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# THAT UNKNOWN COUNTRY

OR

WHAT LIVING MEN BELIEVE CONCERNING  
PUNISHMENT AFTER DEATH

TOGETHER WITH

RECORDED VIEWS OF MEN OF FORMER TIMES

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THE WHOLE FIELD EXPLORED

EVERY SOURCE OF WISDOM, PAST AND PRESENT, MADE TRIBUTARY  
TO THE ILLUMINATION OF THIS THEME

MAN'S FINAL DESTINY

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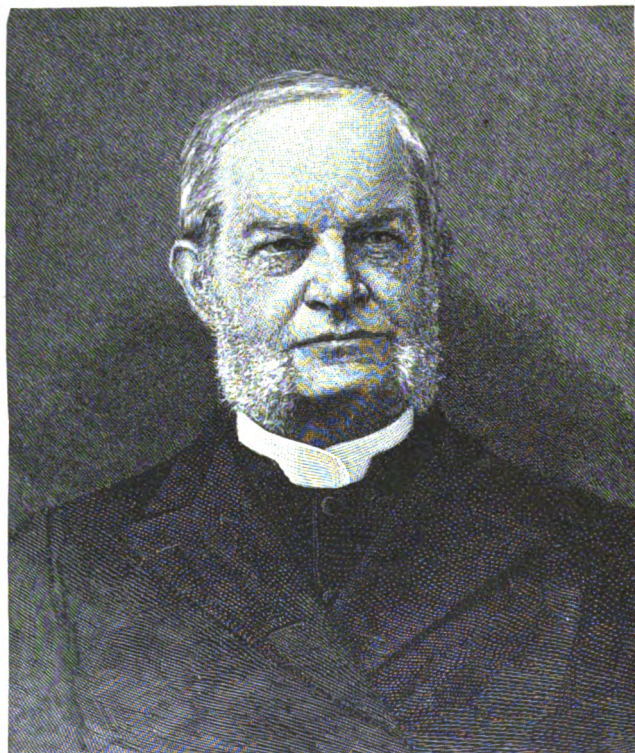
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Horatio Crosby

## CHAPTER X.

### THERE IS AN EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT FOR THE WICKED ; A RETRIBUTION ETERNAL AFTER DEATH ; AND THIS RETRI- BUTION WILL BE THE ACTION OF SIN IN THE SOUL, SUBJECTING IT TO PERPETUAL TORTURES.

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The Notion of a Future State Not Inherent in Man's Nature.—It is Imparted Directly by God.—The Asserted Silence of Moses on this Subject Denied.—The Prophecies and Promises Necessarily Involve a Life Beyond.—Unquestionable Perpetuity of Those Begotten and Beloved of the Lord.—Immortality not Originated but Illumined by Christ.—Continued Consciousness, not Annihilation, Taught by “Unquenchable Fire.”—The Wicked Excluded from Heavenly Life, but Not Extinct.—They Forever Sink in Sin and Corruption.—Two Classes Separated by an Impassable Gulf.—Ultimate Universal Forgiveness, or Restoration, would Include the Sin for which Christ Most Solemnly Declared there was “No Forgiveness” in Either World.—Error of the Materialistic View.—God, whose Inspired Definition is Love, can be No Cruel Executioner.—All Suffering Self-Inflicted.

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By Rev. HOWARD CROSBY, D.D., LL.D., Presbyterian, Late Chancellor of New York University.

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WHAT we know of the condition of man after death we must know from an *ab extra* revelation. The human mind has no light of its own on this subject. Aspirations on one hand and fear of retribution on the other, as these are found native within us, have no necessary reference to a future state. The aspirations are for attainment, but that attainment has its sphere in this life. The fear of retribution is a fear of immediate or speedy punishment, but no future-world idea belongs to it. A notion of an *invisible* world whence the punishment will come is not to be confounded with a

notion of a *future* world. So far from this is the case that the supposed avoidance of retribution is found in suicide. The man kills himself that the rod may not afflict him. When the body is placed in the grave, it is the natural thought that the *man* is placed there, and there he decays, and that is the end of him. There is nothing left outside which one can see as a suggestion of a life beyond. So all plans and calculations of man are bounded by death. He never plans or calculates for a future state. It does not come within his horizon of view. There is actually nothing within him which connects him subjectively with a future world.

