to the texts, when compared, the church of Sardis had fallen into the SECOND DEATH. 2d. It is acknowledged that there were a few names in Sardis, who had not defiled their garments. This was a testimony against the greatest part that they had defiled their garments. Those who had not defiled their garments were to walk with him who hath the seven spirits of God and the seven stars, in white, being worthy. This is a testimony, that those who had defiled their garments, should not walk with Christ, because they were not worthy. 3d. To those who overcome, it was promised, that they should be clothed in white, and that their names should not be blotted out of the book of life, but that their names should be confessed before God and his angels. This is a plain testimony, that those who had not overcome, but were dead, should not be clothed in white nor walk with Christ, but that their names should be blotted out of the book of life and disowned before God and his angels. 4th. In that the text proves that the major part of the church in Sardis, had defiled their garments, it as fully proves that they once had garments which were not defiled. And wherein the text shows that those who did not overcome, should have their names blotted out of the book of life, it as fully shows that their names had been written in the book of life, for they could not be blotted out if they had not been there.

It may be as well at this time to see where our researches will end, as any time. See Rev. xx. 14, 15,

' And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, and whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.' It is now perfectly plain, that those whose names had been in the book of life, were blotted out, and their names being blotted out, they were cast into the lake of fire, which is called the second death. In the 21st chapter and 8th verse, the above lake of fire is called ' the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone ; which is the second death.'

This fire and brimstone is spoken of in the 14th chapter as follows. See verses 9, 10, 11, ' 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 : and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.' Note 1st. This fire and brimstone is called the SECOND DEATH, in the quotation from chapter xxi. 8. 2d. This fire and brimstone is called the wine of the wrath of God in this last quotation. 3d. Those who are set forth to be the sufferers of this Second Death we learn from the following passages in connexion with this above quoted. See chap. xxi. 8 ; ' But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.'

In the quotation from the 14th chapter, those characters are distinguished as receiving the mark of the beast, by worshipping the beast, &c. See chap. xiii. 16, 17; 'And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their forehead: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.' 4th. According to the quotation from the 14th chapter, the worshippers of the beast are tormented with this fire and brimstone at the same time that they are worshipping the beast. See the text: 'And they HAVE no rest day nor night who WORSHIP the beast or his image.' This suffering is not only confined to the time when the beast is worshipped, but also to DAY and NIGHT, which shows it to be in this world of error and condemnation. 5th. It is observed, note 2d, that this fire and brimstone is called the wine of the wrath of God. This wrath and the dispensation of it is noticed in the following scriptures. Chapter xv. 1: 'And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.' Verse 7: 'And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth forever and ever.' Chap. xvi. 1, 2: 'And I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. And the first went and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.' This wrath of God, this fire and brimstone, this lake of fire, and this second death are evidently all the same thing; and no-

thing can be plainer than that this suffering is on the earth, during the changes of day and night, while the beast is worshipped. If we carefully examine the whole dispensation of this wrath of God, represented by the pouring out of the seven vials, it will still confirm this opinion. — See verse 3: ‘And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.’ — See further: ‘The third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. The fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun, &c. The fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast. The sixth angel poured out his vial on the great river Euphrates. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air.’ What is there in all this, which has the least to do with an eternal state of mankind in a future world? Will this beast be worshipped in the eternal world? See chapter xiii. 5: ‘And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.’ This cannot mean an endless duration.

The similarity between this second death and the death which has been illustrated as the first, is very evident. The lively oracles of God were given to the Jewish church as they also were to the Christian church. The Jewish church corrupted and made void the law by their traditions, and the Christian church has corrupted and made void the gospel by their traditions. The Jews denied the holy one and the just, and desired a murderer, — and the Christian church have denied the holy Jesus, the just God and the Saviour, and have desired the murderous antichrist. —

The Jews fell under great condemnation, and the judgments of God were poured out upon them in an awful manner, — and the Christian church, by reason of similar sins, have met and are meeting with similar, awful and dreadful calamities. They have shed the blood of saints and of martyrs, and God hath given them blood to drink, for they are worthy.