Against this position we cannot quote the happy hunting grounds of the Indian or the Nirvana of the Buddhist or the Paradise of the Mohammedan any more than the Heaven of the Christian, for all these are the results of revelation. The notion of a future state, not found in man by nature, has been imparted to him by the teaching of God, has continued down the ages, and has been modified to suit the tastes of different styles of mind. We see at once that the notion of a future state which we have has not the same basis in our minds as our notion of cause and effect or our notion of right and wrong. These last are connected with our whole life and enter into every action, but the first lies on the shelf and is used only at times and by a deliberate act of the will. It bears the stamp of an importation, and hence many have no hesitation in rejecting it, while they cannot reject the native notions of the mind.

This being the case, whatever thoughts we have concerning a future state, having come to us from a revelation, must be corrected by appeal to revelation. That revelation which has become corrupted by its oral transmission through centuries must be corrected by appeal to the written revelation that never changes, and so we must get fresh from the original source the truth all unknown to our unaided thought.

We are therefore shut up to the Bible for our knowledge, and a careful consultation of the holy oracle is our reasonable duty

and our inestimable privilege. What, then, says the Bible concerning a future state? This is the sole question that we have to consider.

It is very often said that the Old Testament is silent on the subject, and this is emphatically asserted of the Pentateuch. Warburton's argument is well known. Notwithstanding all the learning of the Bishop, we do not believe that the Mosaic economy is so dumb. We do not believe that the whole doctrine of a future state was left to the prevailing public sentiment of the Israelites and carefully excluded from the written record for fear of Egyptian extravagance or for any other reason. It is very true that the prominence of the future existence in the Egyptian system must have made the Israelites perfectly familiar with the idea, and it would therefore be absurd to suppose that their minds were not active on the subject. It must be believed that had there been no allusion to a future state in the Mosaic law (including Genesis, as part of the Torah), nevertheless the people of Israel would have had the doctrine lying at the basis of their creed. And sure we are that no such law as that of Israel could have stood for a moment on any other basis, a law which ordered the state of the heart as well as the outward conformity to a ritual. But, with all that, we cannot accept the theory that Moses was mute regarding this basis.

If we first take up the book of Genesis, which must have been a hand-book of history familiar to every Israelite, we find prophecies to individuals whose fulfillment demands their existence long after their departure from earth. These prophecies cannot be exhausted by application to a posterity. The man himself is to enjoy the blessing, and he must exist somewhere to enjoy it. Such are the prophecies to Noah's children and those to Abraham. It was not only unto Abraham's seed that God was going to give Palestine, but also to Abraham himself (Gen., 17 : 8), and yet Abraham never enjoyed the possession during his earthly life.

So again the very carrying of Joseph's bones from Egypt into

Palestine could have no meaning if Joseph was non-existent. If the man's existence had ended, they might take his wealth, but they would not take his bones, which were destitute of all value. But if it be said that there was a sentiment in it, a tribute of affection and memory, we ask on what is that sentiment founded but the continued existence of the one beloved? Moreover this carrying of Joseph's bones was an injunction of Joseph himself as a prophet (Gen., 50: 25; Exod., 13: 19), so that there was in it a divine teaching of his continued interest in Israel (after his bodily death). On no other ground can we account for the instruction and its fulfillment. The keeping up a connection with the ancestors who have passed away must have beneath it the idea of their continuance. Neither nature nor God would bind us to nonentities. This thought is illustrated in what our Saviour says regarding God's words to Moses at the bush, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." Our Lord uses those words to show that the patriarchs were not extinct. "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." We are so accustomed to cherish memories of the dead, that the original reason for it in the continued existence of the departed is forgotten, and the habit remains only as a habit, with its primal significance faded or gone. It is in perfect accordance with these views that we find the sacred writer declaring that the patriarchs were looking for a heavenly country, and that Moses had respect unto the recompense of reward (Heb., 11: 16, 26). They were thus represented to Israel as looking forward to the life beyond. And so when the inspired writer told the Israelites of Abraham going to his fathers (Gen., 15: 15), and of Jacob being gathered to his people (Gen., 49: 33), it was impossible for them to construe such language as to mean extinction. They could not have had the slightest doubt of the perpetuity of those who were begotten of God (Deut., 32: 18), beloved of the Lord (Deut., 33: 12), and whom the Lord knew face to face (Deut., 34: 10). The aged Joshua declaring that he was going the way of all the earth and yet declaring his determination to

serve the Lord (Josh., 23: 14; 24: 15) was a clear testimony to his and to Israel's belief that service extended beyond earth and its scenes.

When we leave the Hexateuch for later books of the Old Testament we find repeated references to the future state, not in the form of instruction, for the people had no need of being taught the fact, but in the form of allusion. Such allusions would not be looked for in the historical books, which chiefly record events occurring in the life of the nation, and yet these are not without them. Samuel's appearance to Saul at En-dor, Nathan's words to David, "*Thy* throne shall be established forever," the use of the phrase "God's inheritance" of Israel, and Elijah's going up into heaven are clear indications that a knowledge of a future state was possessed by Israel. But when we come to the devotional and prophetic books, the allusions are frequent.

David's words are very plain. Only persistent blindness can mistake them. "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." "My flesh also shall rest in hope, for thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption; thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy: at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." It is only as "the hill of the Lord" and "his holy place" in the 24th Psalm refer to heaven as a future abode that the Psalm has meaning, and in the parable or dark saying of Ps. 49 the "morning" of ver. 14 can refer only to the life to come, for part of the lofty song is, "God will redeem my soul from the power of Hades, for he shall receive me." And the very last Psalm in the series (except the final doxology of Ps. 150) has all its beauty and force as belonging to the final judgment and the triumph of God's saints as his assessors: "Let the saints be joyful in glory, let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance upon the heathen and punishments upon the people, to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron, to ex-



ecute upon them the judgment written. This honor have all his saints."

Compare this with our Lord's utterance in the Apocalypse, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne," and with Paul's words, "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor., 6: 3.)

In the prophets all the comforting assurances of the Messianic day are for the faithful of the prophet's day, and the glories to come *they* are to enjoy. As with the great Messiah himself, for the joy set before them they are to endure their crosses, while the opposers of God's truth are represented in the future world wandering in the darkness of the pit. "Hades from beneath is moved to meet thee at thy coming; it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth. . . . All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we?" (Is., 14: 9, 10.) Surely a consciousness in the future life is the ground of such a picture. Death is also to be swallowed up in victory (Is., 25: 8) for the Lord's redeemed ones. They are to be ransomed from the power of the grave and redeemed from death (Hos., 13: 14), while on the other hand as to transgressors, their worm shall not die, nor their fire be quenched (Is., 66: 24, quoted and interpreted in Mark, 9: 44). In the New Testament Christ Jesus has illumined ( *φωτίσας* ) life and immortality through the gospel (2 Tim., 1: 10). The gospel did not bring immortality to light, but enlightened it, lighted it up, illumined it. Christ's resurrection made the subject clearer and his teaching removed the gloom that the fables of the scribes had hung around it. We use the phrase "bring to light" of that which was unknown before, but the verb  *φωτίσας*  has not that extreme meaning. If we study the New Testament on the subject of the future state, we clearly see an immortality for all men whether good or bad. That such phrases as "will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" do not refer to annihilation is evident from the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, where the unquenchable fire is seen with the continued consciousness of the sufferer.

Our Lord constantly holds out to his disciples the enjoyment of a perfected kingdom of heaven (Matt., 5: 3, 10, *et mult. al.*), while he declares the only alternative to be the casting of body as well as soul into hell (*γέεννα*) (Matt., 5: 29, 30, and 10: 28). In heaven the righteous soul would lay up its treasures (Matt., 5: 20) to enjoy them forever, while the wicked were to be cast out into outer darkness, where there should be not unconsciousness but weeping and gnashing of teeth. That this suffering does not belong to this life is plain from the parable of the tares (Matt., 13: 40-42) and from that of the drag-net (Matt., 13: 49, 50). The fire of the future judgment is connected with human suffering and not with annihilation. It is a representation of torture of some kind. The *κόλασις* (punishment) of Matthew 25 has an eternity of duration as much as the *ζωή* (life).