All these things are noted at large in the scriptures, and they are written for our admonition. But, as has been noticed, the scriptures do not exclude the apostatized Jewish church from the final benefits of the gospel, but on the contrary show that the receiving of them shall be life from the dead. So also in the merciful councils of divine grace, as taught in the scriptures, we find that the beast, who is antichrist, and the worship of the beast together with the wrath of God, will not eternally last, but will close in due time, and that dispensation of Universal Holiness and Happiness will commence, which is noted in Rev. xxi. 3, and onward, in which it is declared that the tabernacle of God is with men, and that he will dwell with them; and wipe away all tears from their eyes; and that there shall be no more DEATH. Here then there must be an end to the SECOND DEATH. It is further said that there shall be no more sorrow nor pain. And the reason given, is, that the former things, (relating to the lake of fire) are passed away, and that He who sits upon the throne should make ALL THINGS NEW.

A CALL

ON THE ATTENTION OF THOSE WHO CONTEND THAT
THE DOCTRINE OF A FUTURE STATE OF PUNISH-
MENT IS ESSENTIAL TO CHRISTIANITY.

IN this call, I humbly desire to use perfect fairness, and to be clearly understood, in relation to the object which I have in view. I well know that many who profess to believe in the final salvation of all men, do at the same time most seriously believe that there will be a state of moral discipline, in the future world, and that punishment is not exclusively confined to this mortal state; while others, who maintain the doctrine of future retribution, believe that the punishment to be inflicted and endured in that state will be endless; and that this doctrine of endless punishment is one of the main items in the doctrine of the gospel, and that to deny it is infidelity. But whether those who believe in limited punishment hereafter, generally believe that this article of their faith is essential to Christianity, or not, I am not informed. This call is made to those, and those only, who believe that the doctrine of future punishment is necessarily connected with Christianity, so that a person cannot be a faithful follower of Christ, in principle and in practice, unless he believes it.

That we may do tolerable justice to this subject, it may be well to notice certain particulars, in which all Christian denominations are agreed, and which all al-

low to belong to the system of the gospel of Christ, and institute the inquiry whether a future state of punishment is as plainly taught and enforced in the Scriptures as are those particulars.

1. The existence of one Supreme Creator and Ruler of the Universe is believed by all denominations of Christians. This doctrine of one God is taught by Moses, by all the prophets, by Jesus and all his apostles. But is the doctrine of a future state of punishment as clearly taught by Moses, by all the prophets, by Jesus and all his apostles? It is very certain that this is not the case; and one simple matter of well-known fact is sufficient to prove that it is not. There are many, who were educated in the belief, that the doctrine of a future state of punishment is taught in the Scriptures, who have been led to search the Scriptures with much care and patience, to ascertain whether this doctrine is, in fact, a scripture doctrine, who have, after all their researches, been obliged, contrary to their educations and early prejudices, to come to the conclusion that no such doctrine is supported by the Bible; but never was there an individual who, by studying the Scriptures, came to the conclusion that they do not maintain the existence of Jehovah.

2. All professed Christians agree, that the Scriptures abundantly maintain the belief of a divine inspiration according to the following passage: Heb. i. 1, 2, 'God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son;' and there is no contention respecting this matter of acknowledged fact. But we ask the believers in a future state of punishment whether the Scriptures are

as clear in support of this tenet as they are in vindicating the doctrine of divine inspiration? It is not expected that any one will contend for the affirmative of this question.

3. There is no dispute among professed Christians respecting the fact of the resurrection of Jesus. All denominations seem equally to embrace this as the foundation of the Christian faith, hope and religion. But will any one contend that the doctrine of a future state of punishment is as forcibly and as clearly maintained in the Scriptures, as is the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus? On this subject St. Paul speaks as follows: 'If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ; whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.' But do we meet with any language designed to teach the doctrine of a future retribution, that corresponds with these words of the apostle? Has this, or any other inspired author, ever said, — If the wicked are not punished in a future state then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified that God will punish the wicked in another world, whom he will not punish? It is very true that many, very many preachers of our times might, with much propriety, use this kind of language respecting their own preaching; but then they are not inspired; and are therefore not entitled to the confidence which we place in the testimony of the apostle.