The apostles repeat the testimony of the Master. In the Epistle to the Romans Paul declares the final punishment of the wicked to be "tribulation and anguish" (Rom., 2: 9), which are contrasted with the glory and peace of the righteous. It is very evident, therefore, that when he declares that the wages of sin is death (ch., 6: 23), the death is not annihilation but the absence of the divine life, the same that is described (2 Thess., 1: 9) as punishment with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power. The wicked who are excluded from the kingdom of God (1 Cor., 6: 10) are the same as those whom John sees (Rev., 22: 15) as "without" the heavenly Jerusalem in the grand finality. They are not extinct. They are still dogs. They still love and make a lie. And as there is no escape from doom by annihilation, so there is no refuge in the "alls" of Scripture. "In Christ shall all be made alive" has reference only to believers. So the "all men" of Rom. 5: 18 is but another form of the "many" which follows in the next and parallel verse. A universal application of the word in those places would contradict the whole teaching of Scripture and would obliterate all distinction between the righteous and the wicked.

The opposite of the eternal life promised the righteous is called not only death, but corruption (Gal., 6: 8), which is regarded as a bondage (Rom., 8: 21) begun by the wicked here in this world (2 Pet., 1: 4) and which is the very essence of their permanent condition (2 Pet., 2: 12). Perishing in their own corruption is exactly equivalent to dying in their sins (John, 8: 24). It is a fearful thing and not an anæsthetic which Jesus threatens. Their sins were to continue (see "eternal sin" in Mark, 3: 29, Revision) beyond the earthly state as their eternal environment. They do not perish away from their corruption, nor die away from their sins, but they sink forever into the corrupt and sinful state. All the force of the curse is in this perpetuity. To tell a grievous sinner that at the moment of death he should become unconscious and non-existent would be to renew his strength in sin and to end the function of conscience, if he believed the telling. Surely this was not the purpose of either the Saviour or his apostles.

But when this argument is granted, we find a new entrenchment behind in the doctrine of restoration. An *æonian* punishment will be followed by a return to God and righteousness. We shall not argue this on psychological principles and ask the question, "How can a sinning soul, with God excluded, ever desire God?" and the other question, "If grace can compel in the future world, why can it not compel now?" but we shall confine ourselves to the testimony of Scripture, which, as we showed at the beginning, is our only guide in the matter.

In the first place the application of *æonian* to quality and not time is untenable, nor, because the noun from which it comes means a limited time, though long, can we leap to the conclusion that the adjective partakes of this character. Usage is against this. Usage demands that it shall refer to *time*, and that the time shall be as *everlasting* as the nature of the thing spoken of admits. Unless in the nature of the case man is limited in the time of his existence, *æonian* as applied to him is "everlasting." But the restorationists declare man an everlasting being. They do not say with the anni-

hilationists that he is ephemeral. Now, if they grant he is an everlasting being, then *æonian* punishment for man is a punishment everlasting, *i. e.*, as long as the nature of man admits. Furthermore they must treat the *æonian* punishment exactly as they treat the *æonian* life of the contrast, as far as the adjective is concerned. Restricting one is restricting the other. All that can be said of life as to its duration is said of punishment as to *its* duration.

It is certainly, also, a marvelous thing, that if a final restoration is to take place, the Scriptures are so silent about it, when we should expect a very clear statement of the happy consummation. For those passages which are so frequently quoted by the restorationists are wholly wrested from their evident meaning. We instance a few that they count the strongest. In Acts 3: 21 the "restitution of all things" is mentioned, and that at once is seized upon as the restoration of all souls to godliness and salvation. But the whole passage shows that the times of this restitution are the times spoken of by the Old Testament prophets, and, besides, Moses is quoted as one of those prophets, and a part of the quotation is that "every soul which will not hear that Prophet (the Messiah) shall be destroyed from among the people." So here we have destruction as the last thing for the disobedient. The times of restitution are to be times also of destruction, and this is in exact accord with all the prophets who invariably couple destruction and salvation together as the last things (see Is. 24: 21-23 and the prophets *passim*). And so the last things as given by the last prophet, the Revelator, are the glorious city with its saintly inhabitants and the "without" with its dogs, etc. (Rev., 22: 14, 15). Another favorite passage of the restorationists is Eph. 1: 10, "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth." Strange to say, they take this passage out of a context which especially emphasizes the "elect," those chosen out of the rest and made the children of God by adoption. It is a most unfortunate neighborhood in which to look for a text to prove that

all have the same ultimate destiny. The gathering together of all things in Christ, like the restitution of all things (in the passage in the Acts), is the complete acknowledgment of Christ as King by men and devils, when all principalities and powers of opposition shall be subdued; but that is very far from restoration. The passage in Col. 1 : 20 is of the same sort. All things are to be reconciled unto Christ, but not all in the same way. Two classes are noted, one of which is reconciled by faith "if ye continue in the faith" (ver. 23), implying that the other reconciliation must be without faith and therefore by the mere acknowledgment of the conquering power of the divine arm. There are two ways of establishing peace, one by the hearty yielding to authority, and the other by the constraint of prison and chains. Reconciliation may be by love or by terror, all opposition ceasing in each case. Reconciliation does not necessitate love and friendly union. It only declares a peace, where there was war. That peace shall be established, when all heaven, earth, and hell shall recognize Christ as supreme, whatever may be the subjective conditions of the King's subjects. The fact that *things in heaven* as well as things in earth are to be reconciled shows that the word cannot mean the making of friends out of those who were before enemies. It only declares the establishment of a perfect harmony, of which Christ is the head. That harmony, when it is caused by the yielding of the affections to Christ in faith, is the special reconciliation of the believer, between whom and the unbeliever a broad deep line is drawn by the word of God everywhere ("what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever?" 2 Cor., 6 : 15) even into the world beyond, where the impassable gulf lies between Dives and Lazarus.

It is certainly a bold thing to stand against the overwhelming evidence of the word to the blackness of darkness reserved forever for the wicked (2 Pet., 2 : 17 ; Jude, 13) and build a fortress to resist it on a technical construction of this word "reconcile."

The positive assertions of God's word are too many, that this boldness should be commended. When that word declares to us

that for the willful sinner there remains *no more* sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries (Heb., 10 : 26, 27), how can we speak of the sacrifice of Christ revived in its power for that willful sinner in another world? When that word again declares that for the resister of the Holy Spirit there is no forgiveness either in this world or in the world to come (Matt., 12 : 32), with what face can we assert a universal forgiveness that shall include this very sinner?

The restorationist and the annihilationist are thus both contradicted by the repeated and express teachings of Scripture. There is an everlasting punishment for the wicked, a retribution eternal after death. Following the revelation of God, which, as we have seen, is our only oracle on the subject (but which finds a full approval in reason and conscience) we know that this retribution will be the action of sin in the soul (Mark, 3 : 29), removing it far from God (2 Thess., 1 : 9 ; Matt., 25 : 41) and subjecting it to perpetual tortures, symbolized by the bodily tortures of fire (Luke, 16 : 24). Beyond this we cannot go. The coarse material view of future punishment arose from a failure to see the symbolic character of Scripture language, and doubtless this coarse view caused many souls to revolt from the whole idea of future punishment. We are also to guard against any view which would make God a cruel executioner delighting in blood. God is love, and we have no right to impair in any way this inspired definition of God. The everlasting punishment of the wicked is the legitimate result of their own sin, the outworking of their rebellion against God, in accordance with those eternal laws of mind by which man is an independent and responsible being made in the image of God (see Ps. 82 : 6, 7, "I said, Ye are Elohim, but ye shall die like Adam"). As God stands behind all and has created the whole frame-work of being, so God is said to punish the wicked in this highest sense, but beneath this transcendent sense the wicked punish themselves by the necessary action of their own opposition to God, and in the

everlasting burnings (*moqedhé'olam*—Is., 33: 14), their own spirit, as fire, shall devour them (*ruhakem ésh tokalkem*—Is., 33: 11). Such is God's word on future retribution, before which man can only bow in acquiescence and according to which he must shape his philosophy.

Horace Crosby