4. All denominations of Christians agree that the religion of Christ requires men to love one another,

and even to love their enemies, that they may be the children of our Father who is in heaven; and St. Paul argues that though he had all other gifts and had not charity, he was but as 'sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.' Let us here ask whether the doctrine of future punishment is as forcibly and as evidently vindicated in the Scriptures, as is this doctrine concerning love and charity? Is there any passage of scripture, which, on a fair construction, amounts to as much as to say, — though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and proclaim not the doctrine of a future state of punishment, I am as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal? And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understood all mysteries, and believe not in future punishment, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and believe not in future punishment, I am nothing. The belief in future punishment never faileth. And now abideth charity, hope, and a belief in future punishment; but the greatest of these is this faith in future retribution? If this item, so much contended for, be in fact indispensable in the religion of Christ, why should it not be found expressed in the foregoing strong and impressive language? Why did not St. Paul state this doctrine so plainly that its present advocates might find scripture language sufficient for its defence? And after having thus stated it, proceed to give it as high an encomium as he bestowed on charity? Why did he not say, the doctrine and belief of a future state of sin and punishment for some of our fellow-creatures, suffereth long, and is kind; it envieth not; it vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not easily pro-

voked, thinketh no evil ; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth ; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, and never faileth ? Among most of Christian denominations, in our day, this belief is as the new name in the white stone ; with it, any thing will do ; without it, nothing.

5. All Christians are united in the belief that life and immortality are brought to light through the gospel ; and no one, who pretends to believe the Christian religion, refuses his assent to this glorious and heart-cheering doctrine. But will any one pretend that a future state of punishment is brought to light through the gospel ? Can we with safety contend that it is as necessary to believe in this tenet as in life and immortality, in order that we may enjoy peace and rest in believing ?

To conclude : If we firmly believe in God, and believe that he is our Father and unchangeable friend ; if we believe that he hath revealed the counsels of his divine wisdom and favor through his holy child Jesus, and his determination to reconcile all things to himself through his mediation ; if we cordially embrace the precepts of the Saviour, and love God with all the heart, and our neighbors as ourselves, and exercise love and good will even to our enemies ; if we believe that ‘ as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive,’ in glory and immortality, — must we be denied Christian fellowship because we cannot find the doctrine of a future state of sin and punishment laid down in the written word, nor feel the evidences of this doctrine to grow out of the spirit of Christ within us, or to be dictated by any of the virtues or duties commanded by our divine Master ?

A hope is entertained that those, to whom this call is addressed, will give it a serious attention, and allow the queries here suggested the weight and consideration which their importance demand. It must be granted, on all hands, that the interest of Christianity cannot be promoted by attaching a consequence to unessential opinions, to the entire dissolution of fellowship and brotherly love.

H. B.

CONCLUSION.

THE writer of the foregoing sheets is by no means insensible, that by removing the doctrine of a future state of retribution from the Christian religion, a very material change is effected; and he would assure his readers, that he has not attempted it without endeavoring, by the most careful examination of which he was capable, to satisfy himself, that by so doing he would render a favorable service to mankind, and contribute something towards freeing the Scriptures from a character which not only does not belong to them, but which has rendered them a source of human misery. So far from having any desire to disarm the divine testimony of any terrors which were designed for the salutary purpose of preventing the commission of sin, or wrong-doing, it has been his most fervent desire to present the divine retributions in the way which both scripture and experience direct.

The religion of Jesus Christ was doubtless designed for the improvement of mankind, by enlightening the human understanding, by purifying the heart and af-

fections, by inducing a universal benevolence and charity, by leading men in the path of righteousness and peace, and by giving strength to that blessed hope of a happy existence hereafter, the desire of which it seems that our adorable Creator saw fit to implant in our nature. Could we be persuaded that the gloomy terrors, the heart-withering horrors of a state of torment hereafter, could in the least promote those benevolent designs of the religion of Jesus, we should feel a reluctance in attempting to remove them; but we are convinced, beyond the smallest scruple, that in room of this, they have exerted an entirely contrary influence.

Should the arguments contained in this work induce the reader to search the Scriptures, for the purpose of obtaining a knowledge of God and his word, and contribute to render the gospel more valuable in his estimation, the religion of the Saviour more precious to his heart, the practice of moral virtue more lovely in his sight, and sin and transgression more detestable, — the object the writer has had in view will be attained, and that for which he most ardently prays will be granted.

